# The Canadian Champion

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CANADIAN CHAMPION

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# A CONFLICT OF EVIDENCE.

BY RODRIGUES OTTOLENGUI

AUTHOR OF "AN ARTIST IN CRIME," ETC.


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"I think it will be difficult for you to do so, for I expect that the entrance is through the ceiling of the closet in this room. I will now look."

Mr. Barnes opened the closet door, and then started back as he saw the great mastiff lying on the floor within. The dog arose and went up to Virginia, whining pitifully. Then he went back into the closet, raised himself upon his hind legs, rested his forepaws against the wall of the closet, and with head upturned, howled in a horribly suggestive manner.

"Do you see" said Mr. Barnes. "The brute knows that there is something wrong up there." Virginia coaxed the dog away from the closet, and the detective stood on a chair and examined the ceiling. In a moment he announced—

"I have it. Here is the trap-door." A minute later he had drawn himself up through the aperture and disappeared. Very soon, however, he returned, and as he dropped to the floor, he said:—

"He is up there—dead! Suicide, I suspect. You must go at once to the squire. Pardon my not doing so, but I have a reason for wishing to remain with the body until it be turned over to the coroner."

Virginia gladly hurried away upon an errand which she knew promised the speedy release of her lover.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE CONFESSION.

As soon as Virginia had departed Mr. Barnes recaptured the secret chamber, passing, as before, through the ceiling of the closet.

His first endeavour was to learn how the man had taken his life. This was not difficult. A small charcoal furnace and the strong odour of gas permeating the place for some time after he had opened the skylight, which was the only means of ventilation and light, clearly suggested suicide. This point being settled, he examined the other things lying about. These were necessarily few, as the place was very small. The only articles of furniture were a table and a chair, unless account be taken of a small closet nailed against the wall, in which was a stock of provisions. He also found a suit of clothes. Mr. Barnes pondered over this for a few minutes, and then the idea occurred to him that it was to bring these the garments which Lewis had worn on the night of the crime, and for which, it will be remembered, Burrows had searched in vain, that the man had entered the secret room on the night when Burrows was disturbed by his movements.

It will also be recalled to mind that the younger detective had a theory which would in a measure be substantiated if these were found to be perforated by a bullet, as that would tend to show that the deceased had been shot, that he had then undressed and retired to his bed, was afterward awakened and killed by a second shot.

Mr. Barnes examined these articles with interest. If there were any bullet hole, it would not fit his own theory of the case. It was therefore with much satisfaction that he soon determined that there was none. Next he turned over the papers with which the table was littered, and soon an ejaculation of surprise and pleasure attested the fact that he had made an important discovery. He held in his hand a bundle of manuscript bearing the ominous heading, "My Confession," followed by the words, "For Mr. Barnes, should he find this first."

With unnatural eagerness and curiosity Mr. Barnes sat on the one chair and read the following, occasionally emitting a grunt of satisfaction as point after point in the mystery was explained and all fitted in with his own theory of the crime. The confession is here given verbatim:—

"After years of preparation I find that my plans have miscarried. However, I am a fatalist, and therefore bow to the inevitable. I have been bitterly wronged, but in some degree I have had a revenge. Now I am forced by the immutable laws of circumstance to choose between my own miserable life and that of her whom I love most dearly, and I do not hesitate to sacrifice myself that she may live and be happy, even though it be in the arms of a man whom I should like to grind beneath my heel. Yet what has he done to me? Nothing! He is one of the same family as the villain who wrecked and destroyed the life of my dearly beloved sister. Beyond that there is nothing. Strange that mother and daughter should both love the same name! It is the finger of fate, and yet there are many who scoff at the idea of predestination. But as I wish to be understood by the one who may find this paper, and that one I am confident will be Mr. Barnes, I must be more explicit. Therefore it will be as well to give a detailed account of the sequence of strange events in my life.

"At the outset let me say that my name is John Lewis, but as that is also the name under which I have passed since the tragedy of Sunday night, I will add that I am the man who is supposed to be dead. The corpse is that of Walter Marvel, the uncle of the young man at present accused of my murder. I will now go back to my youth and relate the events in the order of their occurrence.

