GREEN ANNA KATHARINE

THE MYSTERY OF THE HASTY ARROW

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Anna Katharine Green
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BOOK I
A PROBLEM OF THE FIRST ORDER

I
"LET SOME ONE SPEAK!"

The hour of noon had just struck, and the few visitors still lingering among the curiosities of the great museum were suddenly startled by the sight of one of the attendants running down the broad, central staircase, loudly shouting:

"Close the doors! Let no one out! An accident has occurred, and nobody's to leave the building."

There was but one person near either of the doors, and as he chanced to be a man closely connected with the museum,—being, in fact, one of its most active directors,—he immediately

turned about and in obedience to a gesture made by the attendant, ran up the marble steps, followed by some dozen others.

At the top they all turned, as by common consent, toward the left-hand gallery, where in the section marked II, a tableau greeted them which few of them will ever forget.

I say "tableau" because the few persons concerned in it stood as in a picture, absolutely motionless and silent as the dead. Sense, if not feeling, was benumbed in them all, as in another moment it was benumbed in the breasts of these new arrivals. Tragedy was there in its most terrible, its most pathetic, aspect. The pathos was given by the victim,—a young and pretty girl lying face upward on the tessellated floor with an arrow in her breast and death stamped unmistakably on every feature, —the terror by the look and attitude of the woman they saw kneeling over her—a remarkable woman, no longer young, but of a presence to hold the attention, even if the circumstances had been of a far less tragic nature. Her hand was on the arrow but she had made no movement to withdraw it, and her eyes, fixed upon space, showed depths of horror hardly to be explained even by the suddenness and startling character of the untoward fatality of which she had just been made the unhappy witness.

The director, whose name was Roberts, thought as he paused on the edge of the crowd that he had never seen a countenance upon which woe had stamped so deep a mark; and greatly moved by it, he was about to seek some explanation of a scene to which appearances gave so little clue, when the tall but stooping figure

of the Curator entered, and he found himself relieved from a task whose seriousness he had no difficulty in measuring.

To those who knew William Jewett well, it was evident that he had been called from some task which still occupied his thoughts and for the moment somewhat bewildered his understanding. But as he was a conscientious man and quite capable of taking the lead when once roused to the exigencies of an occasion, Mr. Roberts felt a certain interest in watching the slow awakening of this self-absorbed man to the awful circumstances which in one instant had clouded the museum in an atmosphere of mysterious horror.

When the full realization came,—which was not till a way had been made for him to the side of the stricken woman crouching over the dead child,—the energy which transformed his countenance and gave character to his usually bent and inconspicuous figure was all if not more than the anxious director expected.

Finding that his attempts to meet the older woman's eye only prolonged the suspense, the Curator addressed her quietly, and in sympathetic tones inquired whose child this was and how so dreadful a thing had happened.

She did not answer. She did not even look his way. With a rapid glance into the faces about him, ending in one of deep compassion directed toward herself, he repeated his question.

Still no response—still that heavy silence, that absolute immobility of face and limb. If her faculty of hearing was dulled,

possibly she would yield to that of touch. Stooping, he laid his hand on her arm.

This roused her. Slowly her eyes lost their fixed stare and took on a more human light. A shudder shook her frame, and gazing down into the countenance of the young girl lying at her feet, she broke into moans of such fathomless despair as wrung the hearts of all about her.

It was a scene to test the nerve of any man. To one of the Curator's sympathetic temperament it was well-nigh unendurable. Turning to those nearest, he begged for an explanation of what they saw before them:

"Some one here must be able to tell me. Let that some one speak."

At this the quietest and least conspicuous person present, a young man heavily spectacled and of student-like appearance, advanced a step and said:

"I was the first person to come in here after this poor young lady fell. I was looking at coins just beyond the partition there, when I heard a gasping cry. I had not heard her fall—I fear I was very much preoccupied in my search for an especial coin I had been told I should find here—but I did hear the cry she gave, and startled by the sound, left the section where I was and entered this one, only to see just what you are seeing now."

The Curator pointed at the two women.

"This? The one woman kneeling over the other with her hand on the arrow?"

"Yes, sir."

A change took place in the Curator's expression. Involuntarily his eyes rose to the walls hung closely with Indian relics, among which was a quiver in which all could see arrows similar to the one now in the breast of the young girl lying dead before them.

"This woman must be made to speak," he said in answer to the low murmur which followed this discovery. "If there is a doctor present–"

Waiting, but receiving no response, he withdrew his hand from the woman's arm and laid it on the arrow.

This roused her completely. Loosing her own grasp upon the shaft, she cried, with sudden realization of the people pressing about her:

"I could not draw it. That causes death, they say. Wait! she may still be alive. She may have a word to speak."

She was bending to listen. It was hardly a favorable moment for further questioning, but the Curator in his anxiety could not refrain from saying:

"Who is she? What is her name and what is yours?"

"Her name?" repeated the woman, rising to face him again. "How should I know? I was passing through this gallery and had just stopped to take a look into the court when this young girl bounded by me from behind and flinging up her arms, fell with a deep sigh to the floor. I saw an arrow in her breast, and–"

Emotion choked her, and when some one asked if the girl was a stranger to her, she simply bowed her head; then, letting her

gaze pass from face to face till it had completed the circle of those about her, she said in her former mechanical way:

"My name is Ermentrude Taylor. I came to look at the bronzes. I should like to go now."

But the crowd which had formed about her was too compact to allow her to pass. Besides, the director, Mr. Roberts, had something to say first. Working his way forward, he waited till he had attracted her attention and then remarked in his most considerate manner:

"You will pardon these importunities, Mrs. Taylor. I am a director of this museum, and if Mr. Jewett will excuse me,"—here he bowed to the Curator,—"I should like to inquire from what direction the arrow came which ended this young girl's life?"

For a moment she stood aghast, fixing him with her eye as though to ask whither this inquiry tended. Then with an air of intention which was not without some strange element of fear, she allowed her glance to travel across the court till it rested upon the row of connected arches facing them from the opposite gallery.

"Ah," said he, putting her look into words, "you think the arrow came from the other side of the building. Did you see anyone over there,—in the gallery, I mean,—at or before the instant of this young girl's fall?"

She shook her head.

"Did any of *you*?" he urged, with his eyes on the crowd. "Some

one must have been looking that way."

But no answer came, and the silence was fast becoming oppressive when these words, whispered by one woman to another, roused them anew and sent every glance again to the walls—even hers for whose benefit this remark had possibly been made:

"But there are no arrows over there. All the arrows are here."

She was right. They were here, quiver after quiver of them; nor were they all beyond reach. As the woman thus significantly assailed noted this and saw with what suspicion others noted it also, a decided change took place in her aspect.

"I should like to sit down," she murmured. Possibly she was afraid she might fall.

As some one brought a chair, she spoke, but very tremulously, to the director:

"Are there no arrows in the rooms over there?"

"I am quite sure not."

"And no bows?"

"None."

"If—if anyone had been seen in the gallery–"

"No one was."

"You are sure of that?"

"You heard the question asked. It brought no answer."

"But—but these galleries are visible from below. Some one may have been looking up from the court and–"

"If there was any such person in the building, he would have

been here by this time. People don't hold back such information."

"Then—then—" she stammered, her eyes taking on a hunted look, "you conclude—these people conclude *what*?"

"Madam,"—the word came coldly, stinging her into drawing herself to her full height,—"it is not for me to conclude in a case like this. That is the business of the police."

At this word, with its suggestion of crime, her air of conscious power vanished in sudden collapse. Possibly she had seen the significant gesture with which the Curator pointed out a quiver from which one of the arrows was missing. That this was so, was shown by her next question:

"But where is the bow? Look about on the floor. You will find none. How can an arrow be shot without a bow?"

"It cannot be," came from some one at her back. "But it can be driven home like a dagger if the hand wielding it is sufficiently powerful."

A cry left her lips; she seemed to listen as for some echo; then in a wild abandonment which ignored person and place she flung herself again at the dead girl's side, and before the astonished people surrounding her could intervene, she had caught up the body in her arms, and bending over it, whispered word after word into the poor child's closed ear.

II
IN ROOM B

Five minutes later the Curator was at the 'phone calling up Police Headquarters. A death had occurred at the museum. Would they send over a capable detective?

"What kind of death?" was the harsh reply. "We don't send detectives in cases of heart-failure or simple accident. Is it an accident?"

"No—no—hardly. It looks more like an insane woman's attack upon a harmless stranger. It's the oddest sort of an affair, and we feel very helpless. No common officer will do. We have one of that kind in the building. What we want is a man of brains; he will need them."

A muffled sound at the other end—then a different voice asking some half-dozen comprehensive questions—which, having been answered to the best of the Curator's ability, were followed by the welcome assurance that a man on whose experience he could rely would be at the museum doors within five minutes.

With an air of relief Mr. Jewett stepped again into the court, and repelling with hasty gestures the importunities of the small group of men and women who had lacked the courage to follow the more adventurous ones upstairs, crossed to where the door-man stood on guard over the main entrance.

"Locked?" he asked.

"Yes, sir. Such were the orders. Didn't you give them?"

"No, but I should have done so, had I known. No one's to go out, and no one's to come in but the detective whom I am expecting any moment."

They had not long to wait. Before their suspense had reached fever-point, a tap was heard on the great door. It was opened, and a young man stepped in.

"Coast clear?" he sang out with a humorous twist of his jaw as he noted the Curator's evident chagrin at his meager and unsatisfactory appearance. "Oh, I'm not your man," he added as his eye ran over the whole place with a look which seemed to take in every detail in an instant. "Mr. Gryce is in the automobile. Wait till I help him up."

He was gone before the Curator could utter a word, only to reappear in a few minutes with a man in his wake whom the former at first blush thought to be as much past the age where experience makes for efficiency as the other seemed to be short of it.

But this impression, if impression it were, was of short duration. No sooner had this physically weak but extremely wise old man entered upon the scene than his mental power became evident to every person there. Timorous hearts regained their composure, and the Curator—who in his ten years of service had never felt the burden of his position so acutely as in the last ten minutes—showed his relief by a volubility quite unnatural to him

under ordinary conditions. As he conducted the detectives across the court, he talked not of the victim, as might reasonably be expected, but of the woman who had been found leaning over her with her hand on the arrow.

"We think her some escaped lunatic," he remarked. "Only a demented woman would act as she does. First she denied all knowledge of the girl. Then when she was made to see that the arrow sticking in the girl's breast had been taken from a quiver hanging within arm's reach on the wall and used as lances are used, she fell a-moaning and crying, and began to whisper in the poor child's senseless ear."

"A common woman? One of a low-down type?"

"Not at all. A lady, and an impressive one, at that. You seldom see her equal. That's what has upset us so. The crime and the criminal do not seem to fit."

The detective blinked. Then suddenly he seemed to grow an inch taller.

"Where is she now?" he asked.

"In Room B, away from the crowd. She is not alone. A young lady detained with the rest of the people here is keeping her company, to say nothing of an officer we have put on guard."

"And the victim?"

"Lies where she fell, in Section II on the upper floor. There was no call to move her. She was dead when we came upon the scene. She does not look to be more than sixteen years old."

"Let's go up. But wait—can we see that section from here?"

They were standing at the foot of the great staircase connecting the two floors. Above them, stretching away on either side, ran the two famous, highly ornamented galleries, with their row of long, low arches indicating the five compartments into which they were severally divided. Pointing to the second one on the southern side, the Curator replied:

"That's it—the one where you see the Apache relics hanging high on the rear wall. We shall have to shift those to some other place just as soon as we can recover from this horror. I don't want the finest spot in the whole museum made a Mecca for the morbid and the curious."

The remark fell upon unheeding ears. Detective Gryce was looking, not in the direction named, but in the one directly opposite to it.

"I see," he quietly observed, "that there is a clear view across. Was there no one in the right-hand gallery to see what went on in the left?"

"Not that I have heard of. It's the dullest hour of the day, and not only this gallery but many of the rooms were entirely empty."

"I see. And now, what about the persons who were here? How many of them have you let go?"

"Not one; the doors have been opened twice only—once to admit the officer you will find on guard, and the other to let in yourself."

"Good! And how many have you here, all told?"

"I have not had time to count them, but I should say less than

thirty. This includes myself, as well as two attendants."

With a thoughtful air Mr. Gryce turned in the direction of the few persons he could see huddled together around one of the central statues.

"Where are the others?" he asked.

"Upstairs—in and about the place where the poor child lies."

"They must be got out of there. Sweetwater!"

The young man who had entered with him was at his side in an instant.

"Clear the galleries. Then take down the name and address of every person in the building."

"Yes, sir."

Before the last word had left his lips, the busy fellow was halfway up the marble steps. "Lightning," some of his pals called him, perhaps because he was as noiseless as he was quick. Meanwhile the senior detective had drawn the Curator to one side.

