

the cunning detective had a most decided opinion, nevertheless, of that Granger street affair, and it was far different from the views entertained by any of the others, and by the Chief of Police in particular.

In sitting all the circumstances which had any possible bearing upon such a case, Jarmyn first sought for a motive to inspire the act. He could see none on Edgcomb's part, for the commission of such a crime. He could not have expected to find a large sum of money on Mancel Tewkes' person, and the mere fact of having been discharged by him would never have incited thoughts of murder, he argued. He regarded Edgcomb as either a victim of circumstantial evidence, or of a plot to throw the responsibility of the crime upon his shoulders. As to circumstantial evidence, Jarmyn was a man of too much good sense to be deceived by 'illusions,' as he termed them. Therein is where he differed from the majority of his craft, for he did not accept such evidence when it could not be substantiated by positive and convincing proof. He was honest in his convictions and his profession. He recognised the fact that every man is amenable to the law for his actions, but that he should be held accountable for unlawful acts by direct and positive proof, not by mere compromising circumstances. He was disposed to give every person his due, even those against whom his suspicions were aroused, and whom he was shadowing with fidelity; but not the slightest act, movement, word or look escaped him, and when once he had established by undisputable proof the fact that he was a criminal, or when the law had pronounced him such, he would pounce upon him as mercilessly as a cat upon a mouse, and his eyes would gleam with the same satisfaction, for he loathed a criminal as he loathed a snake.

Jarmyn was inclined to believe that the evidence against Edgcomb was wholly the result of a design or a conspiracy. Underneath the coarse exterior of the mantle of compromising evidence which the police had woven around the prisoner, his practised eye seemed to detect the fine handiwork of some one who had committed the crime, and had sought to thus quietly conceal his own connection with it. As yet it was indefinite. He alone felt inclined to give credence to the story which the prisoner had told of having received the money in such a mysterious manner, of finding the lost message, and the way in which he accounted for being upon the scene of the murder. 'It is all perfectly plausible,' he argued, 'and if true, it supports the theory of a conspiracy. If it is such, then surely Edgcomb must have an enemy lurking somewhere near.' And he kept a close watch upon the case, determined to locate that enemy if one existed. At different times he made inquiries among the employees of the telegraph office, but he failed to find any one who had ought to say against Edgcomb. Thus matters remained for several months. The detective was puzzled to his wits' end to find anything tangible to work upon, but he persistently held to his theory and purpose. Finally one day, as he sat with the Chief of Police, conversing in an informal manner, the subject of Edgcomb's approaching trial was touched upon. The Chief was congratulating himself and his bureau upon the speedy manner in which this murderer had been apprehended. 'For a case which promised to be a most complicated one it was the neatest piece of work I have ever known,' he said, 'and thanks to Director-in-Chief Coulter of the telegraph office, or we might be looking for the murderer still.'

'How so?' asked Jarmyn.

'Well, confidentially, he gave us the tip. That fellow is as keen as a carpenter's broad-axe, no mistake about it. You see, the morning after the murder he sent me this note—I have never shown it to you before—and I lost no time in taking him in.' Here the Chief drew from a drawer in his desk the note which Coulter had written him advising Edgcomb's arrest, and passed it over to Jarmyn for perusal.

Jarmyn took the paper and examined it critically. He did not verbally dissent from the Chief's observation that Edgcomb was the right man beyond the shadow of a doubt, but mentally he did. The note, however, appeared to suggest to his mind the very clue which he had so long and hopelessly searched for, but he knew

that he would have to be cautious, for it was evident that the man Coulter and the Chief of Police were on the best of terms. The more he thought of it the more it became apparent that Coulter was mixed up in the case. 'Who could have made such haste to denounce a brother workman to the authorities other than the man who was most interested himself in having him denounced? Was there not a trace of anxiety or of overdoing the thing in that note?' he questioned himself. 'Is it not also probable that he is the man who sent the anonymous letter, with the twenty-dollar bill, to Edgcomb? And had he a motive for committing this crime?' he queried, further. 'Let's see. Well, he seems to have stepped into the murdered man's shoes very easily. I don't know much about the position or the nature of the man, but we will not lose sight of this fact for a while, as there is something very obvious about it.' He mused long and earnestly over the matter. He did not positively assert that Coulter was guilty, but he was suspicious, and, deeming it expedient to keep an eye on him, he engaged a room where he might have a convenient point of observation.

