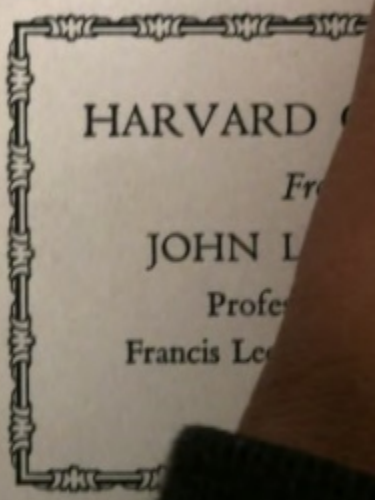
THE HEMLOCK AVENUE MYSTERY

ROMAN DOUBLEDAY

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

AL 2385.7



Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

AL 2385.7.15

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY
From the Library of
JOHN LIVINGSTON LOWES
Professor of English 1918–1930
Francis Lee Higginson Professor of English
Literature 1930–1945

Digitized by Google
Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

The Hemlock Avenue Mystery

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

"IN A MOMENT HALF A DOZEN MEN WERE BETWEEN THEM."

[FRONTISPIECE. *See page* 2

Digitized by Google

Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

"A DOZEN MEN MIGHT BETWEEN THEM"

[FRONTISPIECE See page 2

Digitized by Google

Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

The
Hemlock Avenue Mystery

By Roman Doubleday

Illustrated from Drawings by
Charles Grunwald

Boston
Little, Brown, and Company
1908

Digitized by Google
Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

AL 2385.7.15

Copyright, 1907,
BY STREET & SMITH.

Copyright, 1908,
BY LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY.

All rights reserved

Published February, 1908

COLONIAL PRESS
Electrotyped and Printed by C. H. Simonds & Co.
Boston, U. S. A.

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

List of Illustrations

PAGE

"In a moment half a dozen men were between them" . . . Frontispiece

"She stole a gratified glance at Lyon's straight figure" . . . . *Page* 107

"Her eyes were lowered and her hands were pressed close together" . . " 220

"The old gentleman was examining it with a puzzled look and growing perplexity" . . . . . " 252

Digitized by Google

Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

The Hemlock Avenue Mystery

CHAPTER I

YOUNG Lyon, lounging in the Court House to make up his daily tale of items for the Waynscott *News*, was perhaps the only man who knew exactly how the quarrel between Lawrence and Fullerton began, though, when later events had made that quarrel take on an unexpected significance, he was exactly the one man who did not talk about it.

Through the glass side-panel of the door he had seen Lawrence coming up the stone walk from the street, and he had watched him with eagerness, meaning to get a nod as he passed, for Lawrence was not only a rising young lawyer, but, what was more important to the cub reporter, he had just won the championship in the curling contest of the city clubs. Slight as was Lyon's acquaintance with him, it had the touch of hero-worship which

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

a youth is always ready to pour out as an offering before a man who is at once an athlete, a social success, a man eminent in professional life, and withal magnetic and charming in his personal relations, as Lawrence was. So he counted it luck just to have the chance to say "Good morning." It seems that Fullerton must have approached from the side street, for the two men met at the foot of the Court House steps and came up together. Lyon noticed that though they nodded to each other they did not speak. At the top Fullerton pushed ahead so as to come first through the revolving pepperbox of a storm-door which made the entrance of fresh air to the Court House as difficult as was the exit of foul air within. Lawrence swung through in the next compartment, pushing the door around much more rapidly than suited Fullerton's dignified gait. The knowledge that he had thumped his distinguished predecessor's heels probably cheered Lawrence's heart, for he cried gayly as he emerged,

"You see I follow in your footsteps."

"Not for the first time," said Fullerton in level tones, with a slow lifting of his lowered eyelids.

The effect of those quiet words on Lawrence's temper was surprising. Instantly his hand flashed out and he slapped Fullerton's face.

In a moment half a dozen men were between them. Some one restored Fullerton's hat, which had fallen off at his sudden start, while others

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

officiously laid restraining hands on Lawrence, who was trembling like a nervous horse.

"You may think a trick will win, but, by my soul, I'll take the trick," he cried hotly.

Fullerton, who was quite white except where the marks of Lawrence's fingers burned like a new brand on his cheek, stood perfectly still for an instant, with his eyes on the floor, as though waiting for anything further that his opposing counsel might have to say. Then he replaced his hat, bowed slightly to the group, and walked away to the elevator.

"Jove, if I had the grip on my temper that Fullerton has, I'd be Attorney General by now," said Lawrence lightly. "Guess I'll take the other elevator, all the same." And he walked jauntily down the hall.

The collected group of men burst into excited cross-currents of talk.

"What was it all about?"

"What will Fullerton do?"

