

certain extent; but now and then, when her name was mentioned, hot words would be exchanged. It seems that this had gone on for some months, when one of them, Mr. Preston, disappeared. He had been last seen with Mr. Edmonds, and as he failed to turn up, the latter was arrested on suspicion of foul play. At the preliminary examination it was proved that they had been seen quarrelling near Bout de L'Isle, whither they had gone fishing. Edmonds acknowledged this, but said that Preston had left him on account of the quarrel and returned to the city. As no one had seen Preston, Edmonds was committed for trial.

"By the way the girl spoke, I soon saw that she was head-over-ears in love with Edmonds, and as she was pretty and in trouble, she enlisted my sympathy. I told her that until Preston was found, Edmonds could not be convicted, and promised to help her to the best of my ability to clear her lover of the suspicions now held against him. She hinted that, as Preston knew her feelings, he might have gone off on purpose to fasten suspicion on Edmonds, and insisted upon my going to New York and other places in search of him. Now, there was some plausibility in this, as Preston was known to have had money on him, more than one usually takes on fishing excursions. So, after hunting in vain through the books of the various steamship companies, I started for New York.

"I hadn't been there two days before I received a telegram from my assistant, saying that Preston's murdered body had been found in the river, near Bout de L'Isle. This shattered my faith in Edmonds; so pitying the girl, and wondering why men will commit any crime for love, I returned home. I was scarcely home an hour, when in rushed my young lady again in a most woeful plight.

" 'Oh! Mr. K——,' she cried, 'they have found Mr. Preston, and George is to be tried for his murder.'

"Well, sir, I was nonplussed. I believed in my heart that Edmonds was guilty, and there stood the girl, like a young tigress, storming at the imbecility of mankind in thinking her lover a murderer. I tried to shake her faith as much as I dared, telling her what a terrible thing jealousy is, and hinting that a man might well think a crime no obstacle to winning such a person as she. But she would not hear me out. She flew into a passion, and told me I was a fool and no detective, or I would have known her George was incapable of crime. And then she burst into tears, saying her family had deserted her, and that there was no one to help her or stir himself in Edmonds' behalf.

"I do not mind a woman's storm as long as it is only wind and thunder and lightning, but when it rains I'm no use. You'd think I was sugar, water melts me so easily. So what did I do but promise to move heaven and earth to save Edmonds, and stake my reputation upon the success of my endeavours. She had offered me a liberal reward, but I was not prepared for the reward she gave me when I promised this. She jumped up out of her chair, and, flinging her arms around my neck, kissed me. Yes, sir, she did; but you are the first person I have told that to.

"That afternoon I went down to the inquest on Preston's body. The coroner was just examining the doctor, who made the *post-mortem* examination, when I got there. The doctor said that Preston had been struck with a stone, a small piece of which had remained in the wound. He produced the piece, which the jury examined, reluctantly on the part of some, and it was given to the coroner for deposit in court. I was also permitted to look at it, which I did, listlessly, and from mere habit. It was a piece of limestone, with what looked like a shell in it. It cast no light upon the murder. This was all plain enough, and considering that the body had been found near where Preston and Edmonds had last been seen together, the case seemed hopeless for Edmonds, against whom a verdict of wilful murder was returned. After the inquest, a strange desire to see the body came over me. The doctor was willing to show it to me, and together we entered the morgue, where it lay.

"We spoke for a time about the articles found on the body, which had evidently been robbed, the probable time that had elapsed since death, and then the instrument.

" 'A bad case,' said the doctor, 'and it will go hard with Edmonds. But why should he rifle the body?'

" 'Probably to put people off the track,' I replied.

" 'The blow must have been a terrible one,' said the physician, 'for no light blow would have broken the rock with which he was struck.'

"I thanked the doctor for his kindness, left the place, and proceeded to the prison in which Edmonds was confined. The warden knew me, and admitted me to Edmonds' cell, where I found the poor fellow in a dreadful state.

"All his friends had deserted him, as was natural under the circumstances, and he was broken down by their refusal to believe him innocent. He told me his story readily enough, although I had not told him in whose employ I was, but I learnt nothing new, except that the fishing excursion had been hastily arranged; indeed, that Preston, who had been going to the Island on a geological tour, for he was a bit of a scientist, met Edmonds at Vincent's wharf, and accepted an invitation to go to Bout de L'Isle instead.

" 'Did you know he had money on him?' I asked.

" 'Yes, he said that he had just received some conscience-money from an absconding clerk, but did not tell me how much.'

"This was all I learned, so telling him the result of the inquest, and urging him to plead self-defence if he had really killed Preston, I left.

"For days I haunted the Island for a clue to the murder, but in vain. Nor could I discover the whereabouts of the absconding clerk to verify Edmonds' statement about the money, and thus in some measure authenticate his other assertions, for he still declared that he knew nothing of the murder. I would have given up my search in despair, only that I remembered my promise to Miss Gordon, and was too proud to own myself baffled. Besides, she haunted my office day after day, until my wife began to get jealous. Poor young lady, how pale she grew during those days of 'hope deferred!' I would sometimes