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BESSIE AND WILLIE.

"What you sitting side of me for?"
Bessie's blue eyes opened wider
As little Willie Jenkins
Took the vacant seat beside her.

"I had to come," replied the boy,
"For the teacher told me to;
He said I'd been so naughty
I must sit 'longside of you."

"Is that what makes you look so cross?"
Said Bessie with a smile.
"I like to have you sit by me;
Can you stay a good long while?"

"I'm 'fraid I can't this time," said Will,
"For I wasn't very bad;"
"You'll be badder next time—won't you?"
"Yes," lisped the little lad.
—Portland Transcript.

THE MUSIC MAN.

"Aunt Betsy," said Delia Grey, "can I go over to the Drew place, to singing school, to-night?"

"No, you can't, and there's an end on't," said Aunt Betsey Blatchford, knitting away as if her needles were made of sheet lightning and her elbows worked by electricity.

Delia looked sober enough. She was a tall, fresh complexioned girl of 17 or 18, with large brown eyes, a forehead surmounted by naturally curling rings of chestnut hair, and sweet red mouth always ready to break into gracious smiles.

She had worked hard all day making soft soap and finishing off the family ironing, but her labors had been cheered by the anticipation of the evening "singing school" that was to come.

It is more than likely that Aunt Betsey knew all this, but she sat there like a determined Fate in a brown calico gown and fluted cap frills. Aunt Betsey was the autocrat of Redberry farm. She owned the house and the surrounding acres and the quarts mill by the river, and Delia, although by courtesy called her niece, was in reality only a distant relation who, if not taken in and brought up by old Mrs. Blatchford, would have been turned over to the tender mercies of the town poor house.

"Delia's a good girl enough," said the old woman, "and a spry worker as ever was. But I don't believe in girls larking around the neighborhood the hull time. They're a deal better off at home, sewin' on their patch work or cuttin' rags for a new kitchen carpet."

"But I promised the schoolmaster, Aunt Betsey," said poor Delia, her dimpled face falling like the barometer before a storm. "He's to call for me at half past 7! And he will see me safe home afterward."

"Well, let him go away again," said Aunt Betsey.

Delia could hardly see the glitter of the knitting needles through the tears that blurred her vision at these cruel words.

"There's to be a dance out in the old barn afterward," she ventured to add, "and I ironed my pink calico dress so neatly, and my laces are all done up! Oh, Aunt Betsey, I'd work so hard at the carpet rags all the rest of the week if you would let me go this once to singing school."

Aunt Betsey wheeled herself round in her chair and eyed Delia sharply through the moon like glasses of her big silver bowed spectacles.

"Well, well, go if you want to," said she, tartly. "Though all this music is nothin' but clear waste o' time. In my young days if we could join into the psalm tunes in church it was all folks expected of us!"

"Everybody plays and sings nowadays," ventured Delia, whose loftiest and brightest aspiration was for a melodeon or a cheap parlor organ of her own.

"Humph!" commented Aunt Betsey. "They'd a deal better play on the washboard and sing calling home the cows! That's the sort o' music that pays!"

Delia sighed and abandoned the question. Consent to go to "singing school" was sufficient of a victory for the present time. And when Marcus Wayte, the village pedagogue, called for her at the specified hour she was all ready, in the stiff, rustling, pink dress, the freshly ironed laces and a little pair of brown cotton gloves over frilled ribbon wristlets that were entirely new.

"But it's the last time," she sighed. "Aunt Betsey thinks that music is useless and nonsensical, and she won't have me fooling away my time at singing school, she says."

"Oh, Delia—and those lessons on the melodeon that I have been giving you at Dr. Bartlett's."

"They will all be of no use," said Delia, with a little tremor in her voice.

"Does she know that people sometimes earn their living by the aid of music?" persisted Wayte.

"She don't believe it!"