"We'll take a look at these people as they come down. I have been said to be able to spot a witness with my eyes shut. Let's see what I can do with my eyes open."

"Young and old, rich and poor," murmured the Curator as some dozen persons appeared at the top of the staircase.

"Yes," sighed the detective, noting each one carefully as he or she filed down, "we sha'n't make much out of this experiment. Not one of them avoids our looks. Emotion enough, but not of the right sort. Well, we'll leave them to Sweetwater. Our business

is above."

The Curator offered his arm. The old man made a move to take it—then drew himself up with an air of quiet confidence.

"Many thanks," said he, "but I can go alone. Rheumatism is my trouble, but these mild days loosen its grip upon my poor old muscles." He did not say that the prospect of an interesting inquiry had much the same effect, but the Curator suspected it, possibly because he was feeling just a little bit spry himself.

Steeled as such experienced officers necessarily are to death in all its phases, it was with no common emotion that the aged detective entered the presence of the dead girl and took his first look at this latest victim of mental or moral aberration. So young! so innocent! so fair! A schoolgirl, or little more, of a class certainly above the average, whether judged from the contour of her features or the niceties of her dress. With no evidences of great wealth about her, there was yet something in the cut of her garments and the careful attention to each detail which bespoke not only natural but cultivated taste. On her breast just above the spot where the cruel dart had entered, a fresh and blooming nosegay still exhaled its perfume—a tragic detail accentuating the pathos of a death so sudden that the joy with which she had pinned on this simple adornment seemed to linger about her yet.

The detective, with no words for this touching spectacle, stretched out his hand and with a reverent and fatherly touch pressed down the lids over the unseeing eyes. This office done to the innocent dead, he asked if anything had been found to

establish the young girl's identity.

"Surely," he observed, "she was not without a purse or handbag. All young ladies carry them."

For answer the officer on guard thrust his hand into one of his capacious pockets, and drawing out a neat little bag of knitted beads, passed it over to the detective with the laconic remark:

"Nothing doing."

And so it proved. It held only a pocket handkerchief—embroidered but without a monogram—and a memorandum-book without an entry.

"A blind alley, if ever there was one," muttered Mr. Gryce; and ordering the policeman to replace the bag as nearly as possible on the spot from which it had been taken, he proceeded with the Curator to Room B.

Prepared to encounter a woman of disordered mind, the appearance presented by Mrs. Taylor at his entrance greatly astonished Mr. Gryce. There was a calmness in her attitude which one would scarcely expect to see in a woman whom mania had just driven into crime. Surely lunacy does not show such self-restraint; nor does lunacy awaken any such feelings of awe as followed a prolonged scrutiny of her set but determined features. Only grief of the most intense and sacred character could account for the aspect she presented, and as the man to whom the tragedies of life were of daily occurrence took in this mystery with all its incongruities, he realized, not without a sense of professional pleasure, no doubt, that he had before him an

affair calling for the old-time judgment which, for forty or more years, had made his record famous in the police annals of the metropolis.

She was seated with no one near her but a young lady whom sympathetic interest had drawn to her side. Mr. Roberts stood in one of the windows, and not far from him a man in the museum uniform.

At the authoritative advance of the old detective, the woman, whose eye he had caught, attempted to struggle to her feet, but desisted after a moment of hopeless effort, and sank back in her chair. There was no pretense in this. Though gifted with a strong frame, emotion had so weakened her that she was simply unable to stand. Quite convinced of this, and affected in spite of himself by her look of lofty patience, Mr. Gryce prefaced his questions with an apology—quite an unusual proceeding for him.

Whether or no she heard it, he could not tell; but she was quite ready to answer when he asked her name and then her place of residence—saying in response to the latter query:

"I live at the Calderon, a family hotel in Sixty-seventh Street. My name"—here she paused for a second to moisten her lips —"is Taylor—Ermentrude Taylor.... Nothing else," she speedily added in a tone which drew every eye her way. Then more evenly: "You will find the name on the hotel's books."

"Wife or widow?"

"Widow."

What a voice! how it reached every heart, waking strange

sympathies there! As the word fell, not a person in the room but stirred uneasily. Even she herself started at its sound; and moved, perhaps, by the depth of silence which followed, she added in suppressed tones:

"A widow within the hour. That's why you see me still in colors, but crushed as you behold—killed! killed!"

That settled it. There was no mistaking her condition after an expression of this kind. The Curator and Mr. Gryce exchanged glances, and Mr. Roberts, stepping from his corner, betrayed the effect which her words had produced on him, by whispering in the detective's ear:

"What you need is an alienist."

Had she heard? It would seem so from the quick way she roused and exclaimed with indignant emphasis:

"You do not understand me! I see that I must drink my bitter cup to the dregs. This is what I mean: My husband was living this morning—living up to the hour when the clock in this building struck twelve. I knew it from the joyous hopes with which my breast was filled. But with the stroke of noon the blow fell. I was bending above the poor child who had fallen so suddenly at my feet, when the vision came, and I saw him gazing at me from a distance so remote—across a desert so immeasurable—that nothing but death could create such a removal or make of him the ghastly silhouette I saw. He is dead. At that moment I felt his soul pass; and so I say that I am a widow."

Ravings? No, the calm certainty of her tone, the grief,

touching depths so profound it had no need of words, showed the confidence she felt in the warning she believed herself to have received. Though probably not a single person present put any faith in occultism in any of its forms, there was a general movement of sympathy which led Mr. Gryce to pass the matter by without any attempt at controversy, and return to the question in hand. With a decided modification of manner, he therefore asked her to relate how she came to be kneeling over the injured girl with her hand upon the arrow.

"Let me have a moment in which to recover myself," she prayed, covering her eyes with her hand. Then, while all waited, she gave a low cry, "I suffer; I suffer!" and leaped to her feet, only to sink back again inert and powerless. But only for an instant: with that one burst of extreme feeling she recovered her self-control, answering with apparent calmness the detective's question:

"I was passing through the gallery as any other visitor might, when a young lady rushed by me—stopped short—threw up her arms and fell backward to the floor, pierced to the heart by an arrow. In a moment I was on my knees at her side with hand outstretched to withdraw this dreadful arrow. But I was afraid—I had heard that this sometimes causes death, and while I was hesitating, that vision came, engulfing everything. I could think of nothing else."

She was near collapsing again; but being a woman of great nerve, she fought her weakness and waited patiently for the

next question. It was different, without doubt, from any she had expected.

"Then you positively deny any active connection with the strange death of this young girl?"

A pause, as if to take in what he meant. Then slowly, impressively, came the answer:

"I do."

"Did you see the person who shot the arrow?"

"No."

"From what direction would it have had to come to strike her as it did?"

"From the opposite balcony."

"Did you see anyone there?"

"No."

"But you heard the arrow?"

"Heard?"

"An arrow shot from a bow makes a whizzing sound as it flies. Didn't you hear that?"

"I don't know." She looked troubled and uncertain. "I don't remember. I was expecting no such thing—I was not prepared. The sight of an arrow—a killing arrow—in that innocent breast overcame me with inexpressible grief and horror. If the vision of my husband had not followed, I might remember more. As it is, I have told all I can. Won't you excuse me? I should like to go. I am not fit to remain. I want to return home—to hear from my husband—to learn by letter or telegram whether he is indeed

dead."

Mr. Gryce had let her finish. An inquiry so unofficial might easily await the moods of such a witness. Not till the last word had been followed by what some there afterward called a hungry silence, did he make use of his prerogative to say:

"I shall be pleased to release you and will do so just as soon as I can. But I must put one or two more questions. Were you interested in the Indian relics you had come among? Did you handle any of them in passing?"

"No. I had no interest. I like glass, bronzes, china—I hate weapons. I shall hate them eternally after this." And she began to shudder.

The detective, with a quick bend of his head, approached her ear with the whispered remark:

"I am told that when your attention was drawn to these weapons, you fell on your knees and murmured something into the dead girl's ears. How do you explain that?"

"I was giving her messages to my husband. I felt—strange as it may seem to you—that they had fled the earth together—and I wanted him to know that I would be constant, and other foolish things you will not wish me to repeat here. Is that all you wish to know?"

Mr. Gryce bowed, and cast a quizzical glance in the direction of the Curator. Certainly for oddity this case transcended any he had had in years. With this woman eliminated from the situation, what explanation was there of the curious death he was

there to investigate? As he was meditating how he could best convey to her the necessity of detaining her further, he heard a muttered exclamation from the young woman standing near her, and following the direction of her pointing finger, saw that the strange silence which had fallen upon the room had a cause. Mrs. Taylor had fainted away in her chair.

III
"I HAVE SOMETHING TO SHOW YOU"

Mr. Gryce took advantage of the momentary disturbance to slip from the room. He was followed by the Curator, who seemed more than ever anxious to talk.

"You see! Mad as a March hare!" was his hurried exclamation as the door closed behind them. "I declare I do not know which I pity more, her victim or herself. The one is freed from all her troubles; the other—Do you think we ought to have a doctor to look after her? Shall I telephone?"

"Not yet. We have much to learn before taking any decided steps." Then as he caught the look of amazement with which this unexpected suggestion of difficulties was met, he paused on his way to the stair-head to ask in a tentative way peculiarly his own: "Then you still think the girl died from a thrust given by this woman?"

"Of course. What else is there to think? You saw where the arrow came from. You saw that the only bow the place contained was hanging high and unstrung upon the wall, and you are witness to this woman's irresponsible condition of mind. The sight of those arrows well within her reach evidently aroused the homicidal mania often latent in one of her highly emotional

nature; and when this fresh young girl came by, the natural result followed. I only hope I shall not be called upon to face the poor child's parents. What can I say to them? What can anybody say? Yet I do not see how we can be held responsible for so unprecedented an attack as this, do you?"

Mr. Gryce made no answer. He had turned his back toward the stair-head and was wondering if this easy explanation of a tragedy so peculiar as to have no prototype in all of the hundreds of cases he had been called upon to investigate in a long life of detective activity would satisfy all the other persons then in the building. It was his present business to find out—to search and probe among the dozen or two people he saw collected below, for the witness who had seen or had heard some slight thing as yet unrevealed which would throw a different light upon this matter. For his mind—or shall we say the almost unerring instinct of this ancient delver into human hearts?—would not accept without question this theory of sudden madness in one of Mrs. Taylor's appearance, strange and inexplicable as her conduct seemed. Though it was quite among the possibilities that she had struck the fatal blow and in the manner mentioned, it was equally clear to his mind that she had not done it in an access of frenzy. He knew a mad eye and he knew a despairing one. Fantastic as her story certainly was, he found himself more ready to believe it than to accept any explanation of this crime which ascribed its peculiar features to the irresponsibilities of lunacy.

However, he kept his impressions to himself and in his anxiety

to pursue his inquiries among the people below, was on the point of descending thither, when he found his attention arrested, and that of the Curator's as well, by the sight of a young man hastening toward them through the northern gallery. (The tragedy, as you will remember, had occurred in the southern one.) He was dressed in the uniform of the museum, and moved so quickly and in such an evident flurry of spirits that the detective instinctively asked:

"Who's that? One of your own men?"

"Yes, that's Correy, our best-informed and most-trusted attendant. Looks as if he had something to tell us. Well, Correy, what is it?" he queried as the man emerged upon the landing where they stood. "Anything new? If there is, speak out plainly. Mr. Gryce is anxious for all the evidence he can get."

With an ingenuousness rather pleasing than otherwise to the man thus presented to his notice, the young fellow stopped short and subjected the famous detective to a keen and close scrutiny before venturing to give the required information.

Was it because of the importance of what he had to communicate? It would seem so, from the suppressed excitement of his tone, as after his brief but exceedingly satisfactory survey, he jerked his finger over his shoulder in the direction from which he had come, with the short remark:

"I have something to show you."

Something! Mr. Gryce had been asking for this something only a moment before. We can imagine, then, the celerity with

which he followed this new guide into the one spot of all others which possessed for him the greatest interest. For if by any chance the arrow which had done such deadly work had been sped from a bow instead of having been used as a dart, then it was from this gallery and from no other quarter of the building that it had been so sped. Any proof of this could have but the one effect of exonerating from all blame the woman who had so impressed him. He had traversed the first section and had entered the second, when the Curator joined him; together they passed into the third.

For those who have not visited this museum, a more detailed description of these galleries may be welcome. Acting as a means of communication between the row of front rooms and those at the back, they also serve to exhibit certain choice articles which call for little space, and are of a nature more or less ornamental. For this purpose they are each divided into five sections connected by arches narrower but not less decorative than those which open in a direct row upon the court. Of these sections the middle one on either side is much larger than the rest; otherwise they do not differ.