"I was born in Richmond, Va., and my family was aristocratic. Of course when the civil war began our sympathies were all with the secessionists. My father entered the Confederate service, and soon, by his gallantry, won distinction, being advanced several times on the field until at length he had reached the position of colonel. It was during his absence with his regiment that, in the latter part of 1863, some prisoners of war were brought into Richmond. Some of these were wounded and sent to the hospitals. It is a curious fact that, however eager men may be in battle to destroy each other, after the fight is over they appear to be just as anxious to save the lives of those who may yet have a lingering spark within their veins.

"My sister, together with many other noble women, gave her entire time to the nursing of the wounded, and so spent all her days among the soldiers in the hospitals. Thus, when these prisoners of war were brought in and the sufferers placed in the kind care of these women, my sister met and nursed many of them. Among the number was Walter Marvel, an officer in the Union army. At once she was attracted to him. How or why let those explain who disbelieve in fate, for he was neither handsome nor pleasant, either in countenance or manners. Besides, he was the avowed enemy of all that we held to be our sacred right, and for which our young men were pouring out their young blood on many fields. She was

"South, and it was not surprising that Marvel soon found himself fascinated by her charms.

"After a time he recovered sufficiently to be removed from the hospital, and in the natural order of events would have been taken to prison but for the interest which my sister evinced in him. Naturally she possessed much influence with the officers, and she represented to them that, though well enough to leave the hospital, he was still so weak that if confined in a cell he would probably not survive. Thus she succeeded in having him paroled. So there was opportunity for them to meet and exchange loving vows although they conducted matters so adroitly that I, who was present all the time in the house, never suspected the true state of affairs.

"At last came the end of the war, and, stricken at heart by the outcome thereof, my father returned home. Moreover, he had been severely wounded, and his wound, not having received proper attention, had never thoroughly healed. Great care was necessary to insure its not giving more trouble. Meanwhile it transpired that during the latter part of 1864 Marvel had lured my sister into a secret marriage, a pitfall into which so many innocent and inexperienced women fall, forgetting that their parents have their interests at heart, and therefore are entitled at least to advise about so important a step. She would have confessed to my father on his arrival were it not for his weakened physical condition and the danger which any great excitement might cause.

CHAPTER XVII.—Continued.

"So time passed until at length it became imperative that she should make the disclosure. She was just about to confide her story to my father when unfortunately she discovered that he is ill. He questioned her, and was at first relieved to hear that at least she was a married woman, but when he learned that her husband was a detested Yankee his rage was simply terrible. He stormed and raved until his strength was exhausted, and he fell to the floor in a swoon.

"My sister screamed for help, and the servants rushed in and picked up their master. They bore him up to his own chamber and laid him on his bed, but an ominous train of blood marked their progress from the room below, and when, in response to a hasty summons, the doctor arrived he found that the wound had opened and was bleeding dangerously. Other surgeons were summoned, and after great difficulty the flow was stopped, but the loss of blood in his already weakened condition left him scarcely any strength. Besides, his mental trouble, occasioned by the news which he had that day heard, made his condition critical indeed.

"When the doctor had made him as comfortable as they could, and there was a moment to spare to other considerations, I thought of my sister, and sought for her, but one of the servants informed me that she had left the house. I suspected at once that she had gone to her husband, and, knowing where he resided, I hurried to the father. I rushed into the house, and was horrified to find the apparently lifeless body of my sister stretched on the parlour floor. Assistance was summoned, and, as soon as it was safe to do so, she was removed to her own home. It was not until months after that I learned the events which led up to this catastrophe. It seems that she had, as I had supposed, sought for the villain who could have been ready and anxious to make her her husband. When I heard that her father had refused to acknowledge the marriage, he coolly told her that, in that case, it would be best to part, that he would not separate a girl from her father, and other things equally heartless. Then he left her.

"It was not surprising that my sister's little girl should have been prematurely hurried into the world by these exciting scenes. Afterward the mother improved slowly, but surely, day by day. With my father it was different. For months he lay between life and death. When my sister had sufficiently recovered her own health, she divided her time between her baby and her father, and her experience as a nurse now became invaluable. At last there came a change, and one morning my father awoke, apparently better.