"And you have such a taste for it, Delia! Nay, more than a taste—a decided talent. Oh, we must not let the thing drop. You must have a melodeon—it won't cost much to hire one by the quarter—and go on with your lessons!"

Delia shook her head.

"It will be impossible," said she, mournfully.

"I'll see about that," said Marcus Wayte. "My cousin is in the business. I'll send him to see your aunt."

Delia shrugged her pink calico shoulders. "Ah," said she, "you don't know Aunt Betsey!"

"Well," smiled Marcus, "we'll see."

Mr. Ives Wayte listened with the most earnest interest to the tale of his cousin, the schoolmaster.

"Got a real talent for music, eh?" said he.

"A most decided one."

"And poor?"

"She is," answered Marcus. "But the old lady has plenty of money, if only she chose to spend it in this way, and she ought to do so."

"Plenty of money? And plenty of prejudices, eh?"

"That is it, exactly," said Marcus, smiling.

"Very well. I'll promise to do the best I can—to oblige you, Mark. For," added Mr. Ives Wayte, with a genial twinkle of the eye, "I see your heart is in the business."

"It is," frankly confessed Marcus. "For if Delia Grey could be qualified to give music lessons we might be married and take the Wayesville academy at once—a day and boarding school, don't you see? And she is the dearest little thing."

Mr. Ives Wayte laughed. "It's as good as done," said he.

It was a dreary, rainy night toward the close of that dreariest month of all the year—the end November—when there came a knock at Mrs. Blatchford's door. She was all alone. Thomas Bates, the hired man, had gone to see his brother off on the steamer for Florida, where he was intending to start an orange orchard. Delia Grey had been summoned to the bedside of a sick neighbor, where she was to remain until late. But Mrs. Blatchford had yet to see the tramp, the wild animal or the tame, one of whom she entertained the least fear. She got up and went to the door. There stood a dripping traveler on the threshold.

"Is Mrs. Nugent's place near here?" said he, taking off his cap in spite of the rain.

"Bless your heart, no!" said Mrs. Blatchford. "It's nine good miles away on the other road. How ever came you to take this way?"

"I've a parlor organ here," said the music man, glancing backward at the dim outline of a wagon in the road, "that I was to deliver to Miss Nugent."

"Guess you'll hardly deliver it to-night," said Aunt Betsey. "A parlor organ, eh? For Matildy Nugent? Well, I wonder what folly she'll be guilty of next."

"Would you kindly allow me to bring it in here?" asked Mr. Ives Wayte, with his most ingratiatory air.

"What, in all the rain?"

"Oh, it is safely packed in rubber wrappings. It won't injure this nice new carpet," said the bland traveler, "that reminds me of one my mother has just finished up in Nantucket."

"Yes," said she, "you may fetch it in. I never seen a parlor organ. There was a man came by with one in plum time with a monkey at the end of a long string"——

"Oh, this is quite a different affair," winced the music man. "If I could sleep to-night in your barn"——

"You needn't do that," said Aunt Betsey, quite propitiated by the humble air and manner of this chance visitor. "There's a spare bedroom openin' out of the kitchen that you're welcome to."

"Many thanks, madam," bowed the agent. "As I was about to remark, if you will kindly give me house room I should like to play a few airs for you on this instrument, just to show you its tune and compass."

"Well," said Aunt Betsey, who never objected to a treat which she could get for nothing, "it would be rather a joke for me to hear Matildy Nugent's organ afore she heard it herself, wouldn't it, now? I guess, young man, you may put it up if it ain't too much trouble."

The music man dried himself before the fire. He refreshed himself with a plate of Aunt Betsey's excellent doughnuts and a drink of her cider, and then, cheered both in mind and body, he applied himself to business and soon set the melodeon up in the little sitting room.

"It ain't bad lookin'," said Mrs. Blatchford, viewing it meditatively.

Mr. Ives Wayte sat down before the instrument, and touched it with a master hand.

He played "Rock of Ages," "Shining Shore," "Bruce's Address," "Killarney" and a few such age worn veterans of melody.

