

return to the manor was keen and poignant. "I am afraid she is dead, Beryl," he said on the third day after the discov-

ery of the murder. "She has made away with herself in her sorrow and

madness." "There is nothing to suggest that, nothing more than there was two days ago," replied Beryl, thinking scretly that it could perhaps be the best end-ing for them all.

"Yes, there is the fact that she has not come back," he answered. "If, which heaven forbid, she did this deed in her madness and any knowledge came to her afterward of what she had done, she would do one of two things-either come back at once and own the full truth or lay violent hands on her own life. I know her."

"There is time for her to come back

yet. Suppose, as you say, that she did this in her delirium. She may yet be wandering somewhere in the same state and may know nothing of what has happened." "The whole country is ringing with

news of the man's death. She could not fail to hear of it if she were alive. I tell you she is dead, and if her end were eful it is best so." He sighed heav-"It is an awful thing that I should ever have to say that about her, but I would rather see her dead than mad, and she must be one or the other, or

we are all out of our senses.' Beryl did not answer this at once. but sat thinking out the problem as it showed in the light of her own knowl-

"We may all be out of our senses in that respect, Jasiray. We may be judg-ing her without cause." "I would to God that I could think

so!" he exclaimed, with fierce energy, "I would give my life to feel sure of it. but I can't Beryl, I can't. I have tried to piece the things together that you and I know and to find in them any-thing but the proofs of her deed, and J can't. Look at the things as I wi they lead me nowhere but to one conclusion. There is not a man in England who if he knew what we know would not think what we think. I don't un-derstand the thing. I can't, except on the one supposition that she is mad, and it breaks my heart to think that." and he continued: He paused, but Beryl did not break

the silence. "The thing is all so horribly com-plete! I have talked it over and over with Gifford, trying to get from him a suggestion that may point in another direction, but all his ingenuity cannot offer a hint that the evidence doesn't utterly smash. It is perfectly clear that she left the manor house before this ahe left the manor house before this man was killed. It is quite as certain that he wrote to har the letter telling her to meet him. It is clear again that she get the letter, and that she did go to see him, and just as clear that she was there and dropped that bracelet in the struggle with him and used that the struggle what min and used that dagger, and then on the top of all comes this absolutely inexplicable fight. It would all be different if only she were here. If she would some here and

with a purpose lay her hand in mine and tell me she knew nothing of all this, I would be-lieve her and hold out for her innecence against the whole world, mad or same. But she doesn't come. And yet I hate and loathe myself for harbering the thought that, mad or same, she could even think of taking this man's life. And the strain of it all is enough to kill on

Beryl thought it best to let him speak freely and without interruption. "There is only the one thing that I

have often mentioned to you that I can't fathom-whether there was any sort of understanding between Lola and that brute. I have thought sometimes-in fact, Gifford suggested the idea to me-that he may have had some kind of hold over her, something that-but, there. won's firy to think in that vein. I wish to heaven I'd had the beggar out and shot him before he caused all this

"fin says in her fetter," he said. while is and succeed and left and take

and the second

going to offer any evidence which will be likely to drag it out. Personally I

net quickly.

frown of regret and annoyance. "Borderham may have suspected it even then," he said. "Those men don't

"No, no, Sir Jafray; the tracing will have to be done quietly." don't like working in the light in that way, with all the countryside knowing brought this on you." every step you take. If this thing's ever to be found out at all, it won't be

if going to say more, and Beryl, think-ing this, did not reply, but he said nothing, and at the close of a somewhat by means of a coroner's jusy. It's all a farce and nothing else. It's all night enough for a twopenay halfpenny in pot case, where the facts lie as plain in sight as eggs in a thrush's nest, but where there's serious business inquests are worse than no good." embarrassed pause he went out of the room, just turning by the door to smile to he She was a little pussled by his con-

are worse than no good." "I see," said Sir Jaffray shortly. "Take such a thing as this matter of duct, and with a frown of perplexity on her forehead she sat for a minute or "Take such a thing as take marker of the dagger, now," continued the in-spector. "What would a coreaser's jury make of that, I should like to know? Suppose I was to tell 'em all the facts—that the dagger was one of two just alike which yeu brought home from America, and that the brace-let was one of two brought home inst two thinking of it all. Then she smiled two thinking of it all to herself very slightly and manmared: "I'm glad I did it. Whatever happens ther can't do anything very dreadful to they can't do anything very dreadful to me, and Jaffray must see I did it for his sake." Then she went up stairs to Lady Walcote's rooms. At the inquest everything went as Inspector Borderham had anticipated. He offered just such evidence as he let was one of two brought home just in the same way, and that, whereas Lady Walcote was missing and Miss Leycester here was on the spot, Miss Leycester's thought necessary, and the coroner summed up the case on the evidence dagger and bracelet had got mized up in this crime, while Lady Walsote's were both lying where they had always

presented. One juryman was disposed to question the desirability of not going into more of the facts, but the other 11, who had been drawn carefully from the been, one in the cabinet and the other in the jewel case. What do you suppose Walcote estates, took their one from the foreman and deelared themselves per-fectly satisfied and gave their verdict in the exact terms the inspector had they would make of that? What could they make of it?" He stopped and looked at both his hearers in turn, as if waiting for them

prophesied that they would. "And new," said the inspector to Mr. Gifford and Sir Jaffray when it to speak. But neither of them said anything,

was all over and sir JaEray when it was all over and the courtroom was emptying fast—''now begins the serious business of the investigation.'' "That would be a poser by itself, but

now just throw in a spice of mystery and try to imagine what the effect would be. Suppose I were to read them "You've had some anonymous letter, I hear, about the weapon," said Mr. Gifford, to whom the baronet had ala letter that has been sent to me to the effect that at the time of the death of ready spoken. "Do you mind my seethis Frenchman neither the dagger nor the bracelet was in the manor here, but ing it "Not in the least. Here it is." And

that both were put in their places afterhe produced it. "You see the sugges ward, put there from Leycester Court. tion," he said pointedly. What do you think they would say "And a most monstrons one it is,"

then? Why, we should have all sorts of wild stories repeated everywhere, with then? Why, we should have all sorts of wild stories repeated everywhere, with all sorts of charges against all sorts of people. And how could I carry on my work of inquiry then?" work of inquiry then?" He stopped again, but only for a see-