Later on, when the trial commenced, Jarmyn was an interested attendant whenever his duties would permit. The brilliant speeches of the lawyers had no attraction for him. In his original way of coining expressions, he would say: 'It's only dole's-bane; it poisons the mind with prejudice, unsettles the judgment, and sets it to rattling like a weather-vane on a church spire.' But to all the evidence he gave the closest attention, and when Coulter took the stand there was not a word, look, or movement which escaped him. He followed the cross-examination with the keenest interest, and when Coulter had finished he found his suspicions still more deeply rooted. At last, when Humphrey Davids in his closing argument provoked the dignity of the court by saying, 'If I occupied the seat upon the bench and saw such a palpable conspiracy, I would discharge the prisoner and order the arrest of—' Jarmyn lowered his eyes to the floor and exclaimed sotto voce: 'Amen!' well knowing whom the lawyer had in mind.

Jarmyn also imagined that he saw a collusion between the principal witnesses for the prosecution; Coulter, Pintard, and Louis Carroll. When the latter testified, the falsity of the evidence appeared to him as transparent as a fabric of gauze. There was something clumsy, awkward, and far-fetched, in his practical eye, which looked like a connivance. As she (Chloe) left the room, Jarmyn followed her, determined to sift the matter, but he was cunningly foiled, for she stepped into a carriage which stood in waiting, and was rapidly driven away. Then commenced a systematic search for the driver of the vehicle, but he never succeeded in finding him. Not being able to trace this witness, he then turned his attention to Kve, in a futile attempt to discover his whereabouts.

After the tragic ending of the trial which resulted in Edgcomb's escape, Jarmyn was summoned immediately into the presence of his chief for consultation. He was peremptorily instructed to locate Edgcomb's family, and to bring in the delinquent, dead or alive. Although he had many misgivings as to the justness of the verdict, yet his duty was imperative. He was an agent of the law, and it had declared Edgcomb guilty. There was no alternative but to keep faith with the law and to execute its decrees, for Jarmyn had such an honourable regard for the duties devolving upon him that had the fugitive been his own brother he would have delivered him to the authorities could he have laid hands upon him, and in doing so would have said: 'I am an officer; an officer can have no choice; the law claims him and I must obey; here my responsibility ends.'

It was a matter of some difficulty to locate the lodgings of this unfortunate family, but Jarmyn knew just how to proceed. In the afternoon of the following day he appeared before his chief with the desired information, but was told that it was too late as Edgcomb's clothes had just been brought in with a note attached addressed to his wife; that he had ended the matter by throwing himself into the lake.

'What do you think of it?' queried the Chief, as he tossed the farcical note to Jarmyn for an opinion.

'It is about an even guess that he has, and that he hasn't,' the latter replied, upon reading it.

'Quite probable that he has,' suggested the Chief; 'that note sounds like the pitiful squeak of a rat in the terrier's jaws. He knew that he had to die, but he wanted to cheat something or somebody; and, finding that he could not cheat the jury, he concluded to cheat the gallows.'

Jarmyn was silent after the Chief had delivered himself of his convictions. He was weighing in his mind the probabilities of the matter, whether Edgcomb had, in reality, destroyed himself, or whether he had adopted this as a ruse to elude the police. The Chief waited, indifferently, for the detective's reply; finally it came: 'I don't believe that Edgcomb is dead any more than I believe him guilty of murder.'

The Chief looked very much surprised, 'Jarmyn, I don't understand you,' he said; 'what shall I infer from your remark?'

'That Jarmyn thinks he is neither dead nor guilty,' the detective calmly replied, looking steadily at the Chief with his keen gray eyes.

'Jarmyn, I have always considered you a man of most excellent judgment, but I confess that I am greatly surprised by your declaration. How long have you held such an opinion?'

'Never had any other, sir.'

'It is strange that I have never known it before.'

'Not necessarily; we have never talked much upon the subject, and I had nothing to do with the case. Why should I intrude my opinion when I knew that you held a contrary one?'

'Yes; and I still stick to it.'

'Well, you may be right and I wrong.'

'I think that is about the size of it, Jarmyn; but tell me what theory you hold, and, in your opinion, who killed Mancel Tewkes if Edgcomb did not?'

'I am not prepared to say. I never charge any one with a crime when I cannot substantiate it with an abundance of proof.'

'But you may have an opinion nevertheless.'

'Possibly, but none to offer.'

The Chief of Police frowned as he saw how determined Jarmyn was to evade his questions; but he knew his sterling worth and peculiarities, and he did not deem it prudent to reprimand him. 'I'll let him alone,' he thought, 'and if there is any game abroad he'll surely come home with it in his mouth. But he could not comprehend how Jarmyn could entertain such ideas; they were so totally at variance with his own.'