"Kin you play 'Old Rosin the Bow?'" suddenly demanded Aunt Betsey with something like tears in her eyes.

"I think I can," said Mr. Ives Wayte, and he evoked the sadly sweet chords of the old time lay with "crescendo" and "diminuendo" like the wail of a human voice.

"Seems 'most like 'twis speakin'," said Mrs. Blatchford. "I never knowed there was so much in the parlor organs. Be they very costly, mister?"

Mr. Ives Wayte named the price. Aunt Betsey hesitated—shook her head—pondered.

"It seems a good deal o' money," said she. "But, arter all, what's money? And Delia, she's dredful fond o' music. I'm most certain she could learn to play that there instrument, and it sort o' sounds nice to hear them old fashioned tunes that folks used to sing when I was a gal! My money's my own, I guess, to do as I'm a mind to!" half defiantly. "And I will! I say, Mr. Musicman, if you leave that melodeon just there where it stands, and cart up another for Matildy Nugent, I'll take it, and pay you cash down for it," said Mrs. Blatchford. "There now!"

"Well," said he, "since you desire it, I think it might be managed. The instrument is here. That counts for something."

"It's proper sightly," said Mrs. Blatchford. "Delia has been a good, hard workin' girl. Play that last tune over again, Mr. Musicman—she's comin' up the path now. I heerd the gate latch creak."

"Am I dreaming?" she cried. "What is this? How came it here? Oh, Aunt Betsey"——

"It's a present I'm goin' to make you, Delia," said the old lady, with beaming eyes. "Come here and kiss me!" And I'll hire Miss Barton to give you music lessons—and we'll take solid comfort out o' this 'ere! See if we don't!"

The music man pocketed a roll of bills and went his way rejoicing. Marcus Wayte heard the tidings with great joy.

Little Miss Barton welcomed the news of a new scholar with heartfelt thankfulness—and Aunt Betsey went around the house humming "Those Evening Bells" and wiping the dust off a new joy every few minutes.

"It's something to get ahead o' Matildy Nugent," said she. "And Delia's been a good, dutiful gal all her life!"

"Didn't I tell you it was as good as done?" said Ives Wayte to his cousin when next they met.

"I think," said Marcus, laughing, "you ought to have a diplomatic appointment."

"It pays better to be an agent," observed the music man composedly.—Toronto Mail.

Artificial Ice.

Ice made by these machines is the nearest to being absolutely pure of any used. It is made of water condensed from steam, which is poured into large galvanized cans. These cans are set in a brine bath chilled far below freezing point by coils of pipes, through which anhydrous ammoniacal gas is forced by powerful pumps. The water in the cans is congealed into ice by the same power, cold, that converts the water of a creek, lake or pond into a frigid substance. There is a theory that water purifies itself in freezing, but it is true to a very limited extent. No cold, no matter how intense it may be, will purify water containing decayed animal or vegetable matter. The makers of ice machines claim that they can make ice at a cost of less than $1.25 a ton, but this is doubtless far too low. The time is fast approaching when ice making machinery will be simplified and cheapened, and then it will come into much more general use. The great need in this respect at present is a safe machine, reasonable in cost, which will be small enough for use in residences.—New York World.

A fast young man is very slow in paying his debts, and a lawyer's brief is very long.

Dr. Pierce's Pellets cure constipation, biliousness, sick headache, bilious headache, and all derangements of the stomach, liver and bowels. One a dose.

"Will you kindly hand me the salt?" said a man in a restaurant to his neighbor at the table.

"Do you mistake me for the waiter?" he haughtily inquired.

"No," replied the first speaker, with withering scorn; "I made a far greater mistake than that. I mistook you for a gentleman."

TAKEN IN TIME.

"The carpenters are about done. They've made quick work of it, I must say. They'll be able to quit to-night."

Farmer Hill came into the cheese room in which his wife was busy to tell it. She turned to him in mild surprise.