"Gee, but Lawrence might be disbarred for that."

"Fullerton, of all men! He must be getting old, if he lets that pass."

"Oh, this isn't the end of it, you can bet on that all right."

"But what was it all about?"

"Why, Fullerton got a decision in the Symes case yesterday, — beat Lawrence on a technicality.

Digitized by Google Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

It was rather sharp practice, but Fullerton goes into a case to win, and he knows all the tricks of the trade. You heard what Lawrence said about taking the trick?"

Yes, they had all heard what Lawrence had said. Lyon listened to the gossip, but contributed nothing. He was perfectly certain that Lawrence's hot speech about a trick had been expressly intended for the by-standers. The champion was too good a sport to take a professional defeat like a baby. And the quick speeches that had preceded the blow no one had heard but himself. He walked down the steps thoughtfully. It was his business to understand things.

But the quarrel did not appear among the news items he turned into the city editor.

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER II

"I FOLLOW in your footsteps." — "Not for the first time."

The words echoed in Lyon's mind like a rebus which he must solve. There was a puzzle in them. Could he, by turning them and trying them, find the answer? Of course it wasn't really his business, but for some reason the puzzle haunted his mind.

He had an assignment that evening to report a concert given at the Hemlock Avenue Congregational Church, under the auspices of certain ladies sufficiently prominent in society to ensure a special reporter. He had timed himself to reach the church a little before nine, and as he walked briskly up the north side of Hemlock Avenue, his attention was attracted by the opening of a door in a house on the opposite side of the street. The light, streaming out toward him into the snowy whiteness of the night, showed a man at the door, parleying with the maid-servant within. After a moment the door closed and the man came slowly down the steps. He appeared to hesitate when he reached the street, then he turned up the avenue

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

in the same direction that Lyon was going, and almost opposite him. As he passed under the street lamp, Lyon saw, with a sudden quick pleasure, that the man was Lawrence. He was walking laggingly, with his head bent. At the corner he turned south on Grant Street, and so soon passed out of sight.

Lyon's lively personal interest in Lawrence made him glance back at the house where his hero had evidently made an ineffective call, and wonder who it might be that lived there. Hemlock was an avenue that carried its air of sublimated respectability in every well-kept lawn and unfenced lot. Each house was set back from the street and was "detached," with trees and concrete walks and front lawn and back yard of its own. It was not a show street, but it was supremely well-bred. It struck Lyon, newly come from a busier city, as curious that, but for himself, Lawrence was the only person moving in the street. Not even a policeman was in sight.

This same seclusion and peace brooded over the scene when he retraced his way down that block on his early return from the concert an hour later. He was commenting upon the stillness to himself when he heard the sound of running feet approaching, and in a moment he saw the figure of a woman come running wildly toward him. About the middle of the block she cut diagonally across the street and ran into one of the houses opposite. Lyon

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

had instinctively quickened his own pace, for her panic flight suggested that she was pursued, but he could see no one following her. Then he noticed that the house where she had run in was, curiously enough, the same house where Lawrence had called earlier that evening. She had not gone in at the front door but had run around to the side of the house.

"Some servant maid who has overstayed her leave," he thought. "She ran well, though, — uncommonly good form for a kitchen girl. Bet she's had gymnasium work, whoever she is."

Reaching the end of the block he stopped and looked up and down the cross-street, Sherman, from which the girl had seemed to come. There was no one in sight. The street, snowily white and bare in the light of the gas lamps, lay open before him for long blocks. The music from a skating rink in the neighborhood came gayly to him on the frosty air and an electric car clanged busily in the near distance. As he moved on, his eye was caught by something dark on the white snow at the edge of the pavement, — a black silk muffler it proved to be, when he picked it up. Had the girl dropped it or merely hurried past it? It was a man's muffler. He was about to toss it back into the street when some instinct — the professional instinct of the reporter to understand everything he sees — made him roll it up and tuck it instead into his overcoat pocket.

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

He hurried on, meaning to catch the next car a few blocks below, when the shrill and repeated call of a policeman's whistle cut across the night. Lyon stopped. That sharp and insistent call suggested a more exciting "story" than his church concert. He hurried back to Sherman Street, and half-way down the block, midway between Hemlock Avenue and Oak Street, he saw the officer standing. It was not until he came close up that Lyon saw the gray heap on the ground near the officer's feet.

"What's up?" he demanded.

"Man dead," the officer answered laconically.

Running feet were answering the signal of the whistle, and in less time than it takes to tell it, they were the center of an excited crowd. Donohue, the police officer, ordered the crowd sharply to stand back, while he sent the first watchman who had come up to telephone for the patrol wagon.

"If any one is hurt, I am a physician," one man said, pushing his way to the front.