'Now, Jarmyn,' returned the Chief, 'the question before us is whether Edgcomb has destroyed himself or not. I am inclined to think that he has, but you hold a different opinion. There are the identical clothes that he wore—even to the hat, you see. A man could not go very far in a large city like this, divested of hat and clothing, without being noticed. It is not probable that he would have gone directly home, as he had no means of knowing that we were ignorant of the location.'

'Very true; but he may have friends who would harbour him, and, besides, there is one great fact wanting—a cause, or a motive for his self-destruction. A deduction of facts a priori is as necessary to the success of a detective's work as to the scientific theorist's. Every man's acts are impelled by some motive, and he who fails to grasp this idea in his search for the mysterious will only grope like a blind man without hope of ever seeing a ray of light ahead.'

'But in our affairs we are frequently forced to jump at conclusions.'

'Yes; and illusions, too. We often think we have caught a 'possum when it turns out to be a skunk. No, sir, Edgcomb is not dead, depend upon it. He had no cause to commit suicide. It is well enough to let the public think so, and to let it be understood that you think so yourself; it will render his apprehension all the easier.'

'Well, Jarmyn, for once we differ. Nevertheless we will take the necessary precautions to capture him if he is yet alive. I will send some men to search the house and keep watch of the locality. You can proceed to the spot where these garments were found and make an examination of the surroundings. I will have the officer who brought them in accompany you. I think he mentioned that it was near a large brewery;

at any rate you will have no trouble in finding the place under his guidance.'

As Jarmyn nodded assent there came a sound of laughter from an adjoining room.

'Let's see what's the racket,' said the Chief, motioning Jarmyn to follow; and the two men passed into the room from whence the sound had come.

'Ha, ha, ha,' again rang out a chorus of voices as they entered.

'He floundered about in the dark and yelled like a Sioux Indian,' were the first words which fell upon their ears, and which was spoken by a man with a blue coat and brass buttons.

'It must be something very entertaining,' said the Chief. 'What is it all about?'

'Officer Mulligan's bath,' answered several voices, simultaneously.

'Let's have the story,' demanded the Chief.

The story, which was then retold for the benefit of the Chief of Police, was listened to attentively by Jarmyn. It proved to be the experience of the two officers in following Grit McGuire, which resulted in Officer Mulligan being thrown into the river, and of his rescue from his perilous situation. The Chief seemed very much amused over the affair, but Jarmyn appeared to be anxious for the details. He wanted to know where they had last seen McGuire, over what route the chase was made, and a description of his person, as near as possible.

The officer gave the desired information, adding incidentally that the man carried something in his arms which he could not make out. 'He had probably been up to his old tricks—had burglarized a house and was making off with the plunder.'

'Probably,' said the detective, as he swung open the outer door to take his departure; but it was an empty remark, without a mental acquiescence.

As he proceeded on his way, Jarmyn's mind seemed to be occupied with the adventure just related. 'It may have been Edgcomb after all,' he soliloquized, 'there's no telling what cunning schemes will enter a man's head while being pursued by an officer. He had evidently secured a change of clothing somewhere, and was making for the lake with the purpose of leaving the old ones where they would be found. From the moment he was first seen and followed, he kept his course steadily toward the lake; that is one support to the theory. Then had it been Grit McGuire, as they say, he would never have shouted his name in such a manner. No; Grit McGuire is an old offender and as cunning as a fox. He knows better than to do such a thing. He would much rather the police would think him a thousand miles away; but they are too stupid to see through all this. I'll keep my ideas to myself. Time will show whether I am right or wrong.'

At length they reached the brewery where Edgcomb was at work. As they came to the arcade the officer stopped, and looking through into the busy establishment, said to Jarmyn: 'Wait a moment; I want to find the lad who gave me the clothes and have him show me where he found them.'

Just as the officer was about to turn into the arcade, a boy came out of the office and gave a shrill whistle, a signal to the foreman that he was wanted within.

'There he is now; I'll call him,' said the officer. He did so. Upon approaching he questioned him: 'Where did you find that bundle which you turned over to me this morning; down near the lake, eh?'

'Yes, sir, on the beach near the water.'

'That's near enough for all purposes. Then, show this gentleman the place, and whenever you get arrested for going in swimming send for me and I'll help you out.'

The youth smiled and led the way. Under his guidance Jarmyn soon reached the spot where the bundle was found, and made an examination of the locality. He saw footprints in the sand leading from the spot where the clothing was found to the water's edge. 'They were peculiar footprints, and indicated that the right shoe was run over at the heel. He then searched for traces of returning footprints up and down the beach, but none were to be seen. He knew that Edgcomb had either climbed the break-water and leaped into the lake or had crept along over the rough stone to a