"Why, without cutting that door?"

"Well, I did mean as much as could be to have that door cut, and the hole between the pantry and the kitchen to put the dishes through without walking round. But you see the men have made such good time that I thought it would be best to let 'em go, as it's Saturday night, and not break into another week.

"Yes, of course," said Mrs. Hill, with the ready acquiescence she always gave to her husband's decisions.

"I'm going to have it done, though," went on Mr. Hill with energy. "I've promised it long enough and it ought to have been done long ago. I shall have the men back here before long, for I've about made up my mind to have a wind mill set this fall. Folks say it's a grand thing for saving work. The boys and men are tired of pumping water for the horses. It's getting too late in the day for such old fashioned methods. I believe in keeping up with the times."

But she was so entirely in sympathy with all his plans and arrangements that no thought of complaint crossed her mind as she carried a load of milk pans around to the spring house. A beautiful little rivulet which bubbled through one corner of the back yard had been turned to valuable use for dairy purposes. But the singular obtuseness to all common sense convenience often shown by old time country folk had led the builders of the substantial farm house to place the kitchen door on the other side.

"Wait, I hadn't got through yet," said her husband, following her to the spring house. "My, you have got a lot of nice looking butter there. No wonder your butter always brings the best prices anywhere round. But I'm going over to the funeral and I guess you'd better go 'long."

"Oh, I can't," said Mrs. Hill, shaking her head very decisively. "I'd like to real well, but there's too much to do."

"Nonsense. Call those big girls of yours and let them take hold a little."

"They do. They do all the sweeping, but I can't leave the dairy work to anyone else. Poor Sarah Duffy! Seems as though I ought to go to her funeral."

"Go'n get ready, mother. I'll call Harriet."

"Oh, never mind that. They like to have a little time for study and they ought to. I can leave it for a while."

"Hannah, then."

"No, she has enough to do in the kitchen."

He stood and watched her while she put the finishing touches to the pats of butter and then walked with her around the house. Her step lagged behind his brisk ones, and as she reached the back porch she sat wearily down on the lowest step.

"I don't know as I'll go, James. I don't feel quite up to it."

"That's your mistake, mother. You get yourself dressed and the ride'll do you no end o' good."

Thus urged, Mrs. Hill, after fifteen minutes, appeared at the door ready to take her place in the smart buggy which her husband drove around. He talked away in great animation as usual, but before long seemed suddenly struck by her unusual silence.

"Ain't you well, mother?"

"Oh, yes, about as usual. I seem to have a kind of tired feeling most of the time lately, but I s'pose it's because I'm getting old. We can't always be young, you know."

"No," said Mr. Hill. But any complaint from his wife was such a novelty that he ceased his talk, and pretending to look critically at the grain field of a neighbor stole a few glances at her face.

He was not an observant man; had not, perhaps, in the daily round of harmonious home life taken a keen look at the face of any one there for a year; and a feeling of dismayed surprise arose in his heart as he marked the worn features, the depressed expression and the thick sprinkling of gray in the soft hair.

"Aren't you well, mother?" The question was repeated with more of meaning in the tone.

"Why, of course I am, James. Don't you know what a worker I've always been?"

At the gathering of neighbors for the country funeral Mr. Hill, leaving his wife at the door to make her way into the gloomy parlor in which one more pair of weary hands lay folded in rest, went to find a place to tie his horse. Men talked in subdued tones of crops and stock until the signal came for the beginning of the service, when all gathered as nearly as possible within reach of the voice of the minister. Mr. Hill found himself crowded against a corner of the house close to the end of a long porch which was filled with chairs occupied by women, while from an open window near came sounds which soon told him that the children of the woman who lay resting were within.

They were of all ages, as he knew. There was the babble of a toddling child, happily too young to know what dread meaning lay in these strange doings. And Mr. Hill's heart turned sick at sound of the wailing cry of girls like his own. What if such a thing could come to his home? How could any one have anticipated this of the woman who had been such a power in her family? Who could have believed that she was in need of this rest?