"He's hurted too bad for you to do him any good," Donohue said.

The physician knelt down beside the fallen man, however, and made a hasty examination.

"The man is quite dead," he said, at length. "There's a bruise on the temple, — the blow probably killed him instantly. But he has been dead a few minutes only."

At that there were excited suggestions that the

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

murderer could not have got far away, and some one proposed an immediate search of the neighborhood. But no one started. The center of interest was in that gray-clad heap on the ground.

"Who is the man? — Do you know who it is, officer?" some one asked.

'Donohue, obviously resentful of the presence of this unauthorized jury, made no answer. Lyon, watchful professionally for all details, suddenly recognized Lawrence in one of the men who stood nearest the body. There was something in the fixity of the look which he was bending upon the dead man that made Lyon's eye follow his, and then in his amaze he pushed past Donohue and knelt to look into the face resting against the curb.

"Good heavens, it's Fullerton, — Warren Fullerton, the lawyer," he cried.

The volley of exclamations and questions which he drew down upon himself by this declaration were interrupted by the clang of the patrol wagon, which came down the street at a run. The three men on the wagon swung themselves down and cleared the crowd out of their way in a moment, and expeditiously lifted the limp gray body in. Donohue swung himself on the step and the wagon drove off at a decorous gait, leaving another police officer on the ground to watch the rapidly dispersing crowd.

Lyon, well aware that a more experienced hand than his own would be assigned to work up the

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

story he had stumbled upon, deemed it his duty to report at once to the office instead of trying to do anything further on his own account, and hurried away to catch the car down-town. A man came up behind and fell into his own hurried gait to keep pace with him.

"You've struck an exciting story," said Lawrence's voice.

"Yes," said Lyon, eagerly. His eagerness was more due to the pleasant surprise of having Lawrence single him out to walk with than to anything else. His secret hero-worship had never brought him anything more than a friendly nod before.

"Are you going to write it up?"

"I'll have to report for instructions. They'll probably send some one else up to the station to follow matters up, but perhaps the city editor will let me write up this part of it."

"You have a good deal of responsibility," said Lawrence.

"Responsibility?"

"I mean in the way of influencing public opinion."

"I have nothing to do but to tell the facts, and there aren't many of them yet."

"You have to select the facts to speak of," Lawrence said. He was keeping up with Lyon's quick pace, but his voice was so deliberate that it made Lyon unconsciously pull up.

"I suppose so."

Digitized by Google

Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

"If you wanted to make a sensational report, for instance, you could work in the peaceful night and the deserted street and other things that really have no relation to the facts in such a way as to connect them in the public mind."

"Yes, I suppose so."

"That's what I meant about your responsibility, — responsibility to the public and responsibility to the individuals you may happen to work into your story."

Lyon nodded. He felt that there was something behind this not yet clear to him.

"You were fortunate in being on the spot. You must have been the first man there. I was close behind you, I think. I was not far behind you when you came down Hemlock Avenue."

Then suddenly Lyon understood. It was quite as though Lawrence had said, "I hope you will not consider it necessary to mention that a minute or two after the time of the murder you saw a woman running in terror from the spot and going into a house where I call." He had quite forgotten the running girl for the moment. Now the sudden bringing together of the two ideas staggered him.

"There are things that once said can never be unsaid," said Lawrence.

"Yes."

"That's why I am glad it has fallen into your hands to write it up instead of into the hands of

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

some sensation monger who would not have the instinct of a gentleman about what to say and what to leave unsaid. By the way, it was you who identified the man as Fullerton, wasn't it?"

"Yes," said Lyon slowly. He recalled the fixed look that Lawrence had bent upon the body in silence. It was impossible that he had not recognized his enemy in the dead man. Why had he held back the natural impulse to speak his name?

"I'll look for your report with interest. And, by the way, don't you lunch at the Tillamook Club? Look me up some day. I'm usually there between one and two. Glad to have seen you. Good night."

Lyon found that "story" more difficult to write up than he had anticipated.

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER III

TO say that Waynscott was amazed on the appearance of the *News* the next morning would be to put it mildly. That a prominent lawyer should be found dead in the best residence quarter of the city at the early hour of ten, and that the police authorities should have nothing to offer, was enough to set the whole city talking. Fullerton had not been particularly popular, but he was a man of mark. A bachelor, he had lived at a fashionable apartment house, the Wellington; he had no family, no intimate friends, and there were men at his club who would not play with him, but still he was a personage. The city buzzed with the decorous joy of discussing a full-fledged sensation of its own.

Was it murder? Was it an accident? Had he any personal enemies? Was it highway robbery? What were the police good for, anyhow? The result of the coroner's inquest was awaited with the keenest interest.