He stopped again, but only for a sec-ond, and it was evident now to both Sir given with a smile, "but I have not, I Jaffray and Beryl that he was speaking am thinking, where to look.'

"So am I," returned the other short-"But I don't work in that way. I "But I don't work in that way. I simply leave that letter—th course it's anonymous—out of the question. If I ask any question, it is how the writer, that matter, Lady Walcote either? Hate of some kind inspired that letter."

ask any question, it is how the writes, whoever it is, comes to know so much about it. And then I argue thus: If the the true and these things were ''I am at a loss even to guess, plied Sir Jaffray. ''May I take a tracing of a bit of the ''May I take a tracing of a bit of the about it. And then I argue take, it was story be true and these things were put back, no one knows anything about it officially and authoritatively except to ficially and authoritatively except so, rapidly and to recurs on Mr. Gifferd dia so, rapidly and to recurs on Mr. Borderham?" And without waiting for permission Mr. Gifferd dia so, rapidly and to recurs on Mr. Borderham? myself and the people who may be sup-posed to have done it, and what isn't

the letter back to the inspector, and then Sir Jaffray and the private detect-ive walked back together to the manor house, the baronet explaining more fully known officially can always be contra-dicted. And if it were ever known to be true that any one had, in a moment of misapprehension, done anything of the kind and wanted to cancel the arall that had passed. "What do you think of it, Mr. Gifford?" he asked at the close.

rangement nothing would be easier, supposing it is not officially known. "I can't see it all yet, but I have Publicity, therefore, would be a huge mistake in all interests. No, no, Sir suspicion. I think the better plan will be to hold out against the inspector's hint, at any rate for a time. It's clear Jaffray; if this thing is ever to be traced, the tracing will have to be done quietenough what he means. What he wants is to be spared the trouble of having to ly, under the surface, and altogether apart from any coronar's court." He rose as he said this and made as solve the mystery of the weapon, and somebody seems to want to help him. Who's that somebody?"

if to leave the room, and when he reached the door he tarmed and said: "I can't imagine." "Bractly. Muther can I at property.

and in the state of the state o

Do you think really that Mr. Bor putting it bluntly, it means that so derham has had that letter?" 'Unquestionably I do, and, what is long as you don't speak he daren't wy more, he means us to understand that to make you unless he will act upon it if I make it neces-

te make you unless—unless, mind yeu, he can get some definite, positive evi-dence. You needn't bother yourself one All persons requiring goods in my line will save money by calling on me, as they will find my prices away down below the lowest sary for him. I will go to the inques and hear what transpires, and then I will have a talk with Gifford. I must little bit about the thing yet, then prove this by calling. but when he comes, as he will, of course, you can just say that you wouldn't think of doing anything, be-

speak plainly to him." "He knows," said Beryl. cause some skulking coward has written as an anonymous letter what a newspa "How do you mean?" asked the bar Beryl told him what Mr. Gifford had said to her about the absence of dust on the dagger and the significant way he

as an anonymous lever what a newspa-per penny a iner might kint for the purpose of gebing up a senation, and if-excuse my giving you a fint--if you'll put et a light grandee manner and tell him you are suggetied he should let himself be fooled by an a good dealt to debar the, " Sir Jaffray listened with a gathering

even then," he said. "Incee men con't carry about faces like open books. I'll speak to Gifford and see what happens at the inquest. Meantime try to think I am really and honestly troubled to have

"This is gil very distantatul to me, Mr. Gifford," sold fir Juliony after he had thought over the other's suggestion. "I've no doubt it is, Sir Jaffray," re-jurned his companion shortly, "but the piternative is an immediate waveaut for He stood for a moment near her, as Lady Walcote's arrest on the charge of

"But I object very strongly to any course that antalls this decel and false-hood. I have no right to put this indig-hity upon Miss Leycester. If she ware constitued?"

"But what do you support to gain by heeping up this thing now that it is

"Time, Sir Jaffray, which is everything. Let us put the thing plainly to Miss Leycester. I know what she'll

Sir Jaffrey assented to Gifferd went over the whole ground with Baryl, telling her peecisely what he had told the baronet and leaving her to decide. Without a moment's hesitation she decided in favor of stand-

ing by what they had done. "I don't like the "eception, Baryl," "I don't have the "coeption, Bery!," mid fir Jagmay at the obse. "When Mr. Boyderham comes to question you, you will be placed in a most awkward fir. But I will do this: I will consent to saying nothing for three days—no longer. Then, whatever happens, the facts shall be told." It was left so, but there was no nee

for even so long a delay, for the part day brought a startling development. The inspector came in the morning and by his desire saw Besyl and Sib Jaffray together. Mr. Gifford was pres-

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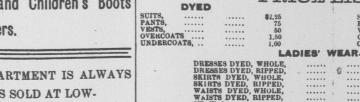
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