

hand were badly bruised. The fingernails were blackened and looked very ugly.

"That did not strike me as significant until after I suspected him. But the bruised fingers became mighty relevant then.

"The way the crime happened was this: Mrs. Forrest had gone to the ice-box, she was bending over it and holding it open. She was struck from behind by Farnam. She fell. But he, before he struck, had braced himself by grasping the edge of the chest with his left hand.

"As Mary fell she let the cover to the ice-box fall. It smashed the two fingers of Farnam's left hand. Which explains that part of it.

"Now for the next. You will notice that there are still traces over Farnam's right eye of a long, vertical bruise. Memory of that bruise comes back to me in a flood after I once suspected him. The explanation of it is simple.

"You will remember, Jim, that I made you rehearse the crime with me. And that as you were supposed to fall—simulating Mrs. Forrest—I turned swiftly, in supposed terror, grabbed the screen door open. . . .

"And the chances are ninety-nine out of a hundred that a man in such circumstances and