The body had been taken to the morgue, and the inquest was held there the next day. The significant testimony, as it was sifted out, was as follows:

Digitized by Google

Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Donohue, the police officer, was called first. He testified that he had been at the corner of Oak and Grant Streets when he heard the Court House clock strike the quarter before ten. He had walked down Oak Street one block at a slow pace, and had turned south on Sherman Street, when his attention was caught by a gray something on the ground at the edge of the sidewalk. At first he thought it was a large dog. Then, as he walked toward it, he saw that it was a man fallen against the curbing. He touched him, lifted his head, and found that the man was not drunk but dead. He had heard no outcry, no disturbance, no sound of running.

After satisfying himself that the man was dead he had blown his whistle to call the officer on the next beat, and had sent him to telephone for the patrol wagon. The first person who came up was Mr. Lyon, but there soon was a crowd about them.

"Did you recognize the body as Mr. Fullerton?" the county attorney asked.

"Not just at first," Donohue answered with some hesitation.

"Did you know him by sight?"

"Yes, sir."

"Yet you did not recognize him?"

"It was his coat. He didn't have that gray coat on usually, — not when I saw him before that evening."

Digitized by Google

Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

"When and where did you see him before that evening?"

"I was coming up Oak Street past the Wellington, and I saw Mr. Fullerton come out with a lady. They walked so slow that I passed them. Mr. Fullerton wore a long loose black topcoat. I noticed because he had both his hands stuck in his pockets. So when I found the man in a gray coat it threw me off. Afterwards —" Donohue hesitated again over his astonishing conclusion — "afterwards we found that he had his black coat on wrong side out. The inside was gray."

The overcoat was brought out for the jury and examined. It was a long, loose garment, black on the outside, gray on the inner. Though not intended for reversible wearing, it was obvious that it could have been easily turned. The question that at once occurred to every listener was whether the garment had been turned by Fullerton himself, or whether it had been hastily and carelessly put on him by some one else after he had fallen unconscious. This was obviously in the examiner's mind when he asked next,

"Was the overcoat buttoned when you came upon him?"

"No, it was open."

"How was the body lying?"

"In a heap, as though his knees had crumpled up under him."

"Officer, did you see no one on the street from

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

the time you left Oak Street and Grant Street until you found the body?"

"No one but Mr. Lawrence. It is a quiet neighborhood."

"When and where did you see Mr. Lawrence?"

"On Grant Street, going toward Hemlock Avenue. He passed me while I was standing on the corner."

"Just before you left the corner?"

"May be ten minutes before."

"If you had walked straight down Grant Street to Hemlock Avenue, down Hemlock Avenue to Sherman Street, and up Sherman Street to the spot where the body was found, how long would it have taken you to get there?"

Donohue considered carefully before he answered, "About seven minutes."

"Was Mr. Lawrence walking rapidly?"

"You might call it so."

"Officer, you spoke of seeing a lady with Mr. Fullerton when he left the Wellington earlier in the evening. Did you recognize the lady?"

"No, sir. I did not see her face. She wore a veil."

"Did you notice anything else about her or her dress?"

"She wore a short fur coat and a muff. Her dress was dark. I noticed as I passed by that she was crying under her veil, — sort of sobbing to

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

herself. That made me look sharp. Mr. Fullerton was walking kind of swaggering, with his hands in his pockets."

"Would you know the lady if you saw her again?"

"If she wore the same clothes, I might," Donohue answered somewhat doubtfully.

The physician, Dr. Sperry, who had pronounced Fullerton dead, was next called. He testified that he was returning from the concert, and was on Hemlock Avenue when he heard the police whistle. When he saw the crowd gathered on Sherman Street he had thought some one might be hurt, and had gone up to offer his professional assistance. He had found the man dead, with the mark of a severe blow on his temple.

"Dr. Sperry, will you describe the appearance of the wound?"

"It was a bruise rather than a wound. The temple was indented, showing that the delicate bone there had been crushed in. The skin was broken, and the blood had oozed down the left side of the face."

"Should you say that it was the mark of a heavy blow?"

"Yes, or a swinging blow. It was undoubtedly made by some dull instrument, heavy enough to crush, and yet with a metallic edge that cut the skin sharply."

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

"Would such a blow cause death at once?"

"Instantaneously."

"Can you say how long the man had been dead?"

"Not less than ten minutes. Not more than half an hour."

After an intimation that Dr. Sperry would be recalled later, Lyon was called.

Lyon had made no mention of the running girl in his report for the *News*, but he foresaw that that matter would come out in his examination, and he hastily resolved that there was one point of information which he would not volunteer, — the house which she had entered. Let them ask him, if they wanted to get at that!

