

“**T**HERE are no undetected crimes,” say the police, and with some show of reason, perhaps, for “Murder will out,” and in the long run daylight is generally let in on lesser offences. The police contention is that, if all criminals are not invariably “run in,” there is always some plausible explanation. It is either that no sufficient evidence is forthcoming to warrant arrest or secure conviction, or that during the inquiry certain facts have become perverted; the false has been taken for the true, and innocence has thus been wrongly established. To this day, old officers at Scotland Yard are firmly convinced that Dr. Hessel was the real perpetrator of the Great Coram Street murder, and declare that the *alibi* by which he escaped was not unimpeachable. It is to be feared that this comforting assurance of ultimate detection cannot be fully accepted. There are some crimes—a large number of them, indeed—that are mysteries, and will remain mysteries, to the end of the chapter. No real solution has been offered as yet of the notorious Whitechapel murders; no reasonable surmise made of the identity of that most mysterious monster “Jack the Ripper.” Given certain favourable conditions, say the police, thus contradicting their other contention—conditions such as were present in that long series of gruesome atrocities—and a murderer will always escape retribution, if only he has the good luck to escape observation at the moment. If he is able to remove himself quickly from the scene of action, and can cover up his tracks promptly and cleverly, detection is, and must be, at fault. Various theories, based upon these alleged conditions, were put forward by the police in the Whitechapel affair. One was that the murderer only visited London at certain intervals, and that at all other times he was safe beyond all pursuit. Either he was at sea—a sailor, a stoker, of foreign extraction, a Malay or Lascar—or he was a man with a double personality;

one so absolutely distinct from, and far superior to the other, that no possible suspicion could attach to him when he resumed the more respectable garb. It was, in fact, a real case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Granted, also, that this individual was afflicted with periodic fits of homicidal mania, accompanied by all the astuteness of this form of lunacy, it was easy to conceive of his committing the murders under such uncontrollable impulse, and of his prompt disappearance by returning to his other altogether irreproachable identity. No doubt this was a plausible theory, but theory it was, and nothing more. It was never, even inferentially, supported by fact.

To admit so much, then, is to concede beyond all question the existence of unsolved and, presumably, unsolvable mysteries of crime. Many such are to be met with in the judicial records of all times and climes; many more are still occurring continually. However disquieting the statement, there is much to justify a belief that murder most foul, and still most mysteriously unrevealed, stalks constantly in our midst. I have myself heard an eminent and very famous police functionary declare that many people come by their deaths in this huge overgrown city of ours by foul means, without being missed, or if missed without any explanation of their disappearance. We come from time to time upon the fringe of such terrible mysteries; the hem of the dark veil is lifted, and light let in on the doings of modern Borgias and Brinvilliers unscrupulously wielding the terrible weapons that advanced science places at their disposal.

We have still an uncomfortable but distinct impression that the bravo still lurks down side streets, and that the nineteenth century can show its Thugs, its associations of branded miscreants, determined to plunder and kill.

The fact that, every now and then, the vestiges of some foul deed are brought to light, the existence of which is undoubted, but of which all explanation is wanting, supports this unpleasant conclusion. There was the Norwich case, as far back as 1851, when a dog turned up unmistakable human remains chopped to pieces, and buried in a plantation at Trowse, a suburb of the city. No doubt a murder had been committed, yet no one in Norwich was reported missing. After a long inquiry, the matter dropped for eighteen years, and but for the voluntary confession of the murderer then, the mystery would have continued inscrutable to the last. A man, Sheward, seized with remorse at visiting the place where he had married his first wife, admitted thus tardily that he had murdered her at Norwich. He had explained her absence at the time by spreading a report that she had gone out to Australia on a visit to her relatives. Sheward's confession was hardly credited at first. It was considered another of those sham statements of self-accusation which men so often make for purposes of their own. As everybody knows, when any crimes remain long unexplained there are always fools, idiots, or knaves anxious to accept the guilt; so Sheward's story was largely disbelieved. His confession was commonly thought false, mainly because it was shown that his wife's age at the time of the supposed murder was fifty-four, while the medical testimony proved that the remains discovered had been those of a young woman between sixteen and twenty-five. In the end, however, Sheward was convicted, sentenced, and duly hanged. Yet the case may still be classed among the mysteries of crime.