Matilda, my sister, was at the moment having her breakfast and was out of the room. I taking her place for the time. Father spoke to me, asking me to relate all that had occurred. I tried to answer evasively, but he immediately showed signs of excitement, insisting on a reply to his inquiries. Under the circumstances I deemed it best to tell him the truth. He listened without comment until I told how her husband had deserted her, at which he gritted his teeth as he muttered, "The villain." When I told him of the little stranger in the house, his expression softened, and he asked me to send my sister to him. As I left the room to do so, he said:—"Let nothing keep her from bringing little Virginia with her."

"I must say here that as yet no name had been chosen for the baby, but Virginia is our native State, and when she called the little one by that name, Matilda would never call her by any other name in the years that came after.

"The interview between my father and Matilda was touching in the extreme. She avowed her contrition for the deception which she had practised, while he asked forgiveness for his harshness.

"'To think,' said he, 'that I should have endangered the life of this dear little blessing!' And, stretching out his arms, he took her child and kissed it, whereupon my sister dropped upon her knees, buried her face in the bed clothing, and wept like a child. My father soothed her, and, deeming it best, I slipped from the room, leaving them alone.

"After that these three were inseparable, and seemed as happy as could be—so much so, indeed, that we were all lulled into the belief that my father was getting well—all except my father himself. He said nothing, but when the end approached, declared that he had expected it all along. When it was clearly evident that he would soon die, he called me to him one day and, taking me by the hand, he said:—

"'John, my son, you have always been a good boy, and I wish you a long and prosperous life. Yet I desire to do something that may seem unjust to you. I hope you may be able to see it as I do. I should die happier.'

"'Do not speak of dying, father,' I cried, in a choked voice. 'What is it you wish?' 'I will accede to it cheerfully.'

"'That is my brave boy,' said he, with a smile, and then he paused awhile. At last he continued: 'John, I wish to make a change in my will. As it stands, my property would be divided equally between you and Matilda. I wish to alter it so that each of you will have one-third. The balance must be invested so that the little one will have something when she is of age. I will arrange so that in case of her death her share must go to her mother, and in the event of the mother's death, that portion must be similarly invested for the little one. I wish you to be the executor. Will you do this for me, my boy?' I nodded acquiescence, and he went on:—

"'This is just, John. You will soon be a man, and can care for yourself. Matilda is a woman. By a mistake she has wrecked her chance of winning a worthy protector, and so I must arrange that she and her child shall not come to want.' I assured him that he was only acting as I should wish, and he seemed to be more contented. The lawyers were summoned, and all was arranged as he directed. A few days later, while he was clasped in his daughter's arms, his spirit passed away.

"I will not prolong my tale in order to give a complete narrative of all that passed, but will simply confine myself to those events most closely connected with this recent tragedy.

"The months rolled by, and never was a word said about the man who had caused all our trouble. Matilda seemed to lavish her whole wealth of love upon her little girl, and as Virgie grew I cherished the hope that the wound in her mother's heart was healing.

"How little does a man understand what a woman means when she says that she gives him her heart! Despite all the outward appearances, I was yet to find that Matilda still thought of and longed for her husband.

"One morning, when Virgie was about five years old, I was sitting at my breakfast, and Matilda, who had already eaten, was amusing herself with the morning's paper, when a sudden exclamation from her attracted my attention. I anxiously asked what it was, and she handed me the paper, pointing to the following paragraph:—

"'We are gratified to see that the Government is recognizing the services rendered by our soldiers in the late war. Especially is it pleasant for us to record that Lieutenant Walter Marvel has been appointed to a diplomatic mission abroad. This gentleman, by his heroism on the field, has demonstrated the sterling qualities of which he is made, and doubtless will fill his new position with honour to himself and to his country. He will leave for Paris this week. It may not be amiss to mention the rumour that the gallant officer will take a bride with him.'

"I was much troubled at this, and scarcely knew what to say, for I could not guess how it would affect my sister. However, she spoke first.

"'John, my brother, will you take me to Paris?' To say that I was astonished at this request would but mildly express it.

"'Take you to Paris,' said I, 'after all that has happened?'

"'He is Virgie's father, John! You forget that!'

"'Evidently he does also.'

"'He does not, even know that he has a child. John, I have thought of this constantly, and it is not right that I should keep him in ignorance, as I have done all these years.

"'Why Mattie, what are you saying? What claim can he have on you after the cowardly manner in which he abandoned you?'