He testified, in answer to the preliminary questions, that he was returning from the concert and was on Hemlock Avenue between Sherman and Hooker Streets when he heard the policeman's whistle and ran back to see what the disturbance was.

"You had passed the corner of Sherman Street a few minutes before?"

"Yes."

"And you saw nothing unusual?"

"I saw a man's muffler on the ground. I have turned it over to the officers."

The muffler was produced and examined. At one place the folds were stiff and matted together. The jury examined the stain.

Digitized by Google

Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

"Was this spot wet when you picked the muffler up?"

"I did not notice."

"Did you see any one on the street?"

"While I was farther up on Hemlock Avenue I noticed a woman running across the street."

"How was she dressed?"

"I was too far away to see."

"Did she wear a veil?"

"I think not. I could not swear to it, however."

"Did you see Mr. Lawrence?"

"No, not until I saw him in the crowd afterwards."

"I believe it was you who first identified the body?"

"Yes."

"Was Mr. Lawrence present when you did so?"

"Yes."

"Did you see him examine the body?"

"I did not see him touch it."

"Was he near enough to identify the body?"

"He was near enough, so far as that goes."

"He did not volunteer any information as to who the dead man was, though he was near enough to recognize him, and presumably must have recognized him?"

"I did not hear him say anything."

"Was the light sufficiently bright to enable you to see clearly?"

Digitized by Google

Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

"It was rather a shadowy spot. There are lamps at the corners of the block only. We were standing about the middle of the block."

The next witness sprung the surprise of the day. He was a boy of eighteen, Ed Kenyon by name, who had been attracted by the quickly spreading report of a murder. Asked to tell his story, he said:

"After the rest of the crowd had gone home, some of us fellows thought we would hunt for the murderer, so we made up a party and looked in all the alleys and went through some of the back yards around there. Right across the street from where the body was found there is a vacant lot. It is a good deal lower than the sidewalk and there is a fence at the inside edge of the walk to keep people from falling off. We looked over the fence and we could see that the snow had been tramped down, as though there had been a scrap or something, so we jumped in and explored for what we could find. When you are down inside the lot there is a hole under the sidewalk, and we found this poked in behind some weeds in the hole." And he produced the two pieces of a broken cane.

Lyon happened to glance at Lawrence at that moment, and he was startled by the look he surprised there. In an instant it was banished, and Lawrence's face was as non-committal, as impassive, as any in the room. But Lyon, watching him

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

now in wonder, felt that the passivity was fixed there by a conscious effort of the will.

The county attorney then recalled Dr. Sperry.

"In your opinion, could the fatal blow have been struck by such an instrument as this cane?"

"It would be quite possible."

"Would such a blow be apt to break the cane?"

"That would depend on how it was held."

"Will you examine the gold knob at the end of this piece and say whether you see anything to indicate that such a blow was actually struck with it?"

"There are a few short hairs caught by a rough place where the metal is joined to the wood. They look matted. It would require a scientific examination to determine whether that is blood or not."

Arthur Lawrence was then called.

"Do you recognize this cane, Mr. Lawrence?"

"Yes, it is mine. My name is engraved around the gold top."

"Will you inform the jury when you last had it in your possession?"

"I regret to say I cannot. I lost the cane sometime ago."

"When and how did you lose it?"

"That I cannot say. I suppose I must have forgotten it somewhere. I simply know that I have not had it in my possession for some little time. I had missed it, but supposed it would eventually

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

turn up and be returned to me, as my name was on it."

"Please search your memory, Mr. Lawrence, as to the last time you had it in your possession."

Lawrence looked thoughtful.

"I remember that I had it last Wednesday when I was in the State Library, because I used it to reach a book on the top shelf."

"Did you leave it there?"

"I am under the impression that I took it away with me, but I have a careless habit of forgetting canes and umbrellas, and I had an exciting debate with Mr. Fullerton just before I left the room."

"With Warren Fullerton?"

"Yes."

"Did you leave the library with him?"

"No, I left alone. He was still there."

"You were on Sherman Street last night?"

"Yes."

"Will you give an account of your movements?"

"I was coming down Hemlock Avenue —"

"One moment. Where were you coming from?"

"I had been out for a tramp and was coming back. I had not been anywhere in particular."

"How long had you been tramping?"

Lawrence seemed to consider his answer before he spoke. "Something over an hour," he said.

"Were you alone all that time?"

Digitized by Google

Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

"Yes."

"Did you see any one to speak to?"

"I spoke to Officer Donohue as I was coming back. I don't remember noticing any one else on my walk."

"You may resume your account. You say you were coming down Hemlock Avenue, —"

"I was midway between Grant and Sherman Streets when I heard the policeman's whistle and I ran down to Sherman Street to see what the trouble was."

