

# THE OLD MAN IN THE CORNER



## VI.—THE LISSON GROVE MYSTERY.

BY THE BARONESS ORCZY.

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

THE OLD MAN IN THE CORNER	Who explains the mystery to—	NICHOLSON ... ..	A charwoman.
THE LADY JOURNALIST...	Who re-tells it to the ROYAL readers.	MESSRS. SNOW AND PATTERSON ... ..	Solicitors.
MR. DYKE ... ..	A crippled old man.	MR. PARLETT... ..	Their clerk.
MISS AMELIA DYKE ... ..	His daughter.	WILFRED POAD ... ..	Manager of a motor-car depôt.
MRS. MARSH ... ..	A neighbour of the Dyke's.	CONSTABLE TURNER ... ..	Who was called in after Mr. Dyke's murder.
MR. AND MRS. PITT ... ..	Other neighbours.	MR. AND MRS. OGDEN... ..	Witnesses in the murder case.
ALFRED WYATT .. ..	<i>Fiancé</i> of Amelia Dyke.		

### CHAPTER I.

THE man in the corner ordered another glass of milk, and timidly asked for a second cheese-cake at the same time.

"I am going down to the Marylebone Police Court, to see those people brought up before the 'Beak,'" he remarked.

"What people?" I queried.

"What people!" he exclaimed, in the greatest excitement. "You don't mean to say that you have not studied the *Lisson Grove Mystery*?"

I had to confess that my knowledge on that subject was of the most superficial character.

"One of the most interesting cases that has cropped up in recent years," he said, with an indescribable look of reproach.

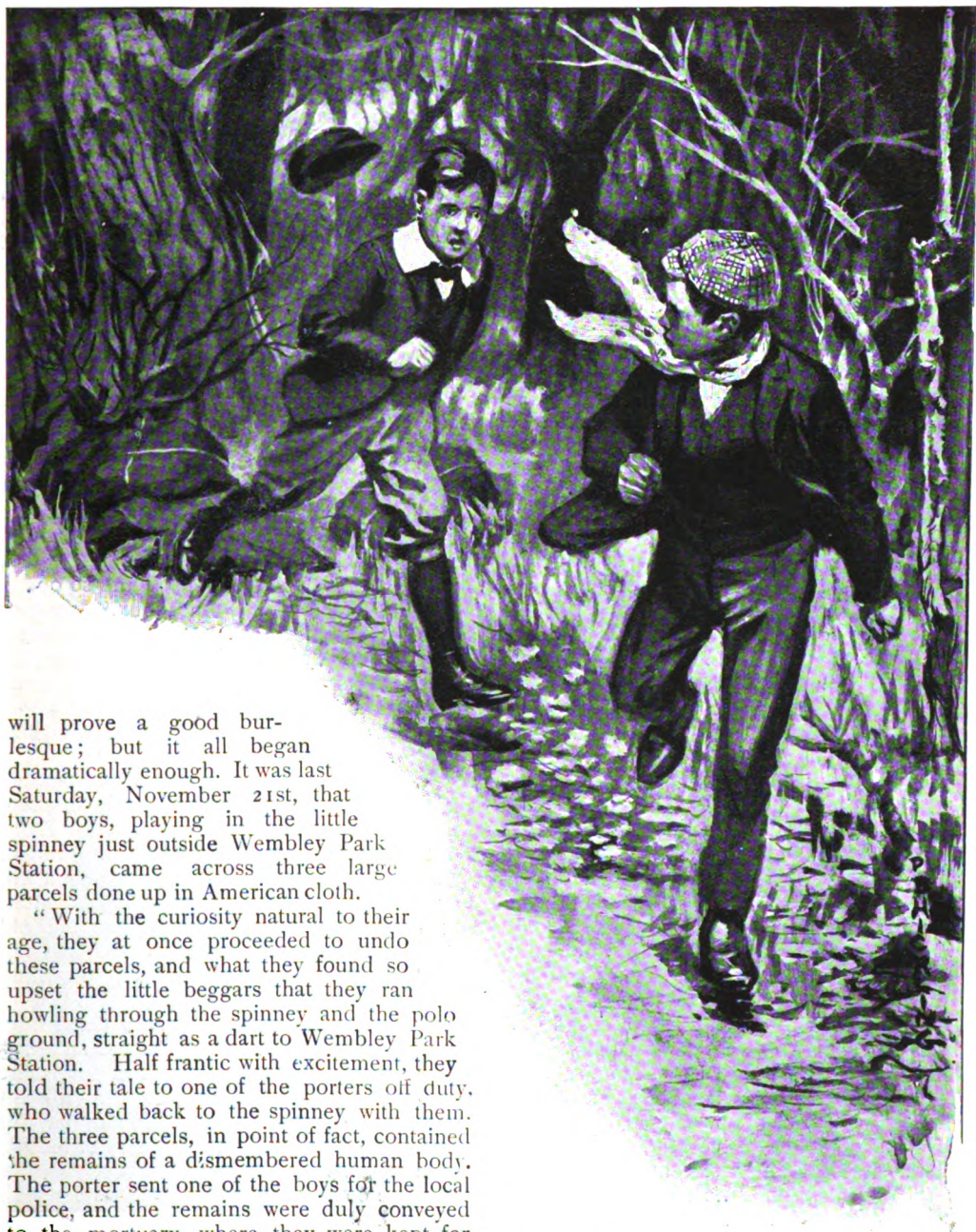
"Perhaps. I did not study it in the papers because I preferred to hear *you* tell me all about it," I said.

