

THE MYSTERY OF MARTHA WARNE.

I have not told my wife. If I did she would not believe me. If she thought that I was serious she would become alarmed lest I be about to lose my reason. When she reads this she will have no idea that it was I who wrote it. I have not told my friends. I have told no one. I do not even hope to be believed. Yet it is absolutely necessary for my own peace of mind that I should take the world into my confidence. By doing so I am well aware that I shall only succeed in making a very mysterious circumstance seem yet more mysterious. I cannot help that. I believe that it is my duty to tell what I have to tell in as few words as possible, and be done with it. I do so. Those who scoff at it as fact may relish it as fiction. In either case my mind will be relieved of an almost intolerable burden.

Of myself I need say little. I am a physician, and have a large practice. I reside in the city of Montreal, the commercial metropolis of the Dominion of Canada. I have lived there for over twenty years. I am married and have a family. I know that I am generally respected and esteemed, both by my professional brethren and by the different classes of society. I have, during the twenty years or more that I have lived in this city, accumulated a considerable fortune, saved out of the returns which a good and ever-increasing practice has brought in to me. I think I need say no more of myself nor of my position; they but very slightly affect the story which I have to tell. Let me proceed.