"Did you see Mr. Lyon on Hemlock Avenue?"

"Yes."

"Where was he?"

"He was going down the street ahead of me."

"Mr. Lyon has testified that he was between Sherman and Hooker Streets when the whistle was heard. That would put him nearly a block ahead of you. Did you identify him at that distance?"

"He was not so far away when I first saw him."

"Where was he when you first saw him?"

"On Hemlock Avenue between Grant and Sherman Streets."

"Then you stood still, practically, while he walked a block?"

"He was certainly walking at a faster pace."

"Was there any one else on the street?"

"I saw no one except the girl who ran across Hemlock Avenue, of whom Mr. Lyon spoke."

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

"Can you describe her?"

"No. I was farther from her than Lyon was."

"When you heard the policeman's whistle, did you go at once to the spot?"

"No, I paid no attention to it at first. Afterwards, when I saw a crowd was gathering, I fell in with the rest to see what had happened."

"Did you recognize the body when you came up?"

"Yes."

"Did you have any reason for refraining from so stating?"

"I was shocked and startled to see who the man was. I had no definite reason, either for speaking or for silence."

"What were your personal relations with Mr. Fullerton?"

"We were not friendly."

"When did you speak to him last?"

"Yesterday morning, in the Court House."

"What was the nature of your conversation at that time?"

"It was of rather a violent nature," said Lawrence, with the slightest drawl. "I had occasion to slap his face."

The boys who had been with Ed Kenyon were called to corroborate his story of finding the broken cane. Lawrence had changed his seat, and now sat beside Lyon. He gave no sign of recognition at

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

first, but after a few minutes, when there was a buzz of talk in the room, he turned to Lyon and said, with a casual air that could not conceal his intention,

"You see what this is leading to. They will arrest me for the murder before I leave the room. Don't answer me. Only listen and remember. I am going to ask you to do me a favor, — the very greatest favor that any living man could do me. I want you to go to the house that girl entered and tell her that I am sending her word by you to keep from speaking of this affair. Make her understand that she must volunteer no information, make no explanation, say nothing, no matter what happens. She will hear of my arrest. Make her understand that arrest is a long way off from conviction. Make that as strong as you can. Tell her that no jury in the world would convict on such evidence. Make light of the whole thing as much as possible, but tell her that I implore and entreat — I would use a stronger word if I dared — that she say nothing to any one at any time in regard to this whole matter. To you I will say — and remember this — that I would rather die than to have her name entangled in this affair in any manner. I'll make a fight for it first, of course, but literally, I would rather go through with it to the bitter end than to have her life darkened by any shadow, and this would be a shadow that could never be lifted. If I could speak more strongly,

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

I would. I am trusting this to you because I must get word to her at once and convincingly, and I dare not write, — and because I believe you are my friend. Her name is Edith Wolcott."

And before Lyon could frame any answer, Lawrence had slightly moved his position again, so as to put a space between them.

Lyon listened to the remaining testimony with attentive ears but a throbbing brain. He had been suddenly swept into the very center of the mystery. He knew no more than before, but knowledge was all around him, pressing against the thin walls of his ignorance. His own share in the evening's events suddenly became significant. Lawrence had made no mistake in choosing his envoy. Neither had he made any mistake in his diagnosis of the situation. Before he left the room, he had been arrested for the murder of Warren Fullerton.

Digitized by Google

Original from
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER IV

PERCY LYON had a natural gift for human nature, as some people have for music or for mechanics. Unconsciously and instinctively, he could read character, and as with all instinctive knowledge, he was utterly unable to say how he reached his conclusions. His judgment had so often proved to be truer than appearances that it had surprised even himself. His success in his newspaper work depended almost wholly upon this gift. In news as news he had little interest, and he often chafed at the routine drudgery of his assignments, but when his work was to "write up" some one, whether it was a drunken tramp arrested for disorderly conduct, a visiting diplomat surrounded with mystery and red tape, a famous actress or an infamous trust-president, he was in his element. He would sit and look at his victim with quiet, dreaming eyes, listen with sympathetic attention to whatever he might say, and then go away and write up a sketch that would reveal the inner life of his subject's mind in a manner that was sometimes startling to the man himself.

"Who told you that? — How did you find that out?" was frequently asked.

Digitized by Google

Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

And Lyon would laugh and pass it off as a joke, or if pressed, would probably answer, "Why, I don't know; that's what I should do, or feel, or think, if I were in his place. — I got that impression about him, that's all." But the point was that the impressions he received were so apt to be psychologically correct that it seemed almost uncanny. It was something like clairvoyance.

As he turned away from the inquest to carry out the mission that had so unexpectedly been entrusted to him, he felt perfectly convinced, in his own mind, of Lawrence's innocence.