It was in the midst of this larger section that Correy now stood, awaiting their approach. There had been show-cases filled with rare exhibits in the two through which they had just passed, but in this one there was nothing to be seen but a gorgeous hanging, covering very nearly the whole wall, flanked at either end by a pedestal upholding a vase of inestimable value and corresponding

ugliness. A highly decorative arrangement, it is true, but in what lay its interest for the criminal investigator?

Correy was soon to show them. With a significant gesture toward the tapestry, he eagerly exclaimed:

"You see that? I've run by it several times since the accident sent me flying all over the building at everybody's call. But only just now, when I had a moment to myself, did I remember the door hid behind it. It's a door we no longer use, and I'd no reason for thinking it had anything to do with the killing of the young lady in the opposite gallery. But for all that I felt it would do no harm to give it a look, and running from the front, where I happened to be, I pulled out the tapestry and saw—but supposing I wait and let you see for yourselves. That will be better."

Leaving them where they stood face to face with the great hanging, he made a dive for the pedestal towering aloft at the farther end, and edging himself in behind it, drew out the tapestry from the wall, calling on them as he did so to come and look behind it. The Curator did not hesitate. He was there almost as soon as the young man himself.

But the detective was not so hasty. With a thousand things in mind, he stopped to peer along the gallery and down into the court before giving himself away to any prying eye. Satisfied that he might make the desired move with impunity, Mr. Gryce was about to turn in the desired direction when, struck by a new fact, he again stopped short.

He had noticed how the heavy tapestry shivered under

Correy's clutch. Had this been observed by anyone besides himself? If by chance some person wandering about the court had been looking up—but no, the few people gathered there stood too far forward to see what was going on in this part of the gallery; and relieved from all further anxiety on this score, he joined Correy at the pedestal and at a word from him succeeded in squeezing himself around it into the small space they had left for him between the pushed-out hanging and the wall. An exclamation from the Curator, who had only waited for his coming to take his first look, added zest to his own scrutiny. It would take something more than the sight of a well-known door to give it such a tone of astonished discovery. What? Even he, with the accumulated surprises of years to give wings to his imagination, did not succeed in guessing. But when his eyes, once accustomed to the semi-darkness of the narrow space which Correy had thus opened out before him, saw not the door but what lay within its recess, he acknowledged to himself that he should have guessed—and that a dozen years before, he certainly would have done so.

It was a *bow*—not like the one hanging high in the Apache exhibit, but yet a bow strong of make and strung for use.

Here was a discovery as important as it was unexpected, eliminating Mrs. Taylor at once from the case and raising it into a mystery of the first order. By dint of long custom, Mr. Gryce succeeded in hiding his extreme satisfaction, but not the

perplexity into which he was thrown by this complete change of base. The Curator appeared to be impressed in much the same way, and shook his head in a doubtful fashion when Correy asked him if he recognized the bow as belonging to the museum.

"I should have to see it nearer to answer that question with any sort of confidence," he demurred. "From such glimpses as I can get of it from here I should say that it has not been taken from any of our exhibits."

"I am sure it has not," muttered Correy. Then with a side glance at Mr. Gryce, he added: "Shall I slip in behind and get it?"

The detective, thus appealed to, hesitated a moment; then with an irrelevance perhaps natural to the occasion, he inquired where this door so conveniently hidden from the general view led to. It was the Curator who answered.

"To a twisting, breakneck staircase opening directly into my office. But this door has not been used in years. See! Here is the key to it on my own ring. There is no other. I lost the mate to it myself not long after my installation here."

The detective, working his way back around the pedestal, cast another glance up and down the gallery and over into the court. Still no spying eye, save that of the officer opposite.

"We will leave that bow where it is for the present," he decided, "a secret between us three." And motioning for Correy to let the tapestry fall, he stood watching it settle into place, till it hung quite straight again, with its one edge close to the wall and the other sweeping the floor. Had its weight been great enough

to push the bow back again into its former place close against the door? Yes. No eye, however trained, would, from any bulge in the heavy tapestry, detect its presence there. He could leave the spot without fear; their secret would remain theirs until such time as they chose to disclose it.

As the three walked back the way they had come, the Curator glanced earnestly at the detective, who seemed to have fallen into a kind of anxious dream. Would it do to interrupt him with questions? Would he obtain a straight answer if he did? The old man moved heavily but the now fully alert Curator could not fail to see that it was with the heaviness of absorbed thought. Dare he disturb that thought? They had both reached the broad corridor separating the two galleries at the western end before he ventured to remark:

"This discovery alters matters, does it not? May I ask what you propose to do now? Anything in which we can help you?"

The detective may have heard him and he may not; at all events he made no reply though he continued to advance with a mechanical step until he stood again at the top of the marble steps leading down into the court. Here some of the uncertainty pervading his mind seemed to leave him, though he still looked very old and very troubled, or so the Curator thought, as pausing there, he allowed his glance to wander from the marble recesses below to the galleries on either side of him, and from these on to the seemingly empty spaces back of the high, carved railing guarding the great well. Would a younger man have served them

better? It began to look so; then without warning and in a flash, as it were, the whole appearance of the octogenarian detective changed, and turning with a smile to the two men so anxiously watching him, he exclaimed with an air of quiet triumph:

"I have it. Follow and see how my plan works."

Amazed, for he looked and moved like another man,—a man in whom the almost extinguished spark of early genius had suddenly flared again into full blaze,—they hastily joined him in anticipation of they knew not what. But their enthusiasm received a check when at the moment of descent Mr. Gryce again turned back with the remark:

"I had forgotten. I have something to do first. If you will kindly see that the people down there are kept from growing too impatient, I will soon join you with Mrs. Taylor, who must not be left on this floor after we have gone below."

And with no further explanation of his purpose, he turned and proceeded without delay to Room B.

IV
A STRATEGIC MOVE

He found the unhappy woman quite recovered from her fainting spell, but still greatly depressed and not a little incoherent. He set himself to work to soothe her, for he had a request to make which called for an intelligent answer. Relieved from all suspicion of her having been an active agent in the deplorable deed he was here to investigate, he was lavish in his promises of speedy release, and seeing how much this steadied her, he turned to Mr. Roberts, who was still in the room, and then to the young lady who had been giving her a woman's care, and signified that their attentions were no longer required and that he would be glad to have them join the people below.

When the door had closed and Mr. Gryce found himself for the first time alone with Mrs. Taylor, he drew up a chair to her side and remarked in his old benevolent way:

"I feel guilty of cruelty, madam, in repeating a question you have already answered. But the conditions are such that I must, and do it now. When this young lady fell so unexpectedly at your feet, was your first look at her or at the opposite gallery?"

For an instant her eyes held his—something which did not often happen to him.

"At her," she vehemently declared. "I never thought of looking anywhere else. I saw her at my feet, and fell on my knees at her

side. Who wouldn't have done so! Who would have seen anything but that arrow—*that arrow*! Oh, it was terrible! Do not make me recall it. I have sorrows enough–"

"Mrs. Taylor, you have my utmost sympathy. But you must realize how important it is for me to make sure that you saw nothing in the place from which that arrow was sent which would help us to locate the author of this accident. The flitting of an escaping figure up or down the opposite gallery, even a stir in the great tapestry confronting you from that far-away wall, might give us a clue."

"I saw nothing," she replied coldly but with extreme firmness, "nothing but that lifeless child and the picture of desolation which rose in my own mind. Do not, I pray, make me speak again of that. It would sound like delirium, and it is my wish to impress you with my sanity, so that you will allow me to go home."

"You shall go, after the Coroner has had an opportunity to see you. We expect him any moment. Meanwhile, you will facilitate your release and greatly help us in what we have to do, if you will carry your fortitude to the point of showing me in your own person just where you were standing when this young girl dashed by you to her death."

"Do you mean for me to go back to that—that–"

"Yes, Mrs. Taylor. Surely you can do so if you will. When you have time to think, you will be as anxious as ourselves to know through whose carelessness (to call it nothing worse) this child came to her death. Though it may prove to be quite immaterial

whether you stood in one place or another at that fatal moment, it is a question which will be sure to come up at the inquest. That you may be able to answer correctly I urge you to return with me to the exact spot, before your recollection of the same has had time to fade. After that we will go below and I will see that you are taken to some quiet place where you can remain undisturbed till the Coroner comes."

Had she been a weak woman she would have succumbed again at this. But she was a strong one, and after the first moment of recoil she rose tremulously to her feet and signified her willingness to follow him to the scene of death.

"Is—is she there alone?" was her sole question as they crossed the corridor separating the room they had been in from the galleries.

"No—you will find an officer there. We could not leave the place quite unguarded."

If she shuddered he did not observe it. Having summoned up all her forces to meet this ordeal, she followed him without further word, and re-entering the spot she had so lately left in great agony of mind, stopped for one look and for one look only at the sweet face of the dead girl smiling up at her from the cold floor, then she showed Mr. Gryce as nearly as she could just where she had paused in shock and horror when the poor child smitten by the fatal arrow fell back almost into her arms.

The detective, with a glance at the opposite gallery, turned and spoke to the officer who had stepped aside into the neighboring

section.

"Take the place just occupied by this lady," he said, "and hold it till you hear from me again." Then offering his arm to Mrs. Taylor, he led her out.

"I see that you were approaching the railing overlooking the court when you were stopped in this fearful manner," he remarked when well down the gallery toward its lower exit. "What did you have in mind? A nearer glimpse of the tapestry over there and the two great vases?"

"No, no." She was wrought up by now to a tension almost unendurable. "It was the court—what I might see in the court. Oh!" she impulsively cried: "the child! the child! that innocent, beautiful child!" And breaking away from his arm, she threw herself against the wall in a burst of uncontrollable weeping.

He allowed her a moment of unrestrained grief, then he took her on his arm again and led her down into the court where he gave her into the charge of Correy. He had gone as far as he dared in her present hysterical condition. Besides, he could no longer defer the great experiment by means of which he hoped to reach the heart of this mystery.

Taking the slip of paper handed him by Sweetwater, he crossed the court to where the various visitors, detained, some against their will and some quite in accordance with it, stood about in groups or sat side by side on the long benches placed along the front for their comfort. As he confronted them, his face beamed with that benevolent smile which had done so much

for him in days gone by. Raising his hand he called attention to himself; then, when he was quite sure of being heard by them all, he addressed them with a quiet emphasis which could not fail to gain and hold their attention:

"I am Detective Gryce, sent here from Police Headquarters to look into this very serious matter. Till the Coroner arrives, I am in authority here, and being so, will have to ask your indulgence for any discomfort you may experience in helping me with my investigation. A young girl, full of life an hour ago, lies dead in the gallery above. We do not know her name; we do not know who killed her. But there is some one here who does. The man or woman who, wittingly or unwittingly, launched that fatal shaft, is present with us in this building. This person has not spoken. If he will do so now, he will save us and himself, too, no end of trouble. Let him speak, then. I will give him five minutes in which to make this acknowledgment. Five minutes! If that man is wise—or can it be a woman?—he will not keep us waiting."

Silence. Heads moving, eyes peering, excitement visible in every face, but not a word from anybody. Mr. Gryce turned and pointed up at the clock. All looked—but still no word from man or woman.

One minute gone!

Two minutes!

Three!

The silence had become portentous. The movement, involuntary and simultaneous, which had run through the crowd

at first had stopped. They were waiting—each and all—waiting with eyes on the minute-hand creeping forward over the dial toward which the detective's glance was still turned.

The fourth minute passed—then the fifth—and no one had spoken.

With a sigh Mr. Gryce wheeled himself back and faced the crowd again.

"You see," he quietly announced, "the case is serious. Twenty-two of you, and not one to speak the half-dozen words which would release the rest from their present embarrassing position! What remains for us to do under circumstances like these? My experience suggests but one course: to narrow down this inquiry to those—you will not find them many—who from their nearness to the place of tragedy or from some other cause equally pertinent may be looked upon as possible witnesses for the Coroner's jury. That this may be done speedily and surely, I am going to ask you, every one of you, to retake the exact place in the building which you were occupying when you heard the first alarm. I will begin with the Curator himself. Mr. Jewett, will you be so good as to return to the room, and if possible to the precise spot, you were occupying when you first learned what had occurred here?"