"Oh, if that's it," he replied, as he settled himself down in his corner like a great bird after the rain, "then you showed more sense than lady journalists usually possess. I can, of course, give you a far clearer account than the newspapers have done; as for the police—well! I never saw such a muddle as they are making of this case."

"I daresay it is a peculiarly difficult one," I retorted, for I am ever a champion of that hard-working department.

"H'm!" he said. "so, so—it is a tragedy in a prologue and three acts. I am going down this afternoon to see the curtain fall for the third time on what, if I mistake not,

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will prove a good burlesque; but it all began dramatically enough. It was last Saturday, November 21st, that two boys, playing in the little spinney just outside Wembley Park Station, came across three large parcels done up in American cloth.

"With the curiosity natural to their age, they at once proceeded to undo these parcels, and what they found so upset the little beggars that they ran howling through the spinney and the polo ground, straight as a dart to Wembley Park Station. Half frantic with excitement, they told their tale to one of the porters off duty, who walked back to the spinney with them. The three parcels, in point of fact, contained the remains of a dismembered human body. The porter sent one of the boys for the local police, and the remains were duly conveyed to the mortuary, where they were kept for identification.

"Three days later—that is to say, on Tuesday, November 24th, Miss Amelia Dyke residing at Lisson Grove Crescent, returned from Edinburgh, where she had spent three or four days with a friend. She drove up from St. Pancras in a cab, and carried her small box up herself to the door

**"What they found so upset the little beggars that they ran howling through the spinney."**

of the flat, at which she knocked loudly and repeatedly—so loudly and so persistently, in fact, that the inhabitants of the neighbouring flats came out on to their respective landings to see what the noise was about.

"Miss Amelia Dyke was getting anxious, Her father, she said, must be seriously ill, or else why did he not come and open the door to her. Her anxiety, however, reached its culminating point when Mr. and Mrs. Pitt, who reside in the flat immediately beneath that occupied by the Dykes came forward with the alarming statement that, as a matter of fact, they had themselves been wondering if anything were wrong with old Mr. Dyke, as they had not heard any sound overhead for the last few days.

"Miss Amelia, now absolutely terrified, begged one of the neighbours to fetch either the police or a locksmith, or both. Mr. Pitt ran out at once, both police and locksmith were brought upon the scene, the door was forcibly opened, and amidst indescribable excitement Constable Turner, followed by Miss Dyke, who was faint and trembling with apprehension, effected an entrance into the flat.

