

the tragedy were present now, made the anguish all the more acute.

"I helped Mr. Whitmore into a chair," Beard proceeded in a sobbing voice. "And I heard him say, 'Well, I guess I'm done for!'"

"Mrs. Collins then came over and threw her arms about his neck, kissing him and imploring him not to die. Ward joined the group, and with tears running down his cheeks, said:

"'I fired the shot. But I meant to kill that dog'—pointing to Collins. 'I meant to avenge the insult to my sister. I hope the wound won't prove serious.'"

"There is no doubt that Ward had wrenched the pistol out of Collins's hand and meant to kill him. But Mr. Whitmore also had tried to get the weapon. And in the darkness there was a mix-up in which Collins managed to slip away after he lost the weapon. When Ward fired, the bullet struck Whitmore. That is the truth of the matter," Beard added imploringly.

Mrs. Collins had buried her face in her handkerchief. She was sobbing convulsively. Miss Burden also was crying, but silently. The coroner and the police officials had hung breathlessly on each word uttered by Beard. Everything he said had carried conviction.