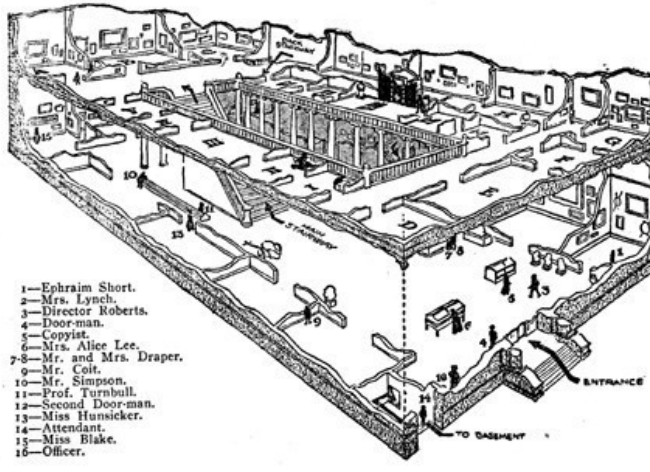
The Curator, who stood at his elbow, made a quick bow and turned in the direction of the marble steps, which he hastily remounted. A murmur from the crowd followed this action and continued till he disappeared in the recesses of the right-hand

gallery. Then, at a gesture from Mr. Gryce, it suddenly ceased, and with a breathless interest easy to comprehend, they one and all waited for his next word. It was a simple one.

"We are all obliged to Mr. Jewett for his speedy compliance with so unusual a request. He has made my task a comparatively easy one."

Then, glancing at the list of names and addresses which had been compiled for him by Sweetwater, he added:

"I will read off your names as recorded here. If each person, on hearing his own, will move quickly to his place and remain there till my young man can make a note of the same, we shall get through this matter in short order. And let me add"—as he perceived here and there a shoulder shrugged, or an eye turned askance—"that once the name is called, no excuse of non-recollection will be accepted. You must know, every one of you, just where you were standing when the cry of death rang out, and any attempt to mislead me or others in this matter will only subject the person making it to a suspicion he must wish to avoid. Remember that there are enough persons here for no one to be sure that his whereabouts at so exciting a moment escaped notice. Listen, then, and when your own name is spoken, step quickly into place, whether that place be on this floor or in the rooms or galleries above.—Mrs. Alice Lee!"



You can imagine the flurry, the excitement and the blank looks of the average men and women he addressed. But not one hesitated to obey. Mrs. Lee was on the farther side of one of the statues before her name had more than left his lips. Her example set the pace for those who followed. Like soldiers at roll-call, each one responded to the summons, going now in one direction and now in another until on reaching the proper spot he or she stopped.

Only six persons followed the Curator upstairs—an old woman who shook her head violently as she plodded slowly up the marble steps; Correy; a man with a packet of books

under his arm (the same who had been studying coins in Section II); a young couple whose movements showed such a marked reluctance that more than one eye followed them as they went hesitatingly up, clinging together with interlocking hands and stopping now on one step and now on another to stare at each other in visible consternation; and a boy of fourteen who grinned from ear to ear as he bounded gayly up three steps at a time and took his position on the threshold of one of the upper doors with all the precision of a soldier called to sentry-duty—a boy scout if ever there was one.

There were twenty-two names on the list, and with the calling out of the twenty-second, Mr. Gryce perceived the space before him entirely cleared of its odd assortment of people. As he turned to take a look at the result, a gleam of satisfaction crossed his time-worn face. By this scheme, which he may be pardoned for looking upon as a stroke of genius worthy of his brilliant prime, he had set back time a full hour, restoring as by a magician's wand the conditions of that fatal moment of initial alarm. Surely, with the knowledge of that hidden bow in his mind, he should be able now to place his hand upon the person who had made use of it to launch the fatal arrow. No one, however sly of foot and quick of action, could have gone far from the gallery where that bow lay in the few minutes which were all that could have elapsed between the shooting of the arrow and the gasping cry which had brought all within hearing to the Apache section. The man or woman whom he should find nearest to that concealed door

in the northern gallery would have to give a very good account of himself. Not even the Curator would escape suspicion under those circumstances.

However, it is only fair to add that Mr. Gryce had no fear of any such embarrassing end to his inquisition as that. He had noticed the young couple who had betrayed their alarm so ingenuously to every eye, and had already decided within himself that the man was just such a fool as might in a moment of vacuity pick up a bow and arrow to test his skill at a given mark. Such things had been and such results had followed. The man was a gawk and the woman a ninny; a few questions and their guiltiness would appear—that is, if they should be found near enough the tapestry to warrant his suspicion. If not—the alternative held an interest all its own, and sent him in haste toward the stairway.

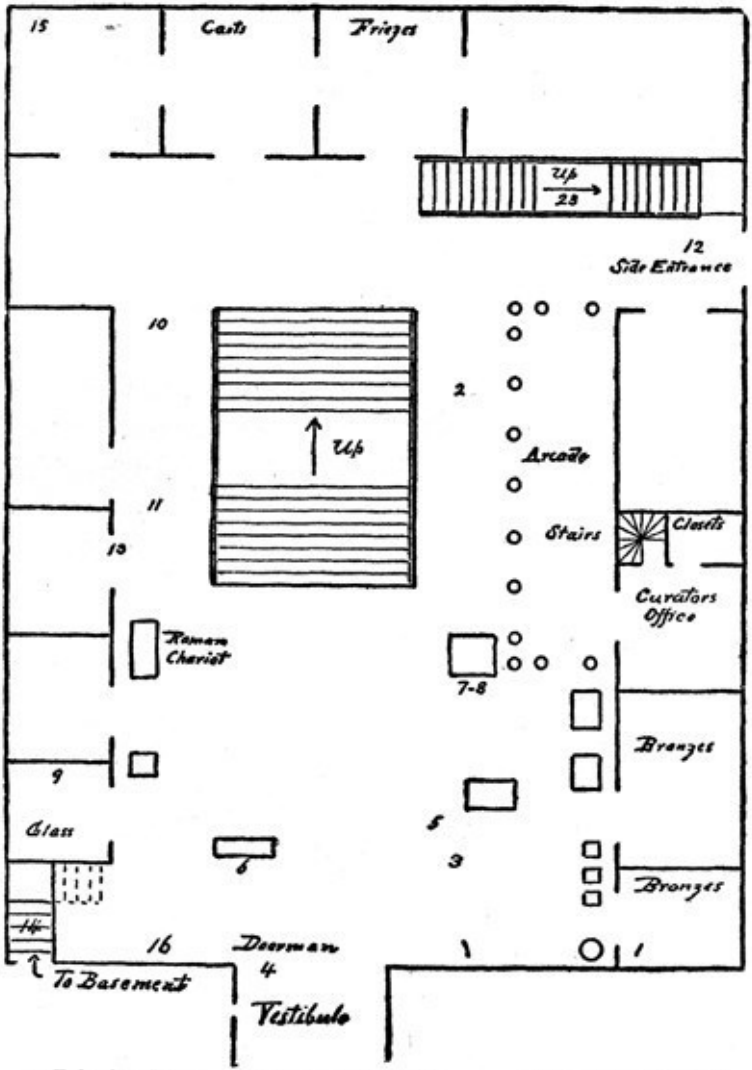
To reach it Mr. Gryce had to pass several persons standing where fate had fixed them among the statuary grouped about the court, and had his attention been less engrossed by what he expected to discover above, he would have been deeply interested in noting how these persons, or most of them at least, had so thoroughly accepted the situation that they had taken the exact position and the exact attitude of the moment preceding the alarm. Those who were admiring the great torsos or carved chariots of the ancients, made a show of admiring them still. The man or woman who had been going in an easterly direction, faced east; and those who had been on the point of entering certain rooms, stood halting in the doorways with their backs to

the court.

Unfortunately, he did not take note of all this, or give the poor pawns thus parading for his purpose more than a cursory glance. When he did think, which was when he was halfway up the staircase, it was to look back upon a changed scene. For with his going, interest had flagged and the tableau lost its pointedness. No one had ventured as yet to leave his place, but all had turned their faces his way, and on many of these faces could be seen signs of fatigue if not of absolute impatience. He had ordered them to stand and they had stood, but to be left there while he went above was certainly trying. The one spot which held the interest was in the southern gallery. If they could only follow him there–

All this was to be seen in their faces, and possibly the cunning old man read it there; but if he did, it was to ask himself if their conclusions were quite correct. The locale of interest had shifted in the last half hour; and while most of these people believed him to be searching for the witness who could tell him what had occurred in the death gallery, he really was hunting for one who could add to his knowledge of what had happened in the opposite one. And this witness might not be found in the gallery, or even on the upper floor. It was well among the probabilities that there might be among the various persons he saw posing in the court below some who by an upward look might take in a part of if not the whole broad sweep of that huge square of tapestry upon which his thoughts were centered. It was for him to make a note

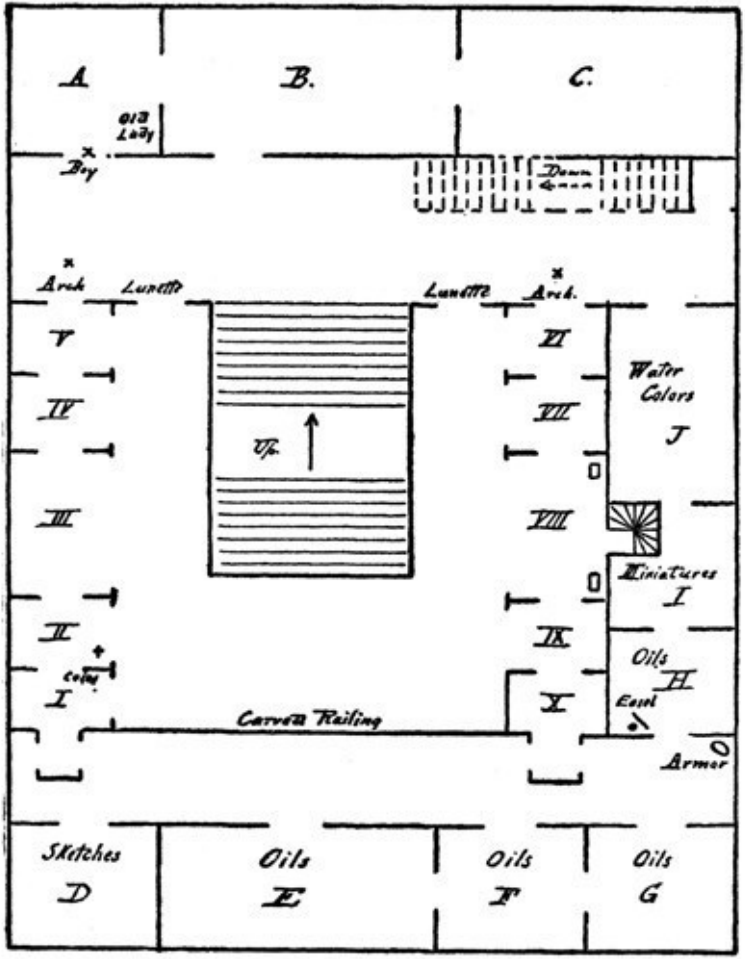
of these persons. A diagram of the court as it looked to him at that moment is shown for your enlightenment.



1—Ephraim Short. 6—Mrs. Alice Lee. 12—Second Door-man.

Sixteen persons! Ten in view from the steps and six not. Of the sixteen, only the following seemed to afford any excuse for future interrogation: Numbers Two, Six, Ten, Seven, Eight and Thirteen. Making a mental note of these, during which operation the poor unfortunates who had just been considering themselves as quite out of the game revived in a startling manner under his eye, he proceeded on his way.

As the action has now shifted to the upper floor, a diagram of this second story is now in order.


A
B.
C.
Old Lady
Boy
Door
Arch
Lunette
Lunette
Arch.
V
VI
Water Colors
IV
VII
J
Up.
III
VIII
VIII
Miniatures
I
II
IX
Oils
H
Easel
Carved Railing
X
Armor
Sketches
D
Oils
E
Oils
F
Oils
G

As you will see, a straight glimpse is given down either gallery from the arches opening into the broad corridor into which Mr. Gryce had stepped on leaving the central staircase. He had therefore only to choose which of the two would better repay his immediate investigation.

He decided upon the northern one, which you will remember was the one holding the tapestry; since, to find anybody there, no matter whom, would certainly settle the identity of the person responsible for that flying arrow. For, as all conceded, too little time had elapsed between its delivery and the discovery of the victim for the quickest possible attempt at escape to have carried the concealer of the bow very far from the spot where he had thrown it. It was possible—just possible—that he might have got as far as one of the four large rooms opening into the corridor stretching across the front, but that he was not in the gallery itself Mr. Gryce soon convinced himself by a rapid walk through its entire length.

That he did not follow up this move by an immediate searching of the rooms I have mentioned was owing to a wish he had to satisfy himself on another point first.

What was this point?

In passing along the rear on his way to this gallery, he had noticed the narrow staircase opening not a dozen feet away to his left. This undoubtedly led down to the side-entrance. If by any chance the user of the bow had fled to the rear instead of to the front, he would be found somewhere on this staircase, for he

never could have got to the bottom before the cry of "Close the doors! Let no man out!" rendered this chance of immediate exit unavailable. So Mr. Gryce retraced his steps, and barely stopping to note the boy eying him with eager glances from the doorway of Room A, he approached the iron balustrade guarding the small staircase, and cautiously looked over.