In spite of the quarrel in the morning with its proof of Lawrence's temper and Fullerton's self-control, in spite of the damning fact that Lawrence's cane, broken and hidden, would appear to be the instrument with which the fatal blow was struck, in spite of the curious fact that Lawrence had held his peace when he must have recognized the dead man, Lyon found himself inwardly committed to the faith that Lawrence was not directly involved. He faced and set aside as simply unexplained the fact of Lawrence's presence in the neighborhood. By Donohue's testimony, Lawrence was going in the direction of the tragedy about half an hour before the body was discovered. By Lyon's own knowledge, Lawrence must have been behind him on Hemlock Avenue as he came down that block, else how had he, too, seen the running girl? In other words, he had spent half an hour

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

loitering on the street of a winter night within a compass of two blocks. Of course the mystery involved the girl, for whose good name he was so deeply concerned.

How she was involved he could not even hazard a guess — until he should have seen her. Did Lawrence entertain the thought that she was involved in the affair in any other way than as a possible witness? If she was merely a disinterested witness, would he have felt bound, at such cost, to keep her from being called upon? Lyon felt that was a forced explanation. No, Lawrence must either know or believe that the girl was vitally connected with the murder. Nothing else would explain his anxiety on her behalf. Now, who was the girl? It was luck and great luck that he had so good a justification for calling, as otherwise he would have been forced to invent an occasion. It was beyond all reason to expect him to relinquish the pursuit of such a clue.

He made his way at once to the house where he had seen Lawrence call. His ring was answered by an elderly servant, slow and stiff in her movements. Lyon recalled with a smile his fancy that the running girl might possibly be the maid, hurrying to conceal a tardy return to the house. This woman could not run for a fire.

"Is Miss Wolcott at home?" he asked.

The woman looked dubious and discouraging. "I'll see," she said.

Digitized by Google

Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

"Please tell her that I will detain her only a moment, but that I have a very important message for her," Lyon said, giving the girl his card and quietly forcing his way past her into the reception room.

The old servant went slowly up-stairs, and Lyon took a swift survey of the room in which he was left, striving to guess the character of the owners. Books, pictures, flowers, all betokened refined and gentle ways of living. Unpretentious as it was, this was evidently the home of cultured people.

A slow step was heard in the hall, and an old man came to the door of the drawing room and looked in at Lyon with a mingling of mild dignity and child-like friendliness that was peculiarly attractive.

"I *thought* I heard some one come in," he said, with obvious pleasure at finding his guess right. "Did you come to see my granddaughter?"

"I have sent up my card to Miss Wolcott," Lyon answered.

"She is my granddaughter. Didn't you know?" the old gentleman asked, in surprise. "I am Aaron Wolcott, you know. Maybe you are a stranger in Wayscott."

"Yes, I am a good deal of a stranger yet."

"What is your name, may I ask?"

"Percy Lyon."

The old gentleman took a chair opposite and regarded him with cheerful interest. "I am

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

pleased to meet you, Mr. Lyon. My granddaughter will be down soon. Eliza, our old servant, is slow because she has rheumatism. She's getting old, — but that isn't a crime, is it? I'll be getting old some time myself, I suppose. But I've got all my faculties yet, thank Heaven."

"Have you lived in this house long?" Lyon asked.

"I built this house twenty-five years ago for my son, — Edith's father, you know. There have been many changes, many changes. He died when he was thirty, and his young wife followed him and left the baby Edith and me alone together. There's something wrong when young people die and old people are left. We should not outlive our children."

"Do you mean that you live here entirely alone with your granddaughter?" asked Lyon, quickly. This was significant.

"Except for Eliza. Eliza is a good servant. Edith isn't much of a housekeeper. She doesn't care for anything but her music. But she's a good girl, Edith is."

"Did you wish to see me?" a cool, low voice asked at the door.

Lyon rose to his feet and bowed. "If you are Miss Wolcott, I have a message for you," he said, and by a pause he conveyed to her the idea that the message was for her alone.

Miss Wolcott regarded him for a moment with

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

an observant scrutiny which she made no attempt to disguise, and then she turned to her grandfather.

"It is time for your walk, Dandy," she said. She got him his overcoat, hat, and stick from the hall, and herself buttoned his coat up to his throat.

"You see how she spoils me," Mr. Wolcott said, with evident pride in his voice. "I'm old enough to look out for myself."

Edith did not speak. In grave silence she gave him his gloves, and watched him put them on while Lyon as intently watched her. She was a tall girl of perhaps twenty-five, with eyes of midnight blackness, broad black eyebrows that drooped in straight heavy lines toward her temples, and black hair that was drawn in smooth, broad bands at the side of her head to repeat the drooping line of her brows. Her mouth drooped too, in lines too firm to be called pensive, too proud to be sad. Altogether it was a face of mystery, — a face not easily read, but not the less powerful in its attraction. Lyon had a swift comprehension of Lawrence's feeling.