"Everything in it was tidy and neat to a degree, all the fires were laid, the beds made, the floors were clean and washed, the brasses polished, only a slight, very slight layer of dust lay over everything, dust that could not have accumulated for more than a few days. The flat consisted of four rooms and a bathroom; in not one of them was there the faintest trace of old Mr. Dyke.

"In order fully to comprehend the consternation which all the neighbours felt at this discovery," continued the man in the corner, "you must understand that old Mr. Dyke was a helpless cripple; he had been a mining engineer in his young days, and a terrible blasting accident deprived him, at the age of forty, of both legs. They had been amputated just above the knee, and the unfortunate man—then a widower with one little girl—had spent the remainder of his life on crutches. He had a small—a very small—pension, which, as soon as his daughter Amelia was grown up, had enabled him to live in comparative comfort in the small flat in Lisson Grove Crescent.

"His misfortune, however, had left him terribly sensitive; he never could bear the looks of compassion thrown upon him, whenever he ventured out on his crutches, and even the kindest sympathy was positive torture to him. Gradually, therefore, as he got on in life, he took to staying more and more at home, and after awhile gave up going out altogether. By the time he was sixty-five years old and Miss Amelia a fine young woman of seven-and-twenty, old Dyke

had not been outside the door of his flat for at least five years.

"And yet, when Constable Turner aided by the locksmith entered the flat on that memorable November 24th, there was not a trace anywhere of the old man.

"Miss Amelia was in the last stages of despair, and at first she seemed far too upset and hysterical to give the police any coherent and definite information. At last, however, from amid the chaos of tears and of ejaculations, Constable Turner gathered the following facts:

"Miss Amelia had some great friends in Edinburgh whom she had long wished to visit, her father's crippled condition making this extremely difficult. A fortnight ago, however, in response to a very urgent invitation, she at last decided to accept it, but, in order to leave her father altogether comfortable, she advertised in the local paper for a respectable woman who would come to the flat every day and see to all the work, cook his dinner, make the bed, and so on.

"She had several applications in reply to this advertisement, and ultimately selected a very worthy-looking elderly person, who, for seven shillings a week, undertook to come daily from seven in the morning until about six in the afternoon, to see to all Mr. Dyke's comforts.

"Miss Amelia was very favourably impressed with this person's respectable and motherly appearance, and she left for Edinburgh by the 5.15 a.m. train on the morning of Thursday, November 19th, feeling confident that her father would be well looked after. She certainly had not heard from the old man while she was away, but she had not expected to hear unless, indeed, something had been wrong.

"Miss Amelia was quite sure that something dreadful had happened to her father, as he could not possibly have walked downstairs and out of the house alone; certainly his crutches were nowhere to be found, but this only helped to deepen the mystery of the old man's disappearance.

"The constable, having got thus far with his notes, thought it best to refer the whole matter at this stage to higher authority. He got from Miss Amelia the name and address of the charwoman, and then went back to the station.

"There, the very first news that greeted him was that the medical officer of the district had just sent round to the various police stations his report on the human remains found in Wembley Park the previous

Saturday: they had proved to be the dismembered body of an old man between sixty and seventy years of age, the immediate cause of whose death had undoubtedly been a violent blow on the back of the head with a heavy instrument, which had shattered the cranium. Expert examination further revealed the fact that deceased had had in early life both legs removed by a surgical operation just above the knee.

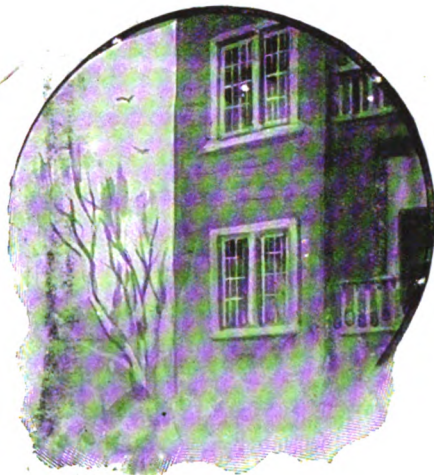
"That was the end of the prologue in the Lisson Grove tragedy," continued the man in the corner, after a slight and dramatic pause, "as far as the public was concerned. When the curtain was subsequently raised upon the first act, the situation had been considerably changed.