A man was there! A man going down—no, coming up; and this man, as he soon saw from his face and uniform, was Correy the attendant.

"So that is where *you* were," he called down as he beckoned the man up.

"As near as I can remember. I was on my way in search of Mr. Jewett, for whom I had a message, and had got as far as you saw me, when I heard a cry of pain from somewhere in the gallery. This naturally quickened my steps and I was up and on this floor in a jiffy."

"Did you notice, as you stepped from the landing, whether the boy staring at us from the doorway over there was facing just as we see him now?"

"He was. I remember his attitude perfectly."

"Coming out of the door—not going in?"

"Sure. He was on the run. He had heard the cry too."

"And followed you into the gallery?"

"Preceded me. He was on the scene almost as soon as the man who stepped in from the adjoining section."

"I see. And this man?"

"Was well within my view from the minute I entered the first arch. He seemed more bewildered than frightened till he had passed the communicating arch and nearly stumbled over the body of the girl shot down almost at his elbow."

"And yourself?"

"I knew by his look that something dreadful had happened, and when I saw what it was, I didn't think of anything better to do than to order the doors shut."

"On your own initiative? Where was the Curator?"

"Not far, it seems. But he gets awfully absorbed in whatever he is doing, and there was no time to lose. Some one had shot that arrow, some one who might escape."

Mr. Gryce never allowed himself—or very rarely—to look at anyone full and square in the face; yet he always seemed to form an instant opinion of whomever he talked with. Perhaps he had already gauged this man and not unfavorably, for he showed not the slightest distrust as he remarked quite frankly:

"You must have had some suspicion of foul play even then, to act in so expeditious a manner."

"I don't know what my suspicions were. I simply followed my first impulse. I don't think it was a bad one. Do you, sir?"

"Far from it. But enough of that. Do you think"—here he drew Correy into the gallery out of earshot of the boy, who was watching them with all the curiosity of his fourteen years—"that this lad could have stolen from where we are standing now to the door where you first saw him, during the time you were making

your rush up the stairs? Boys of his age are mighty quick, and–"

"I know it, sir; and I see what you mean. But even if he had been able to do this,—which I very much doubt,—no boy of his age could have strung that bow, or had he found it strung, have shot an arrow from it with force enough to kill. Only a hand accustomed to its use could handle a bow like that with any success."

"You know the bow, then? Saw it nearer than you said—possibly handled it?"

"No, sir; but I know its kind and have handled many of them."

"In this building?"

"Yes, sir, and in other museums where I have been. I have arranged and rearranged Indian exhibits for years."

"Then you think that the bow we saw behind the tapestry is an Indian one?"

"Without question."

The detective nodded and left him. One word with the boy, and he would feel free to go elsewhere.

It proved to be an amusing one. The boy, for all his enthusiasm as a scout, proved to be so hungry that he was actually doleful. More than that, he had a ticket for that afternoon's ball game in his pocket and feared that he would not be let out in time to see it. He therefore was quick with his answers, which certainly were ingenuous enough. He had been looking at the model of a ship (which could be seen through an open door), when he heard a woman cry out as if hurt, from somewhere down the gallery. He

was running to see what it meant when a man came along who seemed in as great a hurry as himself. But he got there first—and so on and on, corroborating Correy's story in every particular. He was so honest (Mr. Gryce had been at great pains to trip him up in one of his statements and had openly failed) and yet so anxious for the detective to notice the ticket to the ball game which he held in one hand, that the old man took pity on him and calling an officer, ordered him to let the boy out—a concession to youth and innocence he was almost ready to regret when a woman of uncertain years and irate mien attacked him from the doorway he had just left, with the loud remark:

"If you let him go, you can let me go too. I was in this room at the same time he was and know no more about what happened over there than the dead. I have an appointment downtown of great importance. I shall miss it if you don't let me go at once."

"Is it of greater importance than the right which this dead girl's friends have to know by whose careless hands the arrow killing her was shot?" And without waiting for a reply, which was not readily forthcoming, Mr. Gryce handed her over to Correy with an injunction to see that she was given a comfortable seat below and proceeded to finish up this portion of the building by a search through the three great rooms extending along the rear.

He found them all empty and without clue of any kind, and satisfied that his real work lay in front, he returned thither with as much expedition as old age and rheumatism would admit. Why, in doing so, he went for the third time through the gallery instead

of through rooms J, H and I, he did not stop to inquire, though afterward he asked that question of himself more than once. Had he taken this latter course, he might not have missed—

But that will come later. What we have to do now is to accompany him to the front of the building, where matters of importance undoubtedly await him. He had noted, in his previous passage to and fro, that the young man who had been nearest to the tragedy was in his place before the case of coins in Section I. This time he noted something more. The young man was in the selfsame spot, but during this brief interval of waiting, the passion he evidently cherished for numismatics had reasserted itself, and he now stood with his eyes bent as eagerly upon the display of coins over which he hung, as if no shaft of death had crossed the space without and no young body lay in piteous quiet beyond the separating partition.

It was an exhibition of one of the most curious traits of human nature, and Mr. Gryce would undoubtedly have expended a few cynical thoughts upon it if, upon entering the broad front corridor which he had hitherto avoided, he had not run upon Sweetwater pointing in a meaning way toward two huge cases which, stacked with medieval arms, occupied one of the corners.

"Odd couple over there," he whispered as the older detective paused to listen. "Been watching them for the last five minutes. They pretend to be looking at some old armor, but they are mighty uneasy and keep glancing up at the window overhead as if they would like to jump out."

Mr. Gryce indulged in one of his characteristic exclamations. This was the couple whose queer actions he had noticed on the staircase. "I'll have a talk with them presently. Anyone in the rooms opposite?"

"Yes, the Curator. He's in Room A, where there are a lot of engravings waiting to be hung. I guess he was pretty well up to his neck in business when that fellow Correy set up his shout. And have you noticed that he's a bit deaf, which is the reason, perhaps, why he was not sooner on the scene?"

"No, I hadn't noticed. Anyone else at this end?"

"Only the young couple I speak of."

Mr. Gryce gave them a second look. They were by many paces farther from the pedestal from behind which the bow had been flung back of the tapestry than would quite fit in with the theory he had formed, and by means of which he hoped to single out the person who had sent the deadly arrow. But then, under the stress of fear, people can move very swiftly; and besides, what guarantee did he have that these poor, frightened creatures had located themselves with all the honesty the occasion demanded? According to Sweetwater there was nobody sufficiently near to notice where they had been at the critical instant, or where they were now. The student's back was toward them, and the Curator quite out of sight behind a close-shut door.

With this doubt in his mind, Mr. Gryce started to approach the couple. As he did so, he observed another curious fact concerning them. They were neither of them in the place natural to people

interested in the contents of the great cases which they had crossed the hall to examine. Instead of standing where a full view of these cases could be had, they had withdrawn so far behind them that they presented the appearance of persons in hiding. Yet as he drew nearer and noted their youth and countrified appearance, Mr. Gryce was careful to assume his most benign deportment and so to modulate his voice as to call up the pink into the young woman's cheek and the deep red into the man's. What Mr. Gryce said was this: "You are interested I see in this show of old armor? I don't wonder. It is very curious. Is this your first visit to the museum?"

The man nodded; the woman lowered her head. Both were self-conscious to a point painful to see.

"It is a pity your first visit should be spoiled by anything so dreadful as the accidental death of this young girl. It seems to have frightened you both very much."

"Yes, yes," muttered the man. "We never saw anybody hurt before."

"Did you know the young lady?"

"Oh, no; oh, no!" they both hastened to cry out in a confused jumble, after which the man added:

"We—we're from up the river. We don't know anybody in this big town."

As he spoke, he began to edge away from the wall, the girl following.

"Wait!" smiled the detective. "You are getting out of place.

You were looking at the armor when you first heard the hubbub over there?"

Both were silent.

"What were you looking at?"

"I was looking at her, and her was looking at me," stammered the man. "We were—were talking together here—we didn't notice–"

"Just married, eh?"

"Yesterday noon, sir. How—how did you know?"

"I didn't know; I only guessed. And I think I can guess something else—what your reason was for stealing into this dark corner."

It was the man who now looked down, and the woman who looked up. In a pinch of this kind, it is the woman who is the more courageous.

"He was a-kissin' of me, sir," she whispered in a frank but shamefaced way. "There was no harm in that, was there? We're so fond of one another, and how could we know that anyone was dying so near?"

"No, there was no harm," Mr. Gryce reluctantly admitted. Caught in an absurdity amusing enough in its way, he would certainly under less strenuous circumstances have rather enjoyed his own humiliation. But the occasion was too serious and his part in it too pronounced for him to take any pleasure in this misadventure. In the prosecution of so daring a scheme for locating witnesses if not of discovering the actual user of the

bow, it would not do to fail. He *must* find the man he sought. If the Curator—but one glance into the room where that gentleman stood amid a litter of prints satisfied him that Sweetwater was right as to the impossibility of getting any information from this quarter. Nor could he hope, remembering what he had himself seen, that he would succeed any better with the last person now remaining on this floor—the young man busy with the coins in No. I.

That he was to be so fortunate as to lay an immediate hand on the person who had shot the fatal arrow was no longer regarded by him as among the possibilities. Whoever this person was, he had found a way of escape which rendered him for the time being safe from discovery. But there was another possible miscalculation which he felt it his duty to recognize before he proceeded further in his difficult task. The bow found back of the tapestry had every appearance of being the one used for the delivery of the arrow. But was it? Might it not, in some strange and unaccountable way, have been flung there previous to the present event and by some hand no longer in the building? Such coincidences have been known, and while as a rule this old and experienced detective put little confidence in coincidences of any kind, he had but one thought in mind in approaching this final witness, which was to get from him some acknowledgment of having seen, on or about the time of the accident, a movement in the tapestry behind which this bow lay concealed. If once this fact could be established, there could be no further question as

to the direct connection between the bow there found and the present crime.

But Mr. Gryce might have spared his pains, so far as this young man was concerned. He had been so engrossed in his search for a particularly rare coin, that he had had no eyes for anything beyond. Besides, he was abnormally nearsighted, not being able, even with his glasses, to distinguish faces at any distance, much less a movement in a piece of tapestry.

All of this was discouraging, even if anticipated; but there were still the people below, some one of whom might have seen what this man had not. He would go down to them now, but by a course which would incidentally enlighten him in regard to another matter about which he had some doubts.

In his goings to and fro through the hall, he had passed the open door of Room H and noted how easily a direct flight could be made through it and Rooms I and J to the small staircase running down at the rear. Whether or not this explained the absence of anyone on this floor who by the utmost stretch of imagination could be held responsible for the accident which had occurred there, he felt it incumbent upon him to see in how short a time the escape he still believed in could be made through these rooms.

Timing his steps from the pedestal nearest this end, he found that even at his slow pace it took but three minutes for him to reach the arcade leading into the court from the foot of the staircase. A man conscious of wrong and eager to escape would

do it in less; and if, as possibly happened, he had to wait in the doorway of Room J till Correy and the boy had cleared the way for him by their joint run into the farther gallery, he would still have time to be well on his way to the lower floor before the cry went up which shut off all further egress. Relieved, if not contented with the prospect this gave of a new clue to his problem, he reëntered the court and was preparing to renew his investigations when the arrival of the Coroner put a temporary end to his efforts as well as to the impatience of the so-called pawns, who were now allowed, one and all, to leave their posts.

V
THREE WHERE TWO SHOULD BE

It was a good half-hour before Mr. Gryce again found himself in a position to pursue the line of investigation thus summarily interrupted. The condition of Mrs. Taylor, which had not been improved by delay, demanded attention, and it was with a sense of great relief that Mr. Gryce finally saw her put into a taxi. Her hurried examination by Coroner Price had elicited nothing new, and of all who had noticed her distraught air on leaving the building, there was not one, if we except the detective, but felt convinced that if she had not been of unsound mind previous to this accident, she certainly had become so since. He still held to his theory that her story, fantastic and out of character as it seemed, was true in all its essentials, and that it was the warning she believed herself to have received of her husband's death, rather than what had taken place under her eyes, which had caused her such extreme suffering and temporarily laid her reason low.

With the full approbation of the Coroner, to whom he had explained his idea, Mr. Gryce began the sifting process by which he hoped to discover the one witness he wanted.

To subject to further durance such persons as from their position at the moment of tragedy could have no information to give bearing in any way upon their investigation was manifestly

unfair. The old woman who had been found in Room A was of this class, and accordingly was allowed to go, together with such others as had been within twenty feet or more of the main entrance. These eliminated (it was curious to see how loath these few chosen ones were to depart, now that the opportunity was given them), Mr. Gryce settled down to business by asking Mrs. Lynch to come forward.

