

stone; but a little further on, the writing would be fainter, as if the fingers failed, from want of strength, to perform the task.

For two hours and more we pored over this message from the dead, and at last we were able, with the assistance of a microscope which I had among my surveying instruments, to make out these letters:

Murder  
by Robert Sutton

We looked at each other silently, when we had made this astounding discovery. Each of us could easily supply the few letters that were defaced in this extraordinary manuscript, and no time was to be lost in following out the clue and arresting the murderer. In our minds there was not the shadow of a doubt that we had got on the right track at last. We had both seen Sutton that day in the village, but not to speak to him, and the constable had noticed him driving off homeward about dusk. We went immediately to the Sheriff, who lived only a few houses distant from the inn, and told him of the remarkable revelation. At first I think he was inclined to laugh at us, but we soon made the message as intelligible to him as it had been to us: and then, he put a revolver in his pocket and told us to wait for a few minutes whilst he ordered his buggy to be got ready.

It was past eleven o'clock when we drove off to Sutton's place, which was only two miles from the village, and the night was exceedingly dark and rain was threatening, but the road was good and quite hard at that season, and it did not take us more than twenty minutes to reach the turn in the highway where we had decided to stop. We got out of the buggy and tied the horse to a tree a few feet from the road and then made for the mill, from which we could see the glimmer of light.

The mill was some fifty paces off the road, at the edge of a small stream which afforded the necessary water power. Sutton had no relatives in that part of the country, and the only inmate of the house besides himself was an old woman he had hired in the village. We heard no sound whatever about the premises, except the splash of the water from the mill sluice: and the only sign of life was the solitary light burning in an upper room which we supposed to be Sutton's. The constable proposed to reconnoitre and climbed a tree which grew up against the side of the mill, and overlooked the room.

"We're just in time," he said hurriedly, when he got down and rejoined us. "he's packing up his clothes in a big leather valise—about to quit the country, I guess. What's best to be done?"

"Wait till he comes out," replied the Sheriff, laconically, as he took out his revolver and tried it: "there's only one door and as he cannot suspect anything at present, he will not escape us."

Twenty minutes went by, though they seemed to me the longest hour I had ever passed in my life; but at last we were rewarded by hearing him step down stairs and show himself at the door, with a lantern in his hand. In an instant he was hand-cuffed and a prisoner. So surprised was he that he dropped the lantern instantaneously and

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