The short service ended, the neighbors were invited to take the last look at their friend. As Mr. Hill stood waiting for the crowd about him to disperse an undertone conversation between two neighboring farmers' wives distinctly reached his ears through the low hum.

"A dreadful thing for them poor girls."

"Yes, indeed. What'd she o' thought if she'd had time to think of it?"

"Such an ambitious woman as she always was. Never thought any work too hard for her."

"No, and I'm inclined to think that's where the mistake come in. I believe Sarah Duffy'd a' been alive today if that husband o' hers had had a grain of sense. She kep' on and kep' on 'till she broke down all at once."

"How do you mean? He was always good to her."

"Yes, in a way. But he let her work and slave without ever trying to make things easy for her. If I should say my say right out I should say 'twas that pump in the shed that was the death o' Sarah Duffy."

"You don't mean it!"

"Yes, I do. I've seen her a-workin' away at that old pump—stiff and heavy and hard and wheezy, till there didn't seem a breath left in her. I never thought much of it myself till I went for a spell down to my sister's in town and see the way they have things fixed! Nobody in that house o' hers raises a drop o' water 'cept to drink it. It all comes through pipes and runs away through pipes. But folks in the country don't have such fix-in's. They cost money, and flesh 'n' blood's cheaper'n money."

"But there's a new pump set in now."

"Yes," with a short, mirthless laugh; "it'll make things easier for the second wife."

Mr. Hill rapidly made his way out of reach of the voices and found himself in the current which passed on to the parlor. Before he realized it he stood beside the dead, and in one glance took in the expression of ineffable peace. But the weary look had not been quite smoothed out by the kindly finger of death, and sharply into his heart smote the idea that it was like what he had seen in his wife's face as he had furtively scanned it that day. It seemed to rest there now as she sat near the coffin. Making a signal to her, he drew her out of the house and toward the buggy.

"Ain't we going to the cemetery, James?" she asked, as he untied the horse.

"No; I think I can give you a more cheerful ride."

He drove home by a road she had always liked, and on reaching home told her to go and lie down. She laughed and he went to find his daughters.

"Girls, do you know mother's run down and tired out, and that if we don't look out she'll be the next one to go?"

It seemed a cruel bomb to drop into the light hearts.

"Why, father, is anything the matter? Where's mother?"

"No, stay here; there ain't anything the matter yet, perhaps. It's only I want to have it stopped before the matter comes."

There was a long talk.

"I've begged mother time and again to let me take the dairy work," said Harriet. "She says it's too hard for girls."

"We'll make it easier then. We'll make everything easier for you and for her. We must get her away from home for a change, girls."

"She won't go."

"Let's go'n tell her she must. She's lying down."

"Lying down?" said Janet with a laugh. "Look there."

Mother in her working dress was walking around the house to the dairy house. Father took her arm and brought her in.

"Mother," he said, "I'm going over to Reuben's next week to see about that business between him and me. I shall have to again three weeks after. I want you to go with me and stay between whiles."

Mother's face flushed, but she shook her head.

"I couldn't do it," she said. "I don't say but what it would be pleasant to make a good visit to Sister Ruth, but I couldn't take the time and I couldn't be ready. I shouldn't want to go looking shabby, and I don't need anything new for here at home. It's the girls' time for wanting things."

"Oh, yes, yes," said father, half irritably, "but it's the girls' time for taking care of you, and they know it. Some girls know it too late."

"Don't bother now, father," urged Mrs. Hill. "It would take a week of fussing and hard work sewing for me to get ready, and would do more harm than good."

Another talk and a conspiracy against mother was proposed, so astonishing and so delightful that Harriet could not repress a shout of laughter.

"It'll cost money," she said.