It is generally thought murder would be made more easy if greater facilities offered for the disposal of the *corpus delicti*. But murderers are often at no pains to conceal the guilty record of their crime. It is difficult, as in the Norwich case, to connect the discovery of remains with any particular individual. It was so in the Waterloo Bridge mystery, nearly forty years ago. One morning in October, 1857, soon after dawn, two boys in a boat came upon a carpet bag, locked and corded, hanging below Waterloo Bridge. The bag when forced open was found to contain the mutilated fragments of a human body (a male), and also a quantity of torn and blood-stained clothing. A theory was soon set up, and generally believed, that this was a hideous joke from the dissecting-room—the prank of some reckless medical

students. But closer investigation forbade any such conclusion. Medical evidence denied unhesitatingly that these fragments had been professionally dissected. It was as certain that they had been cut, or sawn asunder before the rigidity of death had supervened—a condition that always precedes all anatomical operations. It was shown that they had been boiled and partially salted, all processes that are commonly practised by murderers. Again, the evidences of a violent death were unmistakable. The remains presented no signs of disease; but there was one single stab—a dagger stab, apparently—which pierced the cloth, and, striking between the third and fourth ribs of his left side, had penetrated the heart. As for the clothes, they showed by their tattered condition that there had been a violent struggle, but they had not been removed from the corpse until it was stark and stiff. Here was a plain story, but still no clue was left, and the mystery remains unsolved to this day.

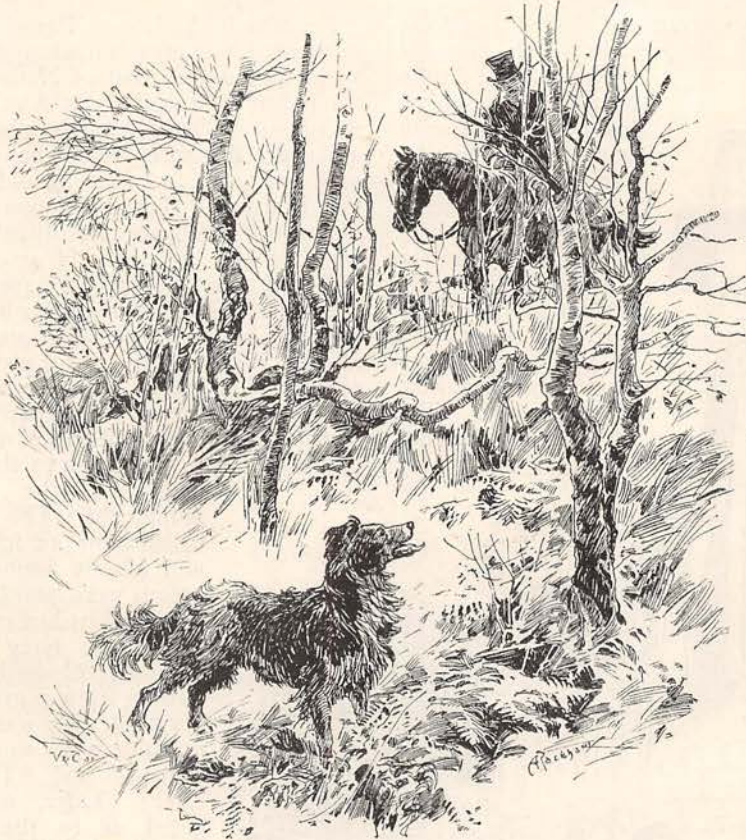
A still more recent mystery of the same kind, equally inexplicable, was the discovery in 1880 of a woman's body in a cellar, under the pavement, of a fine mansion in Harley Street. The butler of the family in cleaning out the cellar came upon a cask, and within that cask he found the body preserved in quicklime, which had been used, no doubt, with the idea of preserving it, but the opposite result followed. Decomposition had, however, gone too far to make recognition possible, and there was never the slightest clue to the identity of the criminal, or of that of the murdered person. The woman had been stabbed to the heart. Nothing whatever was elicited in the house itself. It had been occupied by the same gentleman, its proprietor, an unimpeachably respectable person, for at least twenty years, and he could throw no light whatever upon the mystery.

Even where a body has been clearly identified, and within a short space of time, the solution has not been reached. Let us take some of the less familiar cases, as recorded in the criminal history of other countries. There was the murder of "the pretty cigar girl," as she was called, Mary Rogers, of New York—the foundation, indeed, of Edgar Allen Poe's famous story "The Mystery of Marie Roget," although he placed the scene of the crime in Paris.

