

the next moment I would say to myself it is preposterous; he is no such man. There are many ways by which this paper might have got into other hands. He may have lent it to Bradley; or it may have fallen from his window; or he may have lost it from his pocket. Why should he have called my attention to Bradley's house? Besides, he has no beard.

On the subject of his beard, it did not at first occur to me that he might have worn a false one, but it did finally, and I realized, very soon afterward, what I now regarded as a very suspicious circumstance.

It was about midnight that Henry Collins told me that Mr. Bradley had been in but a few minutes. I now remembered that the body was cold and rigid when I first went in, and I hastened away to meet the surgeon who had made the examination five minutes later.

I had the luck to find him soon, and in reply to my inquiry he stated that Bradley must have been dead two hours when he was called.

"Have the detectives found any clue?" he asked.

"Not that I am aware of," I replied, and took my leave.

My first step now was to go to an establishment in which Collins was employed and inquire for him. I did so, and was told that he had asked and obtained leave of absence to visit Trenton. I next started for his house, which was half a mile distant, carefully looking up and down every street I crossed. I had made half the distance when I caught a glimpse of the very man I was looking for.

He was coming toward me on one of the cross streets, showing that he had come directly from the house. He carried a valise, and by his side walked a small, rough-looking man whom I did not know, and with whom he was conversing earnestly. I went a few steps to meet them, and was within a few yards of them before Collins saw me.

"Ah, how are you, Mr. Collins," I said.

He started visibly, but on recognizing me seemed to regain his composure and answered my salutation. He would have passed on, but I detained him by passing in front of him and opening a conversation.

"Going traveling," said I.

"Yes; to New Haven."

"Wouldn't it be just as well to go to Trenton?" I asked, significantly.

He turned pale, and in a voice that quivered perceptibly said:

"Great Heaven, Mr. Whitmire, what do you mean now?"

"I mean that you and your friend must go to the station with me."

With a look of despair on his white face that I shall never forget, he dropped his valise and staggered a few steps to an awning post, which he held to for support.

At the same moment his companion turned to dart away, but, luckily, two men, who had just stopped on the sidewalk to talk, stood directly in his path, and his movements became confused. I reached him in one bound and seized him by the collar, warning him not to resist. He was thoroughly cowed, while Collins had too little strength left him to escape.

In five minutes I marched them into the station, together with the valise, and had them locked up in separate cells. I then told the captain the whole story. He was disposed to think, at first, that I had made a blunder; but on questioning the two prisoners, and especially on examining the valise and finding a large sum of money in it, he concluded that I had caught the right men, and so distanced the regular detectives.

It proved to be so, and the two men were duly convicted of murder on evidence that was beyond all dispute. Indeed, when Collins lost all hope of escaping the gallows, he was so broken down that he made a full confession, giving substantially the following account of the crime:

The stories of Bradley's great wealth had first put it into his head to rob him. By watching for a long time from a back window he had discovered the nature of the fastenings by which the back door and gates were secured. He was not bold enough to undertake the task alone, but he knew a certain bad character named Revern, to whom he confided his scheme, describing the fastenings on Bradley's gate and door, and asking him if he thought he could force them.

Revern said he could, and readily entered into the plot. They went to work a little after dark one night, when they knew that Bradley had gone out; but the fastenings of the rear door resisted much longer than they had expected.