

Here was a discovery that settled the identity of the murderer, as far as my mind was concerned: although I was forced to admit that in a court of Justice it would not be strong enough to establish a presumption of guilt. It seemed clear to me that Walters was the man; but the motive for the deed was involved in as much mystery as ever. Indeed, from the first, this absence of motive for the commission of so grave a crime had been the great stumbling-block in the way of my investigations, and even with the evidence which I had in my possession, I was sometimes almost tempted to doubt the connexion of Walters with the murder.—Whether guilty or not he was at least for the present out of the reach of justice, and it did not appear that anything further could be accomplished.

In the meantime, I remained in the city and resumed my studies, after writing to the deceased's father, to tell him of the discovery I had made. I requested him to write to me at once if anything further transpired, or if Walters returned to the neighbourhood, for I knew that, with the fatality that attends all murderers, he would surely return to the scene of his crime. I am not prepared to account for the strange fascination which causes men to tread thus on the verge of danger. I only record a fact, which every observer of human nature knows to be correct.

Nearly a year had passed since the murder, when, one morning in looking over the newspaper, I saw the name of the barque *Eleanor* among the list of arrivals. In the course of the day I went down to the vessel, and found to my surprise that the captain was an old acquaintance of my own. He invited me into his cabin, and, knowing him to be a discreet man, I explained to him in a few words the object of my visit. He told me Charles Walters had been with him ever since he left St. John—that he was a first-rate hand, and the last man that would be suspected of murder. He was moody and silent at times, but that proved nothing. He also told me that he had left the vessel that morning and said he was going to the country.

"Have you a sailor here by the name of Paul Thorold?" I enquired.

"Yes; he shipped with me at the same time as Walters."

"His name was on the knife which I found in the well."

"Was it indeed? that is strange! Perhaps I had better call him and see if he ever lent Walters a knife, such as you describe?"

"Do so," I replied.

Thorold came aft at the captain's summons, and, on being questioned, said that he once had a sheath knife such as the one I found, and that he had lent it to Walters, who said he had lost it, and gave him a new one in its place. The captain appeared much surprised at this information, but said he could not believe that so good-natured a man as Walters would be guilty of so great a crime.

In a few days I received a letter from old Mr. White, stating that Walters had returned to the neighbourhood, and advising me to hasten to the place.

I expected this information, and hastened to obey the summons with all possible speed. I found that Walters had called on the widow of the murdered man, and she, having no suspicion of what we knew, had received him in a friendly manner. Even the father of the deceased could not believe that the young man, who seemed so open and friendly, had been his son's assassin.

Under the plea of ill health I took up my abode in the vicinity, and determined to watch the course of events. I knew that in a few weeks something would probably transpire to enable me to pursue my enquiries further.

Week after week passed on, but nothing worthy of note came under my observation. I saw Walters frequently, and he certainly did not look to me like a great criminal, or even like a person capable of committing such a crime as murder. Under ordinary circumstances I should never have suspected him; but there was the evidence of the knife—how was that to be got over?

In the meantime Walters continued his visits at Mrs. White's, and it was evident to me that he was not regarded by her with an unfavourable eye. I became sensible that something must be done speedily, or this perplexing affair would be further complicated by new entanglements of a character that would make further investigations impossible. I impressed this view of the case strongly on old Mr. White, and we decided on a course of action that would be likely to bring things to a crisis. In fact we resolved on an experiment, which could only fail in case Walters was entirely innocent, and which, in the event of his being guilty, must succeed.

The day after we resolved on this a fresh discovery awaited me. There was a fair or cattle show in the neighbourhood, and every person for miles around was there. I attended, and found that Walters was there also. He was well dressed and wore, I noticed particularly, a very flashy waistcoat. Several times in the course of the day I got near enough to him to examine the buttons on that waistcoat. If I had any doubt before as to the identity of the assassin, all doubt vanished after that inspection. The buttons on the waistcoat were of the same size and pattern as the one I found in the lane, on the spot where White was murdered!

I hastened to communicate this fact to old Mr. White, and we resolved to carry out our plan at once, modified of course to suit this fresh discovery.

I communicated with one of the local magistrates, and made such information as was sufficient to obtain a warrant for the arrest of Walters. Two constables were intrusted with its execution, and were to act under my direction. Walters was expected to be at the house of