

discover how far this quarrel would seem to supply a motive for committing the crime. All the details I could gather in reference to this quarrel were meagre enough. It had been lightly regarded at the time as a trivial affair, and only derived any importance from Walters having left the place shortly afterwards, being provoked to take this step by the taunts of his companions, who laughed at him for being "cut out" by White. Walters had, it appeared, used threatening words in reference to White, and declared that he would have revenge; but his remarks excited as little notice at the time as the rash words of an angry man generally do. Indeed no one appeared to have thought them worth remembering, and my enquiries ended in my being as far from the solution of the mystery as ever. Still, when a man is lost in a vast forest he will follow the slightest path, however vague and ill defined it may be, in the hope that it may lead him to his hoped-for destination, and, adopting this principle, I resolved to pursue my enquiries with reference to Walters further, notwithstanding the apparently slight evidence on which my suspicions of his connexion with the murder rested.

The Magistrates, in making their investigation, made no search for the weapon with which the deed had been done, assuming that the assassin had taken it with him. I arrived at precisely the opposite conclusion. It appeared perfectly clear that the murderer would attempt to dispose of the weapon at once, either by throwing it into a brook or a ditch, or concealing it in some such way. I searched a good deal for the weapon in the neighbourhood of the place where the deed was done, but met with no success. Indeed any general search I could make for it was apparently a hopeless task, for he might have carried it a mile or more before throwing it away. I must admit that, at this stage of the investigation, I felt myself greatly at fault, and, although I rode repeatedly over the road by which I supposed the murderer had made his escape, which was the one leading to the nearest town, I could not arrive at any satisfactory result.

One day while I was thus engaged, when I had reached a point on the main road, some half a mile from the fatal spot, I met one of the neighbours with whom I was familiar, and, as usual, he stopped to talk with me over the gossip of the day. Close to where we stood by the roadside was the cellar of an old house which had been burnt some years before, and on my enquiring who had lived there, he told me that it was old Mr. Walters, Charles Walters' father.

"Poor man!" he continued, "the burning of that house was a sad loss to him."

"In a pecuniary point of view?" I enquired.

"No; but in another way. He had a son younger than Charles, and better, who was a mere child then. In the terror caused by the midnight alarm of the house being on fire, he rushed out, and, falling into the well, which

was dry at the time, was so badly hurt that he died in a few days."

"Is it deep?"

"Thirty feet and better. They were cleaning it out at the time, and the fence was removed for that purpose, which accounted for the child falling in. The loss of this boy broke the old man's heart, and he died within a year."

Without waiting to hear more, I tied my horse to the fence and went to the well, which was close to the side of the old cellar. A few rough boards covered it, but, on removing one of them, I could see that it was still in a good state of preservation, and that none of the stones had fallen in. A new idea had struck me: the weapon might be concealed in the well—at all events I resolved to see.

Bidding the talkative neighbour a hasty adieu, I galloped home, and returned with a small pocket mirror, for the purpose of exploring the well. Stripping off the boards, I managed to cast the rays of the sun, which was then declining, to the bottom of the well and found it dry. In another instant my heart gave such a bound as Newton's must have given when he discovered gravitation. THERE WAS A KNIFE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE WELL!!

Yes, there was a knife, but was it the knife of the assassin? I determined not to remain long in doubt. Stripping off my shoes, I commenced to descend into the well, placing my feet in the crevices of the stones on each side, and holding on with my hands. In a short time I reached the bottom, picked up the knife, climbed up once more to the surface, and commenced to examine my new discovery.

It was an ordinary sheath knife, such as is worn by sailors, and on the handle was cut, in rude letters, PAUL THOROLD. The blade and handle were covered with blood, and I felt convinced that it was the very weapon with which the deed had been done. The evidence of this was perhaps not strong enough to have convinced a jury, but it was sufficient to convince me that I was on the right track for the murderer.

Another fact was established by this discovery of the knife in the well:—the murderer was familiar with the neighbourhood, or he would not have known of this place of concealment. The button proved that he had come from a distance, but the concealing of the knife showed that he was no stranger.

I stated before that Charles Walters was said to have gone to sea, and I determined at once to see whether this was correct or not. I proceeded to St. John, and, obtaining access to the books of the shipping master, I examined them for the name of Walters. I found it sooner than I expected. On the 20th October he had shipped on board the barque *Eleanor*, for England, and as I read the date, I remembered that on the 10th of the same month White had been killed. Just below the name of Charles Walters appeared that of Paul Thorold; they were evidently companions and had shipped in the same vessel.