"There's more valuable things than money," said father, taking out his pocketbook. And the girls grew sober, realizing how strongly he felt all he was saying as he laid out one $50 bill, then another, saying:

"Send for anything she wants ready made, so there won't be any fussing. Then she can't help herself."

And for a week mother was sorely puzzled at the whisperings and the sly glances, surprised at sudden hugs and bursts of laughter from Harriet, half inclined to feel angry at seeing very plainly that something was going on which no one would tell her.

At the end of that time a small trunk was delivered at the door. It contained a black silk dress, wrap and bonnet, with gloves and other accessories to a neat toilet.

"That's the secret of all those measurements I had to take last week for that wrapper," said Harriet, pointing to them. "Will you ever forgive yourself, little mother, for the way you growled at me? You see we girls are getting too old for you to be mistress here any longer, so you might as well give in to it at once."

The result was that mother, more pleased than she would admit, was, as she told her friends at the end of her journey, fairly hustled out of the house before she knew what she was about.

She came back with renewed strength and spirit for the dear home duties. But those duties had been so lightened by tender care and thought for her that she declared there seemed nothing left for her to do.

The windmill which had been planned to save the labor of the men had been called upon as a helper for women also, and kitchens and wash rooms were well supplied with faucets and drains. Doors were cut and everything else done which could save the labor of hands and feet.

"It costs a little money," said Farmer Hill, "but I'm not one to count money before flesh and blood, and I'm willing to declare most men think as I do, only they don't happen to think in time."—Sydney Dare in Springfield Homestead.

One of Washington's Widows.

There is a widow belonging to this corps of legislative quorum breakers who is credited with more influence than has ever been exercised over public men by any other woman. She is a woman of remarkable intellectual force and is very highly connected. For a number of years she has occupied a position in one of the departments and has gone into society to a considerable extent. She has a matchless wit and the subtlety of a serpent, and is altogether such a brilliant woman that her society is sought by many of the most distinguished men in public life. Many more beautiful women in society find themselves deserted by the gentlemen when she appears to charm them with her wit, and it may not be surprising that a member should prefer a chat with her to listening to a roll call in the house. So popular is she that she sometimes seems to be holding a reception at her office, callers coming in one after another.—Cor. Philadelphia Telegraph.

"Fruit Jars," he read; and added to himself, "Yes, it does, if it is unripe."

It is said that Boston visitors to Rhode Island use words long enough to reach across the State.

"I am always glad to give the young men a lift," said the father of several pretty daughters, booting an objectionable suitor off the porch.

"But I pass," said a minister in dismissing one theme of his sermon to take up another. "Then I make it spades," yelled a man in the gallery who had been dreaming out the happy hours in a game of euchre. He went out on the next deal, assisted by one of the deacons.

IN HIS SHIRT SLEEVES.

A beautiful woman found dead in the gray morning on the outskirts of the town. Two laborers going to their work in the woods had discovered the body, and in their fright had thrown their axes down and beat a hasty retreat to the village, where, under great excitement, they reported the matter to the authorities.

All Brounfield was excited over the terrible news. Never in the history of the town had such a tragedy occurred. The woman was well known in the community as a young widow whose husband had led a somewhat reckless life, but who had left her well provided for at his death, which occurred after two years of wedded life.

As was most natural with the added attraction of a snug fortune, the pretty young widow was quite popular, and it was rumored that she had half a dozen suitors.

But this is in the nature of a digression. I have introduced you to the woman—dead, and the principal object of this story is to unravel for the reader the mystery of her death.

The mayor, five councilmen, the town marshal and perhaps fifty citizens of Brounfield, after they had heard the stories of the two laborers, followed them to the spot where the body lay.

It was a fitting spot for a murder. The sandy road, arched by meeting trees that shut the sunlight out, led abruptly to a covered bridge, which spanned a bleak and sluggish stream, and just fifty yards from the water, in a clump of bushes by the roadside, the body lay.