"'Hush! You must not think and speak thus of my husband. If I have suffered, do you not think he has also? He did not abandon me. He saw what was my plain duty, and had the courage to show it to me. In my selfishness, would have left my father to him. But he knew that it was my duty to remain at home, and therefore he went. That is the simple truth. I was almost speechless, so great was my surprise at her defence of him, but I made one more effort.

"'But has he not forgotten you, is he not about to marry again?'

"'Stop, John. You do not know what you are saying. Do you think that I believe for a moment what a newspaper says when I know my husband as I do? I should have little faith indeed. John, I must see him before he goes away. If you will not accompany me, I must go alone.'

"I was amazed, but what could I do? She was determined, and I could not allow her to go alone. So she easily induced me to promise to go with her. Preparations were rapidly arranged for the journey to New York, but all of our plans at the last minute were upset by the sudden illness of the little girl. Believing, as I do, in fate, I looked upon this as a sign that we should abandon the idea of seeking out the father. I could not, however, make my sister see it so, and though the strange illness passed away in a few days, she was well enough to travel she insisted on joining her husband, even though it entailed the necessity of crossing the ocean. She anticipated a happy reunion with her husband and a future life of happiness and love.

"As I saw her looking brighter and brighter, day by day, even in the anticipation, much as I detested the man, I could not find it in my heart to thwart her. She was so sure of the joyous welcome with which she would be received that she had the child's portrait painted and placed in a locket. In fact, she had two made, one for herself and one which she intended to send to her husband on her arrival in Paris. This last was the counterpart of the other, save that she had his name, or rather his initials, engraved on the gold case.

"To shorten my narrative as much as possible, that I may surely finish it before I am discovered here in my retreat, I will at once come to our arrival in Paris. It was with little difficulty that I learned of Marvel's whereabouts, for his official duties made him a man of some note. My sister wrote a most affectionate letter telling him all that had passed since she had left her and of the birth of the child. With it she enclosed the locket and portrait. This was forwarded, and she waited impatiently for him to hasten to her side.

CHAPTER XVII.—Continued.

"But the days passed and no word came. She made every excuse for him, urging that his new duties must detain him, and making other similar pleas in his behalf. Meanwhile I instinctively knew that he was but a heartless villain, and I never expected him to behave toward his wife as a man should. At length, even Matilda commenced to doubt, until the thought entered her brain that perhaps her letter had never reached him. Then she determined to seek him in person. I endeavoured to dissuade her from this project, but it was impossible to detain her and so I went with her to his hotel. We asked to see him, and were shown into a private parlour connected with his suite. There we were allowed to wait but a few moments and then we were joined by a tall, handsome woman, who enquired why we had called. We said we wished to see Marvel in person, to which she replied:—

"'He is engaged at present, but I am his wife.'

"'What!' exclaimed my sister. 'His wife? Woman, you are mad! I am his wife.'

"The other did not so much as start, but coolly replied:—

"'Oh, I see! You must be that little rebel that he met down in Richmond. I have heard all about that affair. He told it to me before we were married.' (Here Mr. Barnes uttered a particularly loud grunt of satisfaction.) 'So you have come to claim him, now that he is somebody of consequence. Quite romantic, I declare, but it won't do, you know. He will never acknowledge you.'

"'You forget yourself, madam,' said I. 'By your own words you have admitted my sister's claim as this man's wife, and therefore must see that you are not his wife at all.'

"'Oh, indeed! How pleasant of you to come and tell me! But I tell you it will not do. He will not be bound by such a marriage as your sister tricked him into when he was a prisoner.'

"'I thought it best to take my sister away, but she would not stir.

"'I will not go,' said she, 'until I have seen him!'

"'Oh! Very well, if you insist! Though it is useless, I assure you.' The woman turned and left the room. A moment later Marvel entered.

"'Well, madam,' he began, addressing my sister, 'what can I do for you?'