If this woman was in any way connected with the murder, the matter was serious as well as delicate. Lyon's pulses began to tingle as a hunter's do when he sees a mysterious "track" which he does not understand.

She let her grandfather out at the front door, and then came back to the room where Lyon was waiting. Calmly seating herself, she bent an in-

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

quiring and unsmiling look upon him. It struck him that she had shown nothing of her grandfather's tendency to unnecessary words.

"I have come at the request of Mr. Lawrence, who wished me to bring you a message," Lyon said.

There was something like a flash of light in her shadowy eyes, but whether it meant eagerness or anger, love or hate, Lyon could not say. She bent that same intent, unsmiling regard upon him, with only a deepening of its intentness, as though waiting for his next word with held breath.

"Mr. Lawrence considered it important that I should see you personally and at once, since he could not come himself to explain his reasons for what may sound like an extraordinary request," he went on deliberately.

She moved restlessly. "I have not seen Mr. Lawrence since —"

Lyon interrupted. "Pardon me, may I give you the message before you say anything more? Mr. Lawrence has been arrested on the charge of killing Warren Fullerton —"

"Oh, heavens, has it come to that?" the girl gasped, with horror on her face.

Lyon raised a warning hand. "And his urgent request to you is that you refrain from giving any information which you may possess in regard to the matter to any one. That of course includes myself."

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Miss Wolcott was holding fast to the arms of the chair and her pallor seemed to have deepened visibly, but she did not lose her self-control for a moment.

Lyon would have given much to be able to tell whether the feeling which she obviously held back from expression was fear or concern or contempt.

"You of course saw the account of the murder in the morning papers," he continued, deeming it advisable to put her in possession of the situation as fully as possible. "The inquest was held today, and Mr. Lawrence has been taken into custody, — merely on suspicion, of course. It is known that he had had a quarrel with Mr. Fullerton, and his broken cane was found in the neighborhood."

Miss Wolcott's intense eyes seemed trying to drag out his words faster than he could utter them, but she asked no questions.

"This means that he will be held for the action of the Grand Jury, which will meet in about two weeks. Of course he will have an attorney to present his case. You are not to think that his arrest necessarily means anything worse than the necessity of making his innocence as obvious to the world at large as it is now to his friends. But in the meantime his great and immediate anxiety was that you should be warned to say nothing about the whole matter. Frankly, Miss Wolcott, I don't know whether your silence is to protect

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

him or to protect some one else, but I do know that he was profoundly in earnest in hoping that you would preserve that silence unbroken as long as possible."

"What do you mean by as long as possible?" she asked, slowly.

"If you should be summoned as a witness at the trial, you will of course have to tell everything within your knowledge connected with the affair."

She frowned thoughtfully. "Am I likely to be summoned as a witness?" she asked.

"That will depend on whether the prosecuting attorney or Mr. Lawrence's attorney gets an idea that you have any information in your possession which will help his side of the case."

She sat very still, with downcast eyes, for a long moment. Lyon made a movement of rising, and she checked him.

"One moment. When the trial comes off, will there be any way of my knowing how it is going?"

"It will be fully reported in the papers. You could be present in the court room if you think it advisable."

"I will think of it," she said quietly. Then her splendid self-control wavered for a moment. "If I should feel that I had to talk to some one, to understand things, — would you — might I —"

"May I come occasionally to tell you of any new developments?" Lyon asked, simply.

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY

"Thank you. It will be kind of you."

"I shall be very glad to keep you informed." And then he added deliberately, intending that however much she might veil her own sympathies there should be no doubt in her mind as to his position, "I am a friend of Mr. Lawrence's. That is why he entrusted me with this word for you."

She bowed, somewhat distantly, without speaking, and Lyon left.

When he got outside, he allowed himself to indulge in a moment of puzzled and half-reluctant admiration. What superb nerve! Her connection with this mysterious case was evidently a close and vital one, yet she had held herself so well in hand that it was impossible for him to say now, after this momentous interview, whether her sympathies were with Lawrence or not. She had most completely understood and heeded his injunction to keep silence, at any rate. Was the injunction needed, in the face of such self-control? What was it that lay behind that shield? Lyon felt as though his hands were being bound by invisible bands, and he had a frantic desire to break his way clear and force a way to an understanding of things. Turning a corner he came upon the old grandfather taking his leisurely constitutional in the sun, and instantly he realized that Providence had placed in his hands the means of removing some of his assorted varieties of ignorance, — if

Digitized by Google
Original from HARVARD UNIVERSITY