Mary Rogers left her home one evening for a walk in Hoboken, on the Jersey side of the Hudson River, and was never afterwards seen alive. Some days later her body was found floating in the North river; she had been strangled by her own lace *fichu*. By-and-by the traces of a fierce and mortal struggle

were found in a neighbouring wood, and in due course several arrests were made, all of men supposed to have been desperately in love with Mary Rogers. Every one was able, however, to establish his innocence, although one, by name Payn, subsequently committed suicide near where the crime was perpetrated. This mysterious murder agitated the whole of the United States to an

have hanged herself, then said to have been killed by a Methodist minister; but he was acquitted, and the deed, now proved to be one of violence, was always a mystery. So was that of the girl fished up from the bottom of Manhattan well, in the days when New York was a small place; but the murderer who had first strangled, then thrown Gulielma Sands down the well, was never discovered.



THE NORWICH CASE.

extent unparalleled, except by the murders of Presidents Lincoln and Garfield, and no satisfactory clue was ever obtained.

Not long ago, at the death of the tobacco merchant who had been Mary Rogers's employer, and who as the years passed had become a very wealthy man, certain facts were said to have come out, which in a measure implicated him with the crime; but these do not seem to have been more than a vague story of his being haunted on his death-bed in Paris by the ghost of the murdered girl. Other cases of a similar kind have occurred in the United States. There was the murder of Sarah Cornell, who was at first thought to

A much more recent New York mystery was the murder of the rich Jew, Benjamin Nathan, in 1870. He came home one night from the country to his house in West 23rd Street, close to Fifth Avenue, and as the place was dismantled, he slept on the floor of his reception room. Two of his sons and the housekeeper also slept in the house. Next morning Nathan was found lying in a pool of blood, gashed and slashed, and stabbed to death. Near at hand was a ship-carpenter's chisel, besmeared with blood. All his money and valuables, the three costly diamond studs in his shirt, his gold watch and chain, all had disappeared. More, the iron safe standing in

this same reception room, and the key of which was in the murdered man's trousers pocket, had been rifled, and many securities and important papers stolen. Those who had occupied the house with him were at first suspected, but their innocence was clearly established, and other theories set up. It was thought to be the work of a burglar come to rob, and forced to kill to escape capture; or, again, of a business man in Nathan's power, and determined, at all hazards, to become repossessed of dangerous and discrediting documents held by the Jew, in which case the

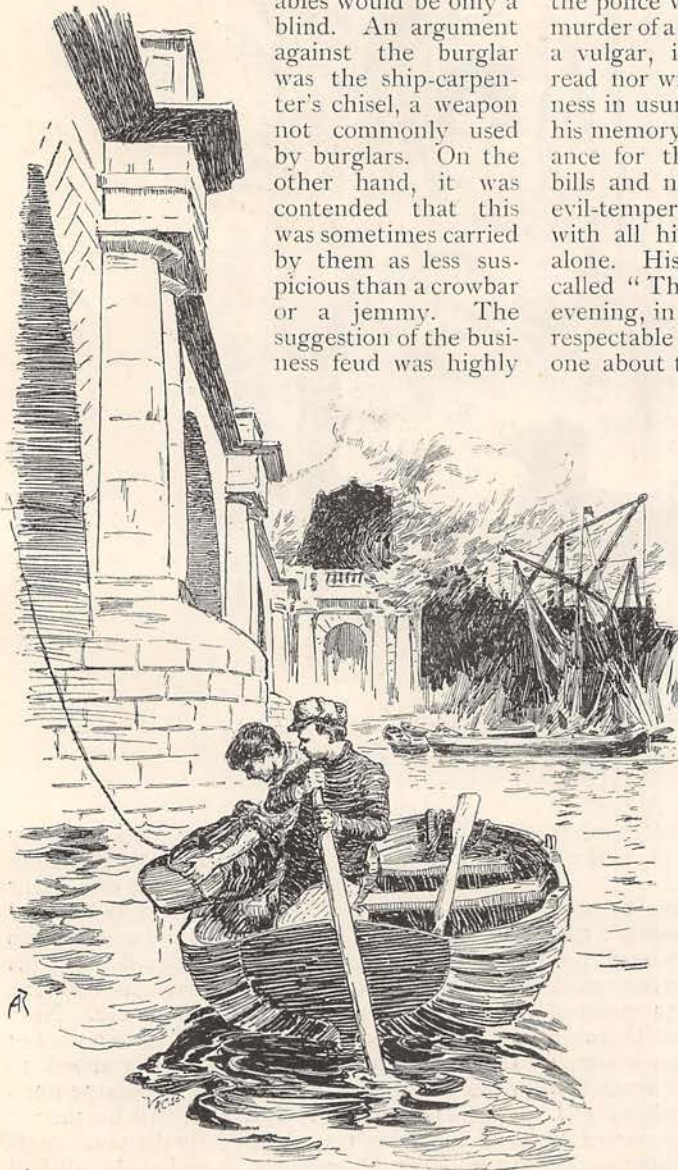
theft of cash and valuables would be only a blind. An argument against the burglar was the ship-carpenter's chisel, a weapon not commonly used by burglars. On the other hand, it was contended that this was sometimes carried by them as less suspicious than a crowbar or a jemmy. The suggestion of the business feud was highly