"The remains had been positively identified as those of old Mr. Dyke, and a charge of wilful murder had been brought against Alfred Wyatt, of no occupation, residing in Warlock Road, Lisson Grove, and against Amelia Dyke for complicity in the crime. They are the two people whom I am going to see this afternoon brought before the Beak at the Marylebone Police Court."

## CHAPTER II.

"Two very important bits of evidence, I must tell you, had come to light, on the first day of the inquest and had decided the police to make this double arrest.

"In the first place, according to one or two of the neighbours, who happened to know something of the Dyke household,



"Both Amelia and Wyatt waved their hands affectionately up towards the window."

Miss Amelia had kept company for some time with a young man named Alfred Wyatt: he was an electrical engineer, resided in the neighbourhood, and was some years younger than Miss Dyke. As he was known not to be very steady, it was generally supposed that the old man did not altogether approve of his daughter's engagement.

"Mrs. Pitt, residing in the flat, immediately below the one occupied by the Dykes, had stated, moreover, that on Wednesday the 18th, at about midday, she heard very loud and angry voices proceeding from above; Miss Amelia's shrill tones being specially audible. Shortly afterwards she saw Wyatt go out of the house; but the quarrel continued for some little time without him, for the neighbours could still hear Miss Amelia's high-pitched voice, speaking very excitedly and volubly.

"An hour later," further explained Mrs. Pitt, 'I met Miss Dyke on the stairs; she seemed very flushed and looked as if she had been crying. I suppose she saw that I noticed this, for she stopped and said to me:

““All this fuss, you know, Mrs. Pitt, because Alfred asked me to go for a drive with him this afternoon, but I am going all the same.”

“Later in the afternoon, it must have been quite half-past four, for it was getting dark, young Wyatt drove up in a motor car, and presently I heard Miss Dyke's voice on the stairs saying very pleasantly and cheerfully: ‘All right, daddy, we shan't be long.’ Then Mr. Dyke must have said something which I didn't hear, for she added, ‘Oh, that's all right; I am well wrapped up, and we have plenty of rugs!’”

“Mrs. Pitt then went to her window and saw Wyatt and Amelia Dyke start off in a motor. She concluded that the old man had been mollified, for both Amelia and Wyatt waved their hands affectionately up towards the window. They returned from their drive about six o'clock; Wyatt saw Amelia to the door, and then went off again. The next day Miss Dyke went to Scotland.

“As you see,” continued the man in the corner, “Alfred Wyatt had become a very important personality in this case; he was Amelia's sweetheart, and it was strange—to say the least of it—that she had never as yet even mentioned his name. Therefore when she was recalled in order to give further evidence, you may be sure that she was pretty sharply questioned on the subject of Alfred Wyatt.

“In her evidence before the coroner, she adhered fairly closely to her original statement:

“‘I did not mention Mr. Wyatt's name,’ she explained, ‘because I did not think it was of any importance; if he knew anything about my dear father's mysterious fate, he would have come forward at once, of course, and helped me to find out who the cowardly murderer was who could attack a poor, crippled old man. Mr. Wyatt was devoted to my father, and it is perfectly ridiculous to say that daddy objected to my engagement; on the contrary, he gave us his full consent, and we were going to be married directly after the New Year, and continue to live with father in the flat.’

“‘But,’ questioned the coroner, who had not by any means departed from his severity, ‘what about this quarrel which the last witness overheard on the subject of your going out driving with Mr. Wyatt?’

“‘Oh, that was nothing,’ replied Miss Dyke very quietly. ‘Daddy only objected because he thought that it was rather too late

to start at four o'clock, and that I should be cold. When he saw that we had plenty of rugs he was quite pleased for me to go.’