Why did the murderer leave it there? was the question we involuntarily asked ourselves as the white face and staring eyes met our gaze. Why did he not seek to conceal his crime by throwing the body in the river?

The woman had been strangled; the print of human fingers was visible on her white throat. The fingers of the right hand were closed tightly, until the blue nails seemed to pierce the bloodless palm. Evidently she had not died without a struggle.

"Look!" cried one of the men, pointing to the closed hand, and we saw for the first time that it held a little tuft of coarse black hair.

"This may be a clew to the murderer," said the mayor. "Justice Brown, you will hold the inquest. Had we not better remove the body at once to Brounfield?"

The justice assented, and we formed a little funeral procession and bore the dead woman to the town.

The two laborers who had discovered the body were held as witnesses, but the inquest developed nothing, except that the woman was fond of taking long walks in the afternoon, and that on the evening preceding her death she had been seen leaving her house by a colored woman, who testified that she saw a man, who wore no coat, join her in the little town park and enter into conversation with her. Here the witness lost sight of them and thought nothing of the incident. She could not describe the man in his shirt sleeves, for she was not near enough to distinguish his features. She remembered, however, that he was a tall man, and seemed to have a stick or walking cane in his hand.

Who could have committed the crime? Robbery was not the object, for the woman's purse, containing seven dollars, was found by her side, or rather a little satchel which she carried suspended from her neck.

My business kept me in Brounfield a week after this event, but when I left they were no nearer to solving the mystery of the murder than they were when the body was found.

I remember how, a month afterward, as I lay on my bed in a distant town thinking it over, the testimony of that colored woman at the inquest recurred to me and set me to thinking.

She had spoken of a man "with his coat off" who had stopped the woman and engaged her in conversation in the park. Had they looked upon this as a clew and followed it up?

Was there a man in that town who habitually went in his shirt sleeves? A man who had been familiar enough with the woman to address her as this man did?

The more I thought of this the more it appealed to me. I could not ridicule it into silence. It seemed to take in my mind the indefinite shape of a clew to the murder, until at last I felt confident that I could clear up the mystery in which it was shrouded.

I packed my valise and bought a ticket to Brounfield. I had yet some unfinished business there and so a good excuse for going.

Arrived there, I made inquiries concerning the murder. A reward had been offered for the murderer, but as yet he had not been captured.

My room was in the second story of the little hotel. It was a hot night in July, and although fatigued by my journey I could not sleep. It was perhaps near 12 o'clock, when the stillness of death seemed to reign in the house, that I arose and resolved to seek the balcony for a breath of fresh air.

As I walked out I saw a man in his shirt sleeves, bare headed, sitting at the far end, with his feet on the railing.

He gave an involuntary start at my approach.

"Ah!" he said, with something like a sigh, "out for a breath of fresh air, eh? It was so plagued hot in the house I thought I'd try it out here myself."

I do not know that the man's manner would have impressed me if I had not seen him in his shirt sleeves, but putting this and that together—the way he started at my approach—his nervous, jerky manner of speaking, and then—his being in his shirt sleeves—but pshaw! I wore no coat myself. Who could on such a burning July night?

I do not know whether fate or Providence led me to this man, but I do know that a half hour's conversation with him made me suspect that he knew something about the murder of that poor woman whose body I had seen on that memorable morning by the roadside!

I naturally led the conversation to the murder. He did not seem inclined to talk of it and soon changed the subject.

But I brought him back to it by easy stages until at last, with a gesture of impatience, he said: "I don't care to talk about it; the authorities are at work on the case and I guess they'll ferret out the murderer in time."

The best detectives sometimes blunder in their work. I was an amateur in the business; hence my great confidence in my theories. "A tall man," the woman had said. Here was a tall man. A tuft of coarse black hair clutched in the dead woman's palm. My friend in his shirt sleeves had just such hair. These were the mental notes I made while I was talking with him there on the balcony.

"Are you a stranger here?" I asked.

"Not exactly," he replied. "