She, as you will see by consulting the chart, answered to the person marked "2." A little, dried-up, eager woman rose from the bench on which were collected the few people still remaining, and met his inquiring look with a nervous smile. She, of all the persons moving about on the main floor at the moment of alarm, had been in the best position for seeing the flight of the arrow and the fall of the victim in Section II. Had she seen them? The continued jigging of the small, wiry curls hanging out from either side of her old-fashioned bonnet would seem to betray an inner perturbation indicative of some hitherto suppressed information. At all events Mr. Gryce allowed himself this hope and was most bland and encouraging in his manner as he showed her the place which had been assigned her on the chart drawn up by Sweetwater, and asked if the position given her was correct.

Perhaps a ready reply was too much to expect—women of her stamp not knowing, as a rule, very much about charts. But when he saw her hasten to the very spot assigned her by Sweetwater, he took heart and with a suggestive glance at the gallery intimated that he would be very glad to hear what she had seen there. Her

surprise was evident, much too evident for his satisfaction. The little curls jigged about more than ever, and her cheeks grew quite pink as she answered hastily:

"I didn't see anything. I wasn't looking. Did you think I saw anything?"

"I hoped you had," he smiled. "If your eyes had chanced to be turned toward that end of the gallery–"

"But I was going the other way. My back was to it, not my face —like this." And wheeling herself about, she showed him that she had been walking toward the rear of the building rather than advancing toward the front.

His disappointment was great; but it would have been greater if he had not realized that under these conditions she was in the precise position to meet face to face any person emerging into the court from the foot of the small staircase. If she could tell him of having seen any such person, and closely enough to be able to give a description of this person's appearance, then she might prove to be his prime witness, after all. But she could not satisfy him on this point. She had been on her way out, and was too busy searching in her bag for her umbrella check to notice whether there were people about her or not. She had not found it when the great shout came.

"And then?"

Oh, then she was so frightened and so shocked that everything swam before her eyes and she nearly fell! Her heart was not a strong one and sometimes missed a beat or two, and she thought

it must have done so then, for when her head steadied again, she found herself clinging to the balustrade of the great staircase.

"Then you have nothing whatever to add to what the others have told?"

Her "no," if a shaky one, was decisive, and seeing no reason for detaining her further, he gave her permission to depart.

Disturbed in his calculations, but not disheartened, Mr. Gryce next proceeded to interrogate the door-man at this end of the building. From his position, facing as he did the approach from the small staircase, he should be able to say, if the old lady could not, whether anyone had crossed the open strip of court toward which she had been advancing. But Mr. Gryce found him no more clear-headed on this point than she. He was the oldest man connected with the museum, and had been very much shaken up by what had occurred. Really, he could not say whether anyone had passed across his line of vision at that time or not. All he could be sure of was that no attempt had been made by anyone to reach the door after he had been bidden to close it.

So this clue ended like the rest in no thoroughfare. Would he have any better luck with the subject of his next inquiry? The young lady tabulated as No. 13 was where she could have seen the upper edge of the tapestry shake if she had been looking that way; but she was not. She also was going from instead of toward the point of interest—in other words, entering and not leaving the room on whose threshold she stood.

Only two men were left from whom he could hope to obtain

the important testimony he was so anxiously seeking: Nos. 10 and 11. He had turned back toward the bench where they should be awaiting his attention and was debating whether he would gain more by attacking them singly or together, when he suddenly became aware of a fact which drove all these small considerations out of his mind.

According to every calculation and according to the chart, there should be only these two men on that bench. But he saw *three*. Who was this third man, and where had he come from?

VI
THE MAN IN THE GALLERY

Beckoning to Sweetwater, Mr. Gryce pointed out this extra man and asked him if he recognized him as one of the twenty-two he had tabulated.

The answer was a vigorous no. "It's a new face to me. He must have dropped from the roof or come up through the flooring. He certainly wasn't anywhere about when I made out my list. He looks a trifle hipped, eh?"

"Troubled—decidedly troubled."

"You might go a little further and say done up."

"Good-looking, though. Appears to be of foreign birth."

"English, I should say, and just over."

"English, without a doubt. I'll go speak to him; you wait here, but watch out for the Coroner, and send him my way as soon as he's at leisure."

Then he reapproached the bench, and observing, with the keenness with which he observed everything without a direct look, that with each step he took the stranger's confusion increased, he decided to wait till after he had finished with the others, before he entered upon an inquiry which might prove not only lengthy but of the first importance.

He was soon very glad that he had done this. He got nothing from Mr. Simpson; but the questions put to Mr. Turnbull

were more productive. Almost at the first word, this gentleman acknowledged that he had seen a movement in the great square of tapestry to which Mr. Gryce drew his attention. He did not know when, or just where he stood at the time, but he certainly had noticed it shake.

"Can you describe the movement?" asked the gratified detective.

"It swayed out–"

"As if blown by some wind?"

"No, more as if pushed forward by a steady hand."

"Good! And what then?"

"It settled back almost without a quiver."

"Instantly?"

"No, not instantly. A moment or two passed before it fell back into place."

"This was before the attendant Correy called out his alarm, of course?"

Yes, of course it was before; but how long before, he couldn't say. A minute—two minutes—five minutes—how could he tell! He had no watch in hand.

Mr. Gryce thought possibly he might assist the man's memory on this point but forbore to do so at the time. It was enough for his present purpose that the necessary link to the establishment of his theory had been found. No more doubt now that the bow lying in the niche of the doorway overhead had been the one made use of in this desperate tragedy; and the way thus cleared

for him, he could confidently proceed in his search for the man who had flung it there. He believed him to be within his reach at that very moment, but his countenance gave no index to his thought as reapproaching the young man now sitting all alone on the bench, he halted before him and pleasantly inquired:

"Do I see you for the first time? I thought we had listed the name of every person in the building. How is it that we did not get yours?"

The tide of color which instantly flooded the young man's countenance astonished Mr. Gryce both by its warmth and fullness. If he were as thin-skinned as this betokened, one should experience but little difficulty in reaching the heart of his trouble.

With an air of quiet interest Mr. Gryce sat down by the young man's side. Would this display of friendliness have the effect of restoring some of his self-possession and giving him the confidence he evidently lacked? No, the red fled from his cheek, and a ghastly white took its place; but he showed no other change.

Meantime the detective studied his countenance. It was a good one, but just now so distorted by suffering that only such as were familiar with his every look could read his character from his present expression. Would a more direct question rouse him? Possibly. At all events, Mr. Gryce decided to make the experiment.

"Will you give me your name?" he asked, "—your name and residence?"

The man he addressed gave a quick start, pulled himself

together and made an attempt to reply.

"My name is Travis. I am an Englishman just off the steamer from Southampton. My home is in the county of Hertfordshire. I have no residence here."

"Your hotel, then?"

Another flush—then quickly: "I have not yet chosen one."

This was too surprising for belief. A stranger in town without rooms or hotel accommodations, making use of the morning hours to visit a museum!

"You must be very much interested in art!" observed his inquisitor a little dryly.

Again that flush and again the quick-recurring pallor.

"I—I am interested in all things beautiful," he replied at last in broken tones.

"I see. May I ask where you were when that arrow flew which killed a young lady visitor? Not in this part of the court, I take it?"

Mr. Travis gave a quick shudder and that was all. The detective waited, but no other answer came.

"I am told that as she fell she uttered one cry. Did you hear it, Mr. Travis?"

"It wasn't a cry," was his quick reply. "It was something quite different, but dreadful, dreadful!"

Mr. Gryce's manner changed.

"Then you did hear it. You were near enough to distinguish between a scream and a gasp. Where were you, and why weren't you seen by my man when he went through the building?"

"I—I was kneeling out of sight—too shocked to move. But I grew tired of that and wanted to go; but on reaching the court, I found the doors closed. So I came here."

"Kneeling! Where were you kneeling?"

He made a quick gesture in the direction of the galleries.

The detective frowned, perhaps to hide his secret satisfaction.

"Won't you be a little more definite?" he asked; then as the man continued to hesitate he added, but as yet without any appreciable loss of kindliness: "Every other person here has been good enough to show us the exact place he was occupying at that serious moment. I must ask you to do the same; it is only just."

Was the look this called up one of fear or of simple repugnance? It might be either; but the detective was disposed to consider it fear.

"Will you lead the way?" he pursued. "I shall be glad to follow."

A glance of extreme reproach; then these words, uttered with painful intensity:

"You want me to go back there—where I saw—where I can see again—*I cannot*. I'm not well. I suffer. You will excuse me. You will allow me to say what I have to say, *here*."

"I'm sorry, but I cannot do that. The others have gone without question to their places; why should not you?"

"Because–" The word came brokenly and was followed by silence. Then, seeing the hopelessness of contending with police authority, he cast another glance of strong repulsion in the

direction of the gallery and started to his feet. Mr. Gryce did the same, and together they crossed the court. But they got no further at this time than the foot of the staircase. Coroner Price, by an extra effort which seemed to be called for by the circumstances, had succeeded in picking up a jury from the people collected on the street, and entering at this moment, created a diversion which effectively postponed the detective's examination of his new witness.

When the opportunity came for resuming it, so much time had elapsed that Mr. Gryce looked for some decided change in the manner or bearing of the man who, unfortunately for his purposes, had thus been given a quiet hour in which to think. Better, much better, for the cause of justice, if he could have pushed him to the point at once, harried him, as it were, in hot blood. Now he might find him more difficult.

But when, in company with the Coroner, who now found himself free to assist him in his hunt for witnesses, he reapproached the Englishman sitting as before alone on his bench, it was to find him to all appearance in the same mind in which he had left him. He wore the same look and followed with the same reluctance when he was made to understand that the time had now come for him to show just where he was standing when that arrow was sped on its death-course. And greatly impressed by this fact, which in a way contradicted all his expectations, Mr. Gryce trod slowly after, watching with the keenest interest to see whether, on reaching the top of the steps,

this man upon whose testimony so much depended would turn toward the southern gallery where the girl had fallen, or toward the northern one, where Correy had found the bow.

It looked as if he were going to the left, for his head turned that way as he cleared the final step. But his body soon swayed aside in the other direction, and by the time the old detective had himself reached the landing, Travis, closely accompanied by the Coroner, had passed through the first of the three arches leading to that especial section of the gallery where the concealing tapestry hung.

"The man is honest," was Mr. Gryce's first thought. "He is going to show us the bow and confess to what was undoubtedly an accident." But Mr. Gryce felt more or less ready to modify this impromptu conclusion when, on passing through the arch himself he came upon the young man still standing in Section VI, with his eyes on the opposite gallery and his whole frame trembling with emotion.

"Is she—the young lady who was shot—still lying on those cold stones alone, forsaken and–"

Mr. Gryce knew misery when he saw it. This man had not overstated the case when he had said "I suffer." But the cause! To what could this excess of sensibility be attributed? To remorse or to an exaggerated personal repulsion? It looked like remorse, but that there might be no doubt as to this, Mr. Gryce hastened to assure the Englishman that on the departure of the jury the body had been removed to one of the inner rooms. The relief

which this gave to Mr. Travis was evident. He showed no further reluctance to proceed and was indeed the first of the three to enter where the great drapery hung, flanked by the two immense vases. Would he pause before it or hurry by into the broad corridor in front? If he hurried by, what would become of their now secretly accepted theory?

But he did not hurry by; that is, he did not pass beyond the upper end, but stopped when he got there and looked back with an air of extreme deprecation at the two officials.

"Have we arrived?" asked Mr. Gryce, his suspicions all returning, for the man had stepped aside from the drapery and was standing in a spot conspicuously open to view even from the lower court.

The Englishman nodded; whereupon Mr. Gryce, approaching to his side, exclaimed in evident doubt:

"You were standing *here*? When? Not at the moment the young girl fell, or you would have been seen by some one, if not by everyone, in the building. I want you to take the exact place you occupied when you first learned that something had gone wrong in the opposite gallery."

The stranger's distress grew. With a show of indecision scarcely calculated to inspire confidence in either of the two men watching him, he moved now here and now there till he finally came to a standstill close by the pedestal—so close, indeed, to its inner corner that he was almost in a line with its rear.

"It was here," he declared with a gulp of real feeling. "I am

sure I am right now. I had just stepped out–"

"From behind the tapestry?"

"No." His blank astonishment at the quickness with which he had been caught up left him staring for a moment at the speaker, before he added:

"From behind the pedestal. The—the vase, as you see, is a very curious one. I wanted to look at it from all sides."

Without a word the Coroner slipped past him and entering the narrow space behind the pedestal took a look up at the vase from his present cramped position.