“‘Isn't it rather astonishing, then,’ asked the coroner, ‘seeing that Mr. Wyatt was on such good terms with your father, that he did not go to see him while you were away?’

“‘Not at all,’ she replied unconcernedly; ‘Alfred went down to Edinburgh on the Thursday evening. He couldn't travel with me in the morning, for he had some business to see to in town that day; but he joined me at my friends' house on the Friday morning, having travelled all night.’

“‘Ah!’ remarked the coroner drily, ‘then he had not seen your father since you left.’

“‘Oh, yes,’ said Miss Amelia; ‘he called round to see dad during the day, and found him looking well and cheerful.’

“Miss Amelia Dyke, as she gave this evidence, seemed absolutely unconscious of saying anything that might in any way incriminate her lover. She is a handsome, though somewhat coarse-looking woman, nearer thirty, I should say, than she would care to own. I was present at the inquest, mind you, for that case had too many mysteries about it from the first for it to have eluded my observation, and I watched her closely throughout. Her voice struck me as fine and rich, with—in this instance also—a shade of coarseness in it; certainly, it was very far from being high-pitched, as Mrs. Pitt had described it.

“When she had finished her evidence she went back to her seat, looking neither flustered nor uncomfortable, although many looks of contempt and even of suspicion were darted at her from every corner of the crowded court.

“Nor did she lose her composure in the slightest degree when Mr. Parlett, clerk to Messrs. Snow and Patterson, solicitors, of Bedford Row, in his turn came forward and gave evidence; only while the little man spoke her full red lips curled and parted with a look of complete contempt.

“Mr. Parlett's story was indeed a remarkable one, inasmuch as it suddenly seemed to tear asunder the veil of mystery which so far had surrounded the murder of old Dyke by supplying it with a motive—a strong motive, too: the eternal greed of gain.

“In June last, namely, it appears that Messrs. Snow and Patterson received intimation from a firm of Melbourne solicitors that a man of the name of Dyke had died there recently, leaving a legacy of

£4000 to his only brother, James Arthur Dyke, a mining engineer, who in 1890 was residing at Lisson Grove Crescent. The Melbourne solicitors in their communication asked for Messrs. Snow and Patterson's kind assistance in helping them to find the legatee.

"The search was easy enough, since James Arthur Dyke, mining engineer, had never ceased to reside at Lisson Grove Crescent. Armed, therefore, with full instructions from their Melbourne correspondent, Messrs. Snow and Patterson communicated with Dyke, and after a little preliminary correspondence, the sum of £4000 in Bank of Australia notes and various securities were handed over by Mr. Parlett to the old cripple.

"The money and securities were—so Mr. Parlett understood—subsequently deposited by Mr. Dyke at the Portland Road Branch of the London and South Western Bank; as the old man apparently died intestate, the whole of the £4000 would naturally devolve upon his only daughter and natural legatee.

"Mind you, all through the proceedings, the public had instinctively felt that money was somewhere at the bottom of this gruesome and mysterious crime. There is not much object in murdering an old cripple except for purposes of gain, but now Mr. Parlett's evidence had indeed furnished a damning motive for the appalling murder.

"What more likely than that Alfred Wyatt wanting to finger that £4000 had done away with the old man? And if Amelia Dyke did not turn away from him in horror, after such a cowardly crime, then she must have known of it and had perhaps connived in it.

"As for Nicholson, the charwoman, her evidence had certainly done more to puzzle everybody all round than any other detail in this strange and mysterious crime.

"She deposed that on Friday, November 13th, in answer to an advertisement in the *Marylebone Star* she had called on Miss Dyke at Lisson Grove, when it was arranged that she should do a week's work at the flat, beginning Thursday, the 19th, from seven in the morning until six in the afternoon. She



"She stopped to ask him how Mr. Dyke was."

was to keep the place clean, get Mr. Dyke—who, she understood, was an invalid—all his meals, and make herself generally useful to him.