"'Walter—'

"'Excuse me, but you may spare yourself. I have heard from my wife the object of your call, and, besides, I received your letter, and so am aware of all the circumstances. I regret the whole affair, I assure you, and since there is a child, which you say is mine, why of course anything that I can do in a pecuniary way to relieve your wants I would be most willing—'

"'You villain!' I began, and was about to grasp him by the throat to strangle him, when my sister caught me by the arm and, with more calmness than I could have expected, said:—

"'No, not that way! He must suffer as I shall. I must be avenged, but death is too tame for my wishes!' With these words she hastened from the room. Hardly knowing what to do, I followed. We entered the carriage which awaited us, and were borne to our hotel, Matilda keeping silent during the trip. As soon, however, as we were in our parlour, she said:—

"'John, go at once for a lawyer.' I immediately divined her intention and went out, only too glad that at last this fiend was to have his deserts.

"It will suffice here to state that we readily had Marvel arrested and tried, for, however lax the Parisians may be in morals, bigamy is a crime there, as elsewhere, and with but little trouble we obtained his conviction. His punishment is his foreign mission had hastened his going abroad, but the newspaper had made a mistake in arrogating that he would take a bride with him. He had been engaged to marry a woman, but she and her parents had been sending some months in Paris, and their wedding had taken place there only a short time prior to our arrival. Thus the crime had been committed on French soil, and was punishable there. My sister maintained her strength, and appeared at the trial to testify against Marvel, a circumstance which greatly assisted in obtaining his conviction, but immediately after she became quite ill and died before I returned to America. Thus ends the sad history of my sister and her wrongs. Now about my

"At the trial, when Marvel was sentenced to the full penalty of the law, he started up and uttered the most terrible invectives against my sister. Then, turning to me, he said:—

"'As for you, who have hounded me down, I warn you that when I get out of this trouble, wherever you may be, I will be away. I will find you, and I will kill you, so help me God!' It was terrible to hear him, and as he spoke I knew that if ever he should have the chance he would execute his threat.

"It was the certainty of this which induced me in my subsequent course. I concluded that when we should meet one of us must die, and I felt that common justice made it but right that he should be the one. Not satisfied with hastening the death of my father and my sister, he must also threaten my life. So I made my preparations. If he should come with murderous intent, I would be ready, and if I did so, no harm could accrue.

"I foresaw that some shrewd detective would discover that this man had crossed the ocean to commit a crime, and I determined to let it appear that he had succeeded. I would kill him, dress him in my clothing, and let it seem that I was the murdered man. But as I must further be able to account for my own presence, I plotted to reappear as my own son. To this end I visited an academy on Washington Heights, and, spoke of placing my son there, though I afterward informed the schoolmaster that I had sent him elsewhere. However, I interested myself in his institution, and offered to make some needed repairs. Then I spent some time at the place myself, and while there I wrote to parties out of town, enclosing self-addressed envelopes for their replies. These were in due time returned to me properly postmarked, and it was an easy matter for me to write fictitious letters, as though to my son, and place them in these covers. These, when the time should come, would be proofs enough of my identity, and as I knew that years would pass before I could use them I concluded that no one would doubt that they were genuine.

"Next I allowed my beard to grow to its full length, that being the style in which Marvel always wore his. I knew that his would be shaved as long as he remained in prison, but I thought that he would allow his beard to grow again as soon as he should regain his liberty, as it had a scar from a wound that would otherwise greatly disfigure his face. I dyed my whiskers, eyebrows and hair black, in imitation of his, my own being quite red. I had no relatives, and absolutely no friends or acquaintances in the North, and I determined not to revisit Richmond. Consequently I had all my Southern property converted into cash and forwarded to me. I then looked about for a suitable place to live and selected Lee.

"I did nothing more in furtherance of my plans except to speak to all of my new friends of the son who had left me and had run away. I was quite young at this time, but 19 in fact, although I was fully matured and looked much older.

"The years rolled by and nothing occurred to disturb the serenity of our home in this little New England town except that the Marvel family came here to reside. This I considered another fatality, and for that reason I did not move away.

"At last came the birthday which would make it necessary for me to explain more to Virgie than I had ever yet done. After dinner I was listening to Squire Olney, but at the same time I was moodily thinking over the past, with its terrible memories, when young Marvel asked to speak to me. I was then startled to hear him, another Walter Marvel, declare that he had won the heart of my little girl. Was it surprising that I should act as I did and deny his suit, or that in my anger I should blurt out a part of the truth? The events which followed are too well known to need iteration here. So I will come at once to the night of the murder.