As he did this, two things happened: first Sweetwater, who had stolen upon the scene, possibly at some intimation from Mr. Gryce, took a step toward them which brought him in alignment with the Englishman, of whose height in comparison with his own he seemed to take careful note; and secondly, the sensitive skin of the foreigner flushed red again as he noticed the Coroner's sarcastic smile, and heard his dry remark:

"One gets a better view here of the opposite gallery than of the vase perched so high overhead. Had you wished to look at those ladies, without being seen by them, you could hardly have found a better loophole than the one made by the curving in of this great vase toward its base." Then quickly: "You surely took one look their way; that would be only natural."

The answer Mr. Travis gave was certainly unexpected.

"It was after I came out that I saw them," he stammered. "There were two ladies, one tall and one very young and slight.

The older lady was stepping toward the front, the other entering from behind. As I looked, the younger made a dash and ran by the first lady. Then–"

"Proceed, Mr. Travis. Your emotion is very natural; but it is imperative that we hear all you have to tell us. She ran by the older lady, and then?"

Still silence. The Englishman appeared to be looking at Coroner Price, who in speaking emerged from behind the pedestal; but it is doubtful if he saw him. A tear was in his eye —a tear!

Seeing it, Mr. Gryce felt a movement of compassion, and thinking to help him, said kindly enough:

"Was it so very dreadful?"

The answer came with great simplicity:

"Yes. One minute she was all life and gaiety; the next she was lying outstretched on the hard floor."

"And you?"

Again that look of ingenuous surprise.

"I don't remember about myself," he said. "I was thinking too much about her. I never saw anyone killed before."

"Killed? Why do you say killed? You say you saw her fall, but how did you know she was killed?"

"I saw the arrow in her breast. As she fell backward, I saw the arrow."

As he uttered these words, the three men watching him perceived the sweat start out on his forehead, and his eyes take

on a glassy stare. It was as if he were again in gaze upon that image of youthful loveliness falling to the ground with the arrow of death in her heart. The effect was strangely moving. To see this event reflected as it were in horror from this man's consciousness made it appear more real and much more impressive than when contemplated directly. Why? Had remorse given it its poignancy? Had it been his own hand which had directed this arrow from behind the pedestal? If not, why this ghastly display of an emotion so far beyond what might be expected from the most sentimental of onlookers?

In an endeavor to clear the situation, the Coroner intervened with the following question:

"Have you ever seen a shot made by a bow and arrow before, Mr. Travis? Archery-practice, I mean. Or—well, the shooting of wild animals in India, Africa or elsewhere?"

"Oh, yes. I come from a country where the bow and arrow are used. But I never shoot. I can only speak of what I have seen others do."

"That is sufficient. You ought to be able to tell, then, from what direction this arrow came."

"It—it must have come from this side of the gallery. Not from this section, as you call it, but from some one of the other open places along here."

"Why not from this one?"

"Because there was nobody here but me," was the simple and seemingly ingenuous answer.

It gave them an unexpected surprise. Innocence would speak in this fashion. But then the bow—the bow which was lying not a dozen feet from where they stood! Nothing could eliminate that bow.

After a short consultation between themselves, which the Englishman seemed not to notice, the Coroner addressed him with the soothing remark:

"Mr. Travis, you must not misunderstand me. The accident which has occurred (we will not yet say crime) is of so serious a nature that it is imperative for us to get at the exact facts. Only yourself and one other person whom we know can supply them. I allude to the lady you saw, first in front of and then behind the girl who was shot. Her story has been told. Yours will doubtless coincide with it. May I ask you, then, to satisfy us on a point you were in a better position than herself to take note of. It is this: When the young girl gave that bound forward of which you both speak, did she make straight for the railing in front, or did she approach it in a diagonal direction?"

"I do not know. You distress me very much. I was not thinking of anything like that. Why should I think of anything so immaterial. She came—I saw her smiling, beaming with joy, a picture of lovely youth—then her arms went suddenly up and she fell—backward—the arrow showing in her breast. If I told the story a hundred times, I could not tell it differently."

"We do not wish you to, Mr. Travis. Only there must be somewhere in your mind a recollection of the angle which her

body presented to the railing as she came forward."

The unhappy man shook his head, at which token of helplessness Mr. Gryce beckoned to Sweetwater and whispered a few words in his ear. The man nodded and withdrew, going the length of the gallery, where he disappeared among the arches, to reappear shortly after in the gallery opposite. When he reached Section II, Mr. Gryce again addressed the witness, who, to his surprise and to that of the Coroner as well, had become reabsorbed in his own thoughts to the entire disregard of what this movement might portend. It took a sharp word to rouse him.

"I am going to ask you to watch the young man who has just shown himself on the other side, and tell us to what extent his movements agree with those made by the young lady prior to her collapse and fall to the floor."

For an instant indignation robbed the stranger of all utterance. Then he burst forth:

"You would make a farce of what is so sad and dreadful, and she scarcely cold! It is dishonoring to the young lady. I cannot look at that young man—that hideous young man—and think of her and of how she looked and walked the instant before her death."

The two officials smiled; they could not help it. Sweetwater was certainly no beauty, and to associate him in any kind of physical comparison with the dead girl was certainly incongruous. Yet they both felt that the point just advanced by them should be settled and settled now while the requisite

remembrance was fresh in the mind of this invaluable witness. But in order to get at what they wanted, some show of consideration for his feelings was evidently necessary. Police persistence often defeats its own ends. If he was to be made to do what they wished, it would have to be through the persuasion of some one outside the Force. To whom should they appeal? The question answered itself. Mr. Roberts was approaching from the front, and to him they turned. Would he use his influence with this stranger?

"He may listen to you," urged the Coroner in the whispered conference which now followed, "if you explain to him how much patience you and all the rest of the people in the building have had to exercise in this unhappy crisis. He seems a good enough fellow, but not in line with our ideas."

Mr. Roberts, who saw the man for the first time, surveyed him in astonishment.

"Where was he standing?" he asked.

"Just where you see him now—or so he says."

"He couldn't have been. Some one would have observed him—the woman who was in the compartment with the stricken girl, or the man studying coins in the one next to it."

"So it would seem," admitted the Coroner. "But if he were behind the pedestal–"

"Behind the pedestal!"

"That's where we think he was. But no matter about that now!—we can explain that to you later. At present all we want is for

you to reassure him."

Not altogether pleased with his task, but seeing no good reason for declining it, the affable director approached the Englishman, who, recognizing one of his own social status, seemed to take heart and turn a willing ear to Mr. Roberts' persuasions. The result was satisfactory.

When the Coroner again called Mr. Travis' attention to Sweetwater awaiting orders in the opposite gallery he did not refuse to look, though his whole manner showed how much he was affected by this forced acquiescence in their plans.

"You will watch the movements of the young man we have placed over there," the Coroner had said; "and when he strikes a position corresponding to that taken by the young lady at the moment she was shot, lift up your hand, thus. I will not ask you to speak."

"But you forget that there is blood on that floor. That man will step in it. I cannot lend myself to such sacrilege. It is wrong. Let the lady be buried first."

The outburst was so natural, the horror so unfeigned, that not only the men he addressed but all within hearing showed the astonishment it caused.

"One would think you knew the victim of this random shot!" the Coroner intimated with a fresh and close scrutiny of this very reluctant witness. "Did you? Was she a friend of yours?"

"No, no!" came in quick disavowal. "No friend. I have never exchanged a word with her—never."

"Then we will proceed. One cannot consider sensibilities in a case like this." And he made a signal to Sweetwater, who turned his body this way and that.

The distressed Englishman watched these movements with slowly dilating eyes.

"It's the angle we want—the angle at which she presented her body to the gallery front," explained the relentless official.

A shudder, then the rigidity of fixed attention, broken in another moment, however, by an impulsive movement and the unexpected question:

"Is it to find the man who did it that you are enacting this horrible farce?"

Somewhat startled, the Coroner retorted:

"If you object on that account–"

But Mr. Travis as vehemently exclaimed:

"But I don't! I want the man caught. One should not shoot arrows about in a place where there are beautiful young women. I want him caught and punished."

As they were all digesting this unexpected avowal, they saw his hand go up. The Coroner gave a low whistle, and the detective in obedience to it stood for one instant stock-still—then bent quickly to the floor.

"What is he doing?" cried Mr. Travis.

"Yes, what is he doing?" echoed Mr. Roberts.

"Running a mark about his shoes to fix their exact location," was the grim response.

VII
"YOU THINK THAT OF ME!"

"We're certainly up against it this time," were the words with which Dr. Price led the detective down the gallery. "What sort of an opinion can a man form of a fellow like that? Is he fool or knave?"

Mr. Gryce showed no great alacrity in answering. When he did speak it was to say:

"We shall have to go into the matter a little more deeply before we can trust our judgment as to his complete sincerity. But if you want to know whether I believe him to have loosed the arrow which killed that innocent child, I am ready from present appearances to say yes. Who else was there to do it? He and he only was on the spot. But it was a chance action, without intention or wish to murder. No man, even if he were a fool, would choose such a place or such a means for murder."

"That's true; but how does it help to call it accident? Accident calls for a bow in hand, an arrow within reach, an impulse to try one's skill at a fancied target. Now the arrow—whatever may be said of the bow—was not within the reach of anyone standing in this gallery. The arrow came from the wall at the base of which this young woman died. It had to be brought from there here. That does not look like accident, but crime."

Yet as the Coroner uttered this acknowledgment, he realized

as plainly as Mr. Gryce how many incongruous elements lay in the way of any such solution of the mystery. If they accepted the foreigner's account of himself,—which for some reason neither seemed ready to dispute,—into what a maze of improbabilities it at once led them! A stranger just off ship! The victim a mere schoolgirl! The weapon such an unusual one as to be *outré* beyond belief. Only a madman—But there! Travis had less the appearance of a lunatic than Mrs. Taylor. It must have been an accident as Gryce said; and yet—

If there is much virtue in an *if*, there is certainly a modicum of the same in a *yet*, and the Coroner, in full recognition of this stumbling-block, remarked with unusual dryness:

"I agree with you that some half-dozen questions are necessary before we wade deeper into this quagmire. Where shall we go to have it out?"

"The Curator will allow us to use his office. I will see that Mr. Travis joins us there."

"See that he comes before he has a chance to fall into one of his reveries."

But quickly as Mr. Gryce worked, he was not speedy enough to prevent the result mentioned. The man upon whose testimony so much hinged did not even lift his eyes when brought again into their presence.

The Coroner, in his determination to be satisfied on this point, made short work of rousing him from his abstraction. With a few leading questions he secured his attention and then without

preamble or apology asked him with what purpose he had come to America and why he had been so anxious to visit the museum that he hastened directly to it from the steamer without making an effort to locate himself in some hotel.

The ease with which this apparently ingenuous stranger had managed to meet the opening queries of this rough-and-ready official was suddenly broken. He stammered and turned red and made so many abortive attempts to reply that the latter grew impatient and finally remarked:

"If the truth will incriminate you, you are quite justified in holding it back!"

"Incriminate me!" With the repetition of this alarming word, a change of the most marked character took place in young Travis' manner. "What does that mean?" he asked. "I am not sure that I understand your use of that word *incriminate*."

Dr. Price explained himself, to the seeming horror of the startled Englishman.

"You think that of me!" he cried, "of me, who–"

But here indignation made him speechless, till some feeling stronger than the one subduing him to silence forced him again into speech, and he supplemented in broken tones: "I am only a stranger to you and consequently am willing to pardon your misconception of my character and the principles by which I regulate my life. I have a horror of crime and all violence; besides, the young lady—she awakened my deepest admiration and reverence. I,"—again he stopped; again he burst forth,—"I

would sooner have died myself than seen such angel graces laid low. Let my emotion be proof of what I say. It was a man of the hardest heart who killed her."

"It would seem so."

It was the Coroner who spoke. He was nonplussed; and Mr. Gryce no less so. Never had either of them been confronted by a blinder or more bewildering case. An incomprehensible crime and a suspect it was impossible to associate with a deed of blood! There must be some other explanation of the mournful circumstance they were considering. There had been twenty or more people in the building, but—and here was the rub—if the chart which they had drawn up was correct and the calculations which they had drawn from it were to be depended upon, this man was the only person who had been in this gallery when the arrow was shot.

With a side glance at Mr. Gryce, who seemed content to remain silent in the background, Dr. Price turned again to Mr. Travis.

"Your admiration of the young lady must have been as sudden as it was strong. Or possibly you had seen her before you hid behind the pedestal. Had you, Mr. Travis? She was a charming child; perhaps you had been attracted by her beauty before you even entered the galleries."

Instantly the man was another being.