"Accordingly, Nicholson turned up on the Thursday morning. She let herself into the flat, as Miss Dyke had entrusted the latchkey to her, and went on with the work. Mr. Dyke was in bed, and she got him all his

meals that day. She thought she was giving him satisfaction, and was very astonished when, at six o'clock, having cleared away his tea, he told her that he would not require her again. He gave her no explanation, asked her for the latch-key, and gave her her full week's money—seven shillings in full. Nicholson then put on her bonnet, and went away.

"Now," continued the man in the corner, leaning excitedly forward, and marking each sentence he uttered with an exquisitely complicated knot in his bit of string, "an hour later, another neighbour, Mrs. Marsh, who lived on the same floor as the Dykes, on starting to go out, met Alfred Wyatt on the landing. He took off his hat to her, and then knocked at the door of the Dyke's flat.

"When she came home at eight o'clock, she again passed him on the stairs; he was then going out. She stopped to ask him how Mr. Dyke was, and Wyatt replied: 'Oh, fairly well, but he misses his daughter, you know.'

"Mrs. Marsh, now closely questioned, said that she thought Wyatt was carrying a large parcel under his arm, but she could not distinguish the shape of the parcel as the angle of the stairs, where she met him, was very dark. She stated though that he was running down the stairs very fast.

"It was on all that evidence that the police felt justified in arresting Alfred Wyatt for the murder of James Arthur Dyke, and Amelia Dyke for connivance in the crime. And now this very morning, those two young people have been brought before the magistrate, and at this moment evidence—circumstantial, mind you, but positively damning—is being heaped upon them by the prosecution. The police did their work quickly. The very evening after the first day of the inquest, the warrant was out for their arrest."

He looked at a huge silver watch which he always carried in his waistcoat pocket.

"I don't want to miss the defence," he said, "for I know that it will be sensational. But I did not want to hear the police and medical evidence all over again. You'll excuse me, won't you? I shall be back here for five o'clock tea. I know you will be glad to hear all about it."

### CHAPTER III.

WHEN I returned to the A.B.C. shop for my tea at five minutes past five, there he sat in his accustomed corner, with a cup of tea before him, another placed opposite to him,

presumably for me, and a long piece of string between his bony fingers.

"What will you have with your tea?" he asked politely, the moment I was seated.

"A roll and butter and the end of the story," I replied.

"Oh, the story has no end," he said with a chuckle; "at least, not for the public. As for me, why, I never met a more simple 'mystery.' Perhaps that is why the police were so completely at sea."

"Well, and what happened?" I queried with some impatience.

"Why, the usual thing," he said, as he once more began to fidget nervously with his bit of string. "The prisoners had pleaded not guilty, and the evidence for the prosecution was gone into in full. Mr. Parlett repeated his story of the £4000 legacy, and all the neighbours had some story or other to tell about Alfred Wyatt, who, according to them, was altogether a most undesirable young man.

"I heard the fag end of Mrs. Marsh's evidence. When I reached the court she was repeating the story she had already told to the police.

"Someone else in the house had also heard Wyatt running helter-skelter downstairs at eight o'clock on the Thursday evening; this was a point, though a small one, in favour of the accused. A man cannot run downstairs when he is carrying the whole weight of a dead body, and the theory of the prosecution was that Wyatt had murdered old Dyke on that Thursday evening, got into his motor-car somewhere, scorched down to Wembley with the dismembered body of his victim, deposited it in the spinney where it was subsequently found, and finally had driven back to town, stabled his motor-car, and reached King's Cross in time for the 11.30 night express to Edinburgh. He would have time for all that, remember, for he would have three hours and a half to do it in.

"Besides which the prosecution had unearthed one more witness, who was able to add another tiny link to the already damning chain of evidence built up against the accused.

"Wilfred Poad, namely, manager of a large cycle and motor car depôt in Euston Road, stated that on Thursday afternoon, November 19th, at about half-past six o'clock Alfred Wyatt, with whom he had had some business dealings before, had hired a small car from him, with the understanding that he need not bring it back until after eleven p.m.

This was agreed to, Poad keeping the place open until just before eleven, when Wyatt drove up in the car, paid for the hire of it and then walked away from the shop in the direction of the Great Northern terminus.