"I was sitting in the parlour, pondering bitterly over my position. I had begun to realise the fact that it should pursue the course which I had begun and should prosecute Marvel, it must be at the cost to myself of Virgie's love. I was debating as to the most sensible course to adopt when, suddenly, I heard a pistol shot and a bullet broke through the pane. I jumped up, hurried to the window, and distinctly saw a man grappling with my dog. The snow had ceased to fall, and there was light from the moon, which was visible through the clouds as they broke away. I thought this was young Marvel, and that he had deliberately fired through my window, in pursuance of the threat made on the day of the party. I had seen Virgie pass through the parlour and leave her pistol on the mantel; so quickly possessing myself of it, I fired at the retreating figure. At the same moment a second shot was fired, this time at me, for it struck me on the head, though it inflicted but a slight wound.

"I learned at the inquest that these shots were fired respectively by Lucas and Miss Marvel—the first accidentally and the second deliberately, though at the time I did not see whence the latter came and supposed that it was from the man's weapon.

"A very few minutes after this I heard the knocker at my front door. Thinking that it might be young Marvel still desirous of injuring me, I concluded to go prepared and took a weapon in my hand. I did not again take Virgie's, for I had time to think before acting, and as I was possibly about to take a life it occurred to me that it would not do to use Virgie's pistol, because it has her name on it. At the same moment it flashed across my mind that young Marvel's also bore his name and that it was in my possession. I took it from the drawer where I kept it, and went to the front door, where the man outside was again knocking. I opened it and a bearded man entered. When I saw that it was not young Marvel, I led the way back to the parlour. Reaching there, I faced the man and enquired his name.

"'Walter Marvel,' he replied, 'and your day of reckoning has arrived.' For a moment I was dazed, and I did not remember that there were two who bore this name.

"'That is impossible!' I exclaimed. 'I do not recognize you.'

"'You will in a moment,' he answered, and put his hand to his hip pocket. Immediately I understood. This was the elder Marvel, and the time had come for him to take my life or for me to take his.

"I was certain that he was at that moment getting out a weapon, though, as it proved later, it must have been that evidence of his identity he meant to show me the locket which my sister had sent to him. I think that he wished to know where his daughter was before going to extremities. Be this as it may, I thought that he was about to raise his hand against my life, and so, having a pistol already in my hand, I shot him, and he died almost without a struggle.

"I at once proceeded to carry out my long prepared plan. I stripped the body, cutting the garments away, with the exception of the long coat, which, with much difficulty, I succeeded in removing without destroying, as I desired to wear it away from the house. There was not a moment's delay, for I had long been ready for this emergency and so acted promptly. I got one of my own shirts, making sure that it was not marked with my name, and slipping this on him made it appear that I had been aroused after going to sleep. Next I arranged the shirt so that it touched the wound and allowed a stream of the blood to soak through. This served as a mark, and I fired at it in order that there be a bullet hole through the garment and near enough to the other and for both to have entered the same spot. I suppose that my hand trembled somewhat, and that is why, as the doctor testified, this was but a slight wound and the bullet passed out again. It can be found in the floor, of course, if it be deemed necessary to substantiate my statement in that way.

"Next, to make the identification complete, I placed upon the finger of the corpse the large diamond ring which I had always worn, and which is well known. This was again a fatality, for this is a ring which he gave to his sister when he engaged her affections. It was with some difficulty that I got the ring on, for his finger was much larger than mine. (Again Mr. Barnes uttered an ejaculation and thought to himself:—'Excuse me, old man, but you are so small a thing in body, and it was so small a thing that which led me finally to suspect the truth. If the finger could not well after death, as the doctor claimed, to be the fact, then the ring should not have been on the right finger.') I then took a roaring fire and held the head of the dead man in it long enough to scorch and disfigure him beyond recognition. I then laid him down near the hearth so that it would appear that he had dropped there and had been burned afterward. Next I hurriedly wrote the slips of tape I found in Virgie and the detectives, through which I meant to point to young Marvel as the murderer, thus getting that science would prove that death had been instantaneous, and therefore that the victim had not had time to make such an accusation.