"You are right," he acquiesced with undue alacrity. "I had seen her crossing the court. Her beauty was heavenly. I am a

gentleman, but I followed her. When she moved, I moved; and when she went upstairs, I followed her. But I would not offend. I kept behind,—far behind her,—and when she entered the gallery on one side, I took pains to enter it on the other. This is how I came to be looking in her direction when she was struck down. You see, I speak with candor; I open my whole heart."

Dr. Price, stroking his long beard, eyed the man with a thoughtful air which changed to one of renewed inquiry. Instead of being convinced by this outburst, he was conscious of a new and deepening distrust. The transition from a low state of feeling to one so feverishly eager had been too sudden. The avidity with which this man just off ship had made a grasp at the offered explanation had been too marked; it lacked sincerity and could impose on no one. Of this he seemed himself aware, for again the ready flush ran from forehead to neck, and with a deprecatory glance which included the silent detective he vehemently exclaimed:

"I am poor at a lie. I see that you will have the whole truth. It was on her account I crossed the ocean. It was by dogging her innocent steps that I came to the museum this morning. I am a man of means, and I can do as I please. When I said that I had never exchanged a word with her, I spoke the truth. I never have; yet my interest in her was profound. I have never seen any other girl or woman whom I was anxious to make my wife. I hoped to meet and woo her in this country. I had no opportunity for doing so in my own. I did not see her till a night or so before she

sailed, and then it was at the theater, where she sat with some friends in an adjoining box. She talked, and I heard what she said. She was leaving England. She was going to America to live; and she mentioned the steamer on which she expected to sail. It may strike you as impetuous, unnatural in an Englishman, and all that, but next morning I secured my passage on that same ship. As I have just said, I am my own master and can do as I please, and I pleased to do that. But for all the opportunity which a voyage sometimes gives, I did not succeed in making her acquaintance on shipboard, much as I desired it. I was ill for the first three days and timorous the rest. I could only watch her moving about the decks and wait for the happy moment in which I might be able to do her some service. But that moment never came, and now it never will come."

The mournfulness with which this was uttered seemed genuine. The Coroner was silenced by it, and it was left to Mr. Gryce to take up the conversation. This he did with the same show of respect evinced by Dr. Price.

"We are obliged to you for your confidence," said he. "Of course you can tell us this young girl's name."

"Angeline—Angeline Willetts. I saw it in the list of passengers."

"What ship?"

"The *Castania*, from Southampton."

"We are greatly obliged to you for this information. It gives us the much-wanted clue to her identity. Angeline Willetts! Whom

was she with?"

"A Madame Duclos, a French lady. I once spoke to *her*."

"You did? And what did you say?"

"I bade her good morning as we were passing on the main-deck stairs. But she did not answer, and I was not guilty of the impertinence again."

"I see. Such, then, was the situation up to this morning. But since? How did it happen that a young girl, six hours after landing in this country, should come to a place like this without a chaperon?"

"I don't know what brought her here; I can only tell you why I came. When she left the dock, I was standing near enough to hear the orders Madame Duclos gave on entering a cab. Naturally, mine were the same. I have been in New York before, and I knew the hotel. If you will consult the Universal's register for the day, you will find my name in it under hers. You will understand why I shrank from confessing to this fact before. I held her in such honor—I was and am so anxious that no shadow should fall upon her innocence from my poor story of secret and unrecognized devotion. She knew nothing of what led me to follow every step she took. I was a witness of her fate, but that is all the connection between us. I hope you believe me."

It would be difficult not to, in face of his direct gaze, from which all faltering had now vanished. Yet the matter not being completely thrashed out, Mr. Gryce felt himself obliged to say in answer to this last:

"We see no reason to doubt your word or your story, Mr. Travis. All that you have said is possible. But how about your following the young girl here? How did that come about?"

"That was occasioned by my anxiety for her—an anxiety which seems to have been only too well-founded."

"How? What?" Both of the officials showed a greatly increased interest. "Please explain yourself, Mr. Travis. What reason had you for any such feeling in regard to a person with whom you had held no conversation? Anything which you saw or heard at the hotel?"

"Yes. I was sitting in the foyer. I knew that the ladies were in the house, but I had not seen them. I was anxious to do so (see, I am telling all) and was watching the door of the lift from behind my journal, when they both stepped out. Miss Willetts was dressed for the street, but Madame Duclos was not, which seemed very strange to me. But I felt no concern till I caught some fragments of what Madame said in passing me. She spoke in French, a language I understand, and she was exclaiming over her misfortune at not being allowed to accompany her young charge to whatever place she was going. It was bad, bad, she cried, and she would not have a moment's peace till her dear Angeline got back. Anxiety of this kind was natural in a Frenchwoman not accustomed to see a young lady enter the streets alone; but the force with which she expressed it betrayed a real alarm—an alarm which communicated itself to me. Where could this unprotected girl be going, alone and in a hotel cab?

"I could not imagine, and when I saw Madame stop in the middle of her talk to buy some fresh flowers and pin them to Miss Willetts' corsage, I got a queer feeling, and flinging my newspaper aside, I strolled to the door and so out in time to hear Madame's orders to the chauffeur. The young lady was to be taken to a museum. To a museum, at this early hour! and alone, alone! Such a proceeding is not at all in accord with French ideas, and I feared a plot. Though it was far from being my affair, I determined to make it so; and as soon as I dared, I followed her just as I had followed her from the dock. But fruitlessly! Not knowing the danger, how could I avert it? I was in one gallery, she in the other. It was my evil fate to see her fall, but by whose hand I am as ignorant as yourselves. *Now* I have told it all. Will you let me go?"

"Not yet," interposed the Coroner. "There are one or two questions more which you will undoubtedly answer with the same frankness. Were you standing in front of the pedestal or behind it when you saw Miss Willetts fall?"

"I was standing just where I said, somewhere near it in the open gallery."

This seemed so open to question that the Coroner paused a moment to recall the exact situation and see if it were possible for a man as conspicuous in figure as Mr. Travis to have stood thus in full view of gallery and court, without attracting the attention of anyone in either place. He found, after a moment's consideration, that it was possible. Mr. Gryce, for all his efforts and systematic

inquiry into the position which each person had held at or near this time, had been able to find but one who chanced to be looking in the direction of this gallery, and he with a limited view which took in only the upper part of the tapestry.

A probe in a fresh direction might reach a more vulnerable spot.

"But you had been behind the pedestal?" Dr. Price suggested.

"Yes"—the quick flush coming again. "My old timidity led me to conceal myself where I could watch undetected her bright young figure pass from arch to arch along the opposite gallery. Not till she had got past my line of view did I step out, and then—then it was to see what I have already told you—her rush toward the front—the start she gave—the fall—that cruel arrow! I own that I shrank back into my narrow hiding-place when I realized that all was at an end—that she was dead."

"Why? You had been witness to a deed of blood—a deed which must have recalled to you the anxiety expressed by the woman whom you regarded as the young girl's guardian; and yet you shrank back—out of sight—away from those who had the right to make inquiries! How do you explain that, Mr. Travis?"

"I cannot, except that I was so dazed, so stricken, that I was hardly conscious of what I did. And, sirs, believe me or not, had it not been for the refuge afforded by that narrow space behind the pedestal, I think I should have fallen headlong to the floor. When I came again to myself, which was after some of the confusion had abated, I had only one thought in mind: to

suppress myself and my story lest some shadow should fall across her sweet purity. Waiting till the attention of the man you had placed on guard over her body was attracted another way, I slid out and hastened to the front, where I managed to find a quiet room in which to sit down and brood again over my misfortune. Forewarned, as you have said, and on the spot, with every wish to protect her, I had failed to do so. I fear it will make me mad some day."

Had it made him insane already? Was his story to be trusted? It was full of incongruities; were they those of a disordered mind? Such had been the excuse made for Mrs. Taylor when she had been thought guilty of this attack; why should it not be applied to this man who certainly had given evidences of not being of the usual type of young Englishman? With a sidelong look at Mr. Gryce, which that individual perfectly understood, Dr. Price thanked Mr. Travis for his candor and asked if he could point out the room in which he had sat while their young man had gone through the building checking off the position of everybody in it.

To his surprise, the Englishman answered quite simply, "I will try," and rose when they rose.

The glances exchanged between the other two men were eloquent. Where was he about to take them? Sweetwater was no fool; how had this man of marked appearance and generous proportions managed to elude him?

As has happened before, it proved to be easily explainable when once the conditions were known. The room to which he

led them was that on the upper story marked H on Chart Two. It was devoted, like one or two others near it, to a line of famous paintings at once the hope and despair of young girl copyists. The one most favored for this purpose hung just behind the door "X," which, half-open as they found it, made with the easel, the canvas upon it and an apron hanging carelessly over all, an impromptu screen behind which a man crouched in misery on the copyist's stool might easily remain unnoticed by anyone passing hurriedly by him.

And thus vanished one hindrance to a full belief in young Travis' story.

But a greater one remained. The bow! the bow found behind the tapestry at the edge of which he had stood in timorous hiding! In the hope that a shock might startle him into some admission which would give a different aspect to the case, they now led him back to this place of first concealment. He was showing strain by this time, and no delay was made to press their point. Giving the tapestry a pull, the Coroner bade him tell what he saw behind it.

The answer came with much emotion.

"The bow! The bow which sped the arrow which killed Miss Willetts. I do not want to see it. It hurts me—hurts me physically. Let me go, I entreat."

"Mr. Travis," urged the Coroner as they again emerged upon the open gallery, "you have said that there was no one with you in the section where you stood. If that was so, how came this bow to be where you have just seen it?"

A bewildered look, a slow shake of the head and nothing more.

"Did you know it was there? Did you see it thrown there?"

"No, I saw nothing. I am an honest man. You may believe me."

The Coroner scrutinized him closely but not unkindly.

"We shall know before night who handled that bow, Mr. Travis. It carries its own clue with it."

A gleam of unmistakable joy lighted up the Englishman's features.

"I am glad," he cried. "I am glad."

Coroner Price was a man of experience. He recognized the ring of truth in the Englishman's tones, and saying no more, led the way from the gallery.

A few minutes later he was on the lower floor. He had a short conversation with the two doormen; then he proceeded to the telephone and called up the Universal.

The result was startling.

Asked if the name of Rupert Henry Travis, Hertfordshire, England, was on their register, the answer was yes.

"The date of his arrival?"

"Early this morning."

"Any other arrivals to-day from the other side?"

"Yes, a Madame Duclos and a Miss Willetts."

The Coroner's tone altered. So much of the stranger's story was true, then.

"Will you connect me with Madame Duclos. I have important news to give her. Some woman had better be with her when she

receives it."

"I am sorry, but I cannot do this. Madame Duclos has left."

"Left? Gone out, you mean?"

"No, left the hotel. She's been gone about half an hour. The young lady who came with her has gone out too, but we expect her back."

"You do. And what took the older woman away? What excuse did she give, and where has she gone?"

"I cannot tell you where she has gone. She left after receiving a telephone message from some one in town. Came down to the desk looking extremely distressed, said that she had had bad news and must go at once. I made out her bill and, at her request, that of the young lady, whom she said would be called for by a friend on her return to the hotel. These bills she paid; after that she left the hotel on foot, carrying her own bag. The young lady has not returned–"

"Enough. The young lady is dead, killed by chance here at the museum. A plain-clothes man will be with you shortly from Headquarters. Meanwhile keep your eyes and ears open. If a message comes for either Madame Duclos or Miss Willetts, notify me here; and if anyone calls, detain the party at all hazards. That's all; no time to talk."

And now Gryce entered the room. He was accompanied by an inspector. This was a welcome addition to their force. Coroner Price greeted him with cordiality:

"You've come in good time, Inspector. The death of this young

girl struck down by an arrow shot by an unknown hand from the opposite side of the building bids fair to make a greater call on your resources than on mine. The woman who appears to have acted as companion to Miss Willetts has fled the hotel where they both took rooms immediately upon leaving the steamer. Either she has heard of the accident which has occurred here—and if so, how?—or she's but carrying out some deep-laid plan which it is highly important for us to know. It looks now like a premeditated crime."

"With this Englishman involved?"

"I doubt that; I seriously doubt that—don't you, Gryce? A more subtle head than his planned this strange crime."

"Yes; there can be little doubt about that. Shall I set the boys to work, Inspector? This Frenchwoman must be found."

"At once—a general alarm. You can get a description of her from the clerk at the Universal. She must not be allowed to leave town."

Mr. Gryce sat down before the telephone. Coroner Price proceeded to acquaint the Inspector with such details of the affair as were now known. The Curator moved restlessly about. Gloom had settled upon the museum. On only one face was there a smile to be seen, but that was a heavenly one, irradiating the countenance of her who had passed from the lesser to the larger world with the joy of earth still warm in her innocent heart.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.