"That was pretty strong against the male prisoner wasn't it? For, mind you, Wyatt had given no satisfactory account whatever of his time between eight p.m., when Mrs. Marsh had met him going out of Lisson Grove Crescent, and eleven p.m., when he brought back the car to the Euston Road shop. 'He had been driving about aimlessly,' so he said. Now one doesn't go out motoring for hours on a cold, drizzly night in November for no purpose whatever.

"As for the female prisoner, the charge against her was merely one of complicity.

"This closed the case for the prosecution." continued the funny creature with one of his inimitable chuckles, "leaving but one tiny point obscure, and that was, the murdered man's strange conduct in dismissing the woman Nicholson.

"Yes, the case was strong enough, and yet there stood both prisoners in the dock, with that sublime air of indifference and contempt which only complete innocence or hardened guilt could give.

"Then when the prosecution had had their say, Alfred Wyatt chose to enter the witness box and make a statement in his own defence. Quietly, and as if he were making the most casual observation he said:

"I am not guilty of the murder of Mr. Dyke, and in proof of this I solemnly assert that on Thursday, November 19th, the day I am supposed to have committed the crime, the old man was still alive at half-past ten o'clock in the evening."

"He paused a moment, like a born actor, watching the effect he had produced. I tell you, it was astounding.

"I have three separate and independent witnesses here," continued Wyatt, with the same deliberate calm, "who heard and saw Mr. Dyke as late as half-past ten that night. Now, I understand that the dismembered body of the old man was found close to Wembley Park. How could I, between half-past ten and eleven o'clock, have killed Dyke, cut him up, cleaned and put the flat all tidy, carried the body to the car, driven on to Wembley, hidden the corpse in the spinney, and be back in Euston Road, all in the space of half-an-hour? I am absolutely innocent of this crime and, fortunately, it is easy for me now to prove my innocence."

"Alfred Wyatt had made no idle boast.

Mrs. Marsh had seen him running down stairs at 8 p.m. An hour after that, the Pitts in the flat beneath heard the old man moving about overhead.

"Just as usual," observed Mrs. Pitt. "He always went to bed about nine, and we could always hear him most distinctly."

"John Pitt, the husband, corroborated this statement; the old man's movements were quite unmistakable because of his crutches.

"Henry Ogden, on the other hand, who lived in the house facing the block of flats, saw the light in Dyke's window that evening, and the old man's silhouette upon the blind from time to time. The light was put out at half-past ten. This statement again was corroborated by Mrs. Ogden, who also had noticed the silhouette and the light being extinguished at half-past ten.

"But this was not all; Both Mr. and Mrs. Ogden had seen old Dyke at his window, sitting in his accustomed armchair, between half-past eight and nine o'clock. He was gesticulating, and apparently talking to someone else in the room whom they could not see.

"Alfred Wyatt, therefore, was quite right when he said that he would have no difficulty in proving his innocence. The man whom he was supposed to have murdered was, according to the testimony, alive at six o'clock; according to Mr. and Mrs. Ogden he was alive and sitting in his window until nine; again, he was heard to move about until ten o'clock by both the Pitts, and at half-past ten only was the light put out in his flat. Obviously, therefore, as his dead body was found twelve miles away, Wyatt, who was out of the Crescent at eight, and in Euston Road at eleven, could not have done the deed.

"He was discharged, of course; the magistrate adding a very severe remark on the subject of 'carelessly collected evidence.' As for Miss Amelia, she sailed out of the court like a queen after her coronation, for with Wyatt's discharge the case against her naturally collapsed. As for me, I walked out too, with an elated feeling at the thought that the intelligence of the British race had not yet sunk so low as our friends on the Continent would have us believe."

[At this point you should try and puzzle out the mystery for yourselves.—E.D.]

#### CHAPTER IV.

"BUT then, who murdered the old man?" I asked, for I confess the matter was puzzling me in an irritating kind of a way.