"When I first bought this house, foreseeing the necessity for this crime, I caused this small room to be constructed, to do which it was only necessary to close up the closets which originally opened into the adjoining rooms. Here I had everything that I would need in this emergency, and therefore came to this room and quickly shaved off my beard. Then I washed off my hair and eyebrows, using a liquid which I kept specially for this purpose. Thus they were restored to their natural red colour, and would easily prevent any identification. Any resemblance in face or voice I hoped would be accepted as a natural inheritance of a son from his father. I left my own clothing in my sleeping apartment, to give colour to the theory that I had retired. The dead man's clothes I packed in a satchel, except his overcoat, which I slipped on over the sailor's suit which I had adopted. I easily caught the train which passes Lee Depot at 10.29, and thus it will be seen that the crime occurred while Virgie and young Marvel were together across the river. I left the train at Epring. Here fate favoured me, for a hotel man gave me a lift in his wagon, and claimed that he recognized me as young Marvel. So I admitted that he had guessed my name. Leaving him, I went to the old house belonging to Marvel, and here I burned the articles that I had in the satchel, among which there must have been some wire, which Burrows afterward, to strengthen his theory, erroneously claimed was a part of a set of false whiskers. Next, I hid the pistol, and the piece of plate which had my name engraved on it, and which I broke from the satchel. In rearranging the stones I did so in such a clumsy way that anyone would discover what was hidden beneath.

"It was now but half-past eleven, and, thinking there was sufficient time before me, I threw myself on the bed and tried to sleep. I had not been there more than two or three hours, however, when I heard someone enter the house. I started up and sprang to the window. The boughs of a huge elm were quite near, and I easily stepped into the tree. Here I remained hidden by the dense foliage, for despite the danger, I could not resist the curiosity to know who it was that was in the house. In a very few moments a light appeared, and I clearly saw that it was young Walter Marvel himself. Everything seemed to favour my plot. Waiting until his light was extinguished again and until I could slip out of the tree without attracting his attention I stole silently away. I walked to New Market Junction, where I boarded the early morning train for New Market, for, though I could easily have continued on to that place on foot, I wished to give colour to the story which I intended to tell, of having come from Portsmouth, by being seen to leave the proper train. During this short ride the conductor pointed out to me two men and told me that they were detectives. It was these same two that I afterward recognized at the saloon, when the squire informed me that he was taking detectives to my house. I was startled, not unnaturally, to learn that experienced men would be on the scene of the crime so early, and in my agitation I almost betrayed myself, as I know, because Burrows questioned me afterward.

"Another unexpected event was when my dog recognized me at the house and plainly showed his friendship. Strange as it may seem, this possibility, obvious as it should have been, had not even occurred to me. A man who commits a crime always overlooks something. I was so taken by surprise that I scarcely knew what to do, for the animal is so savage that it would, of course, look strange to the squire to see him fawn upon a stranger. However, I made a lame attempt at explanation, but, poor as it was, it served to lull suspicion.

"That night, as fate would have it, I was assigned to my own room, and, thinking over the whole affair, it suddenly occurred to me that a post-mortem would reveal the fact that one wound had caused instantaneous death, and, for all that I could tell at that time, the other might be of the same character. However, I saw at a glance that the only way to explain the presence of the paper which I had written would be by supposing one wound to have been made by either of the shots which had been fired from the lawn. In that event the position of the wound on the body would lead the detectives to search for the corresponding hole through my clothing. I, therefore, determined to secrete these garments in this apartment, and to let their disappearance be a part of the mystery.

"Everything went as I had planned, except that the paper came into the hands of Virgie, and led her to believe in young Marvel's guilt. Thus, in her efforts to save him, she herself became entangled in the affair and even accused herself of the crime. To prevent the consequences of this, I led Mr. Barnes to where he would find the evidence which I had manufactured against young Marvel. I wished to remain behind to search for the bundle which he claimed to have thrown into the river, and which I would have destroyed if I had found it. But the shrewd detective would not allow me to leave him. When we reached Epring, we found Burrows ahead of us. He had forestalled out all that I wish to be discovered. I congratulated myself that all would yet be well when Mr. Barnes at once demonstrated the fact that Virgie must be guilty or else that Virgie must be considered an accomplice.

"Thus I have no recourse but to die. The truth must be known that the innocent may not suffer. It is hard that what I have so long and carefully guarded should at last be revealed. I have been a victim of circumstances, rather than a criminal, and