"Ah! who indeed?" he rejoined sarcastically, while an artistic knot went to join its fellows along that never ending bit of string.

"I wish you'd tell me what's in your mind," I said, feeling peculiarly irritated with him just at that moment.

"What's in my mind?" he replied with a shrug of his thin shoulders. "Oh, only a certain degree of admiration!"

"Admiration at what?"

"At a pair of exceedingly clever criminals."

"Then you do think that Wyatt murdered Dyke?"

"I don't think—I am sure."

"But when did they do it?"

"Ah, that's more to the point. Personally, I should say between them on Wednesday morning, November 18th."

"The day they went for that motor car ride?" I gasped.

"And carried away the old man's remains beneath a multiplicity of rugs," he added.

"But he was *alive* long after that!" I urged. "The woman, Nicholson——"

"The woman Nicholson saw and spoke to a man in bed, whom she *supposed* was old Mr. Dyke. Among the many questions put to her by those clever detectives, no one thought, of course, of asking her to describe the old man. But even if she had done so, Wyatt was far too great an artist in crime not to have contrived a make-up which, described by a witness who had never before seen Dyke, would easily pass as a description of the old man himself."

"Impossible!" I said, struck in spite of myself by the simplicity of his logic.

"Impossible, you say?" he shrieked excitedly. "Why, I call that crime a masterpiece from beginning to end; a display of ingenuity which, fortunately, the criminal classes seldom possess, or where would society be? Here was a crime committed, where everything was most beautifully stage-managed, nothing left unforeseen. Shall I reconstruct it for you?"

"Do!" I said, handing across the table to him a brand new, beautiful bit of string, on which his talon-like fingers fastened as upon a prey.

"Very well," he said, marking each point with a scientific knot. "Here it is, scene by scene: There was Alfred Wyatt and Amelia Dyke—a pair of blackguards, eager to obtain that £4000 which only the old man's death could secure for them. They decide upon killing him, and: Scene 1, Miss Amelia makes *her* arrangements. She advertises for

a charwoman, and engages one, who is to be a very useful witness presently.

"Scene 2.—The murder, brutal, horrible, on the person of an old cripple, whilst his own daughter stands by, and the dismembering of the body.

"Scene 3.—The ride in the motor car, after dark, remember, and with plenty of rugs, beneath which the gruesome burden is concealed. The scene is accompanied by the comedy of Miss Dyke speaking to her father, and waving her hand affectionately at him from below. I tell you, that woman must have had some nerve!

"Then, scene 4.—The arrival at Wembley, and the hiding of the remains.

"Scene 5.—Amelia goes to Edinburgh by the 5.15 a.m. train, and thus secures her own *alibi*. After that, the comedy begins in earnest. The impersonation of the dead man by Wyatt during the whole of that memorable Thursday. Mind you, that was not very difficult; it only needed the brain to invent, and the nerve to carry it through. The charwoman had never seen old Dyke before; she only knew that he was an invalid. What more natural than that she should accept as her new master the man who lay in bed all day, and only spoke a few words to her? A very slight make-up of hair and beard would complete the illusion.

"Then, at six o'clock, the woman gone, Wyatt steals out of the house, bespeaks the motor car, leaves it in the street in a convenient spot, and is back in time to be seen by Mrs. Marsh at seven.

"The rest is simplicity itself. The silhouette at the window was easy enough to arrange; the sound of a man walking on crutches is easily imitated with a couple of umbrellas—the actual crutches were no doubt burned directly after the murder. Lastly, the putting out of the light at half-past ten was the crowning stroke of genius.

"One little thing might have upset the whole wonderful plan, but that one thing only; and that was if the body had been found *before* the great comedy scene of Thursday had been fully played. But that spinney near Wembley was well-chosen. People don't go wandering under trees and in woods on cold November days, and the remains were not found until the Saturday.

"Ah, it was cleverly stage-managed, and no mistake. I couldn't have done it better myself. Won't you have another cup of tea? No? Don't look so upset. The world does not contain many such clever criminals as Alfred Wyatt and Amelia Dyke."