plausible, as Nathan was supposed to be concerned in many strange operations. But he was a silent, reserved man, whose own wife never knew what he carried in his pocket, or what was lodged in his safe. The police believed that the murderer had gained access to the house during the day, and remained close concealed until the midnight hour of action arrived. Whatever the solution of the mystery, it remains to this day unknown and undiscoverable.

Feuerbach, the famous Bavarian judge, who unravelled so many criminal mysteries, records a case not unlike that of Nathan's, in which the police were entirely at fault. It was the murder of a goldsmith, Christopher Rupprecht, a vulgar, illiterate man, who could neither read nor write, but who yet did a large business in usury. He trusted almost entirely to his memory, only occasionally calling in assistance for the drawing and arranging of his bills and notes of hand. Rupprecht was an evil-tempered old miser, who had quarrelled with all his near relations, and lived quite alone. His favourite resort was a beer-shop, called "The Hell." And he sat there one evening, in company with a party of staid and respectable citizens till half-past ten. Someone about that time came to the front door,

and asked the landlord for Rupprecht. The usurer when called went out into the street, and almost immediately loud groans were heard, and a heavy fall. All rushed out, and found Rupprecht lying just within the door, covered with blood, flowing from a great wound in his head. He was just able to murmur a few words, "Wicked rogue!" and "The axe—the axe!" Later, when interrogated as to the murder, he gasped out, "My daughter!"

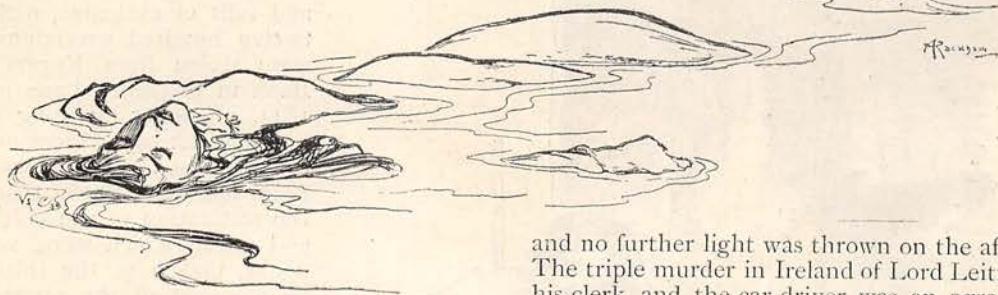
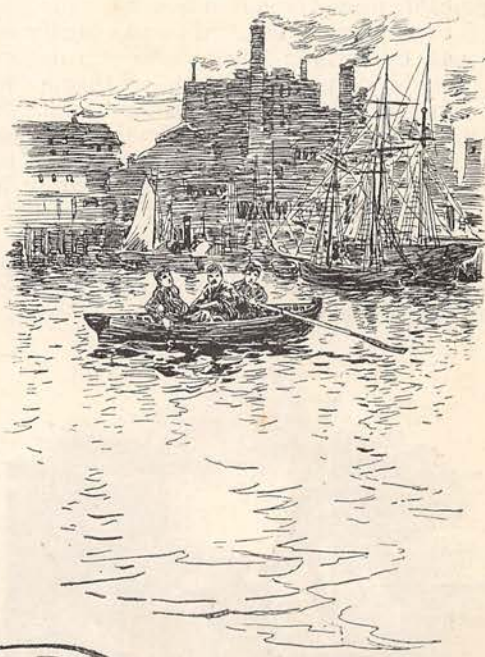
The wound, which was in the skull, and evidently mortal, had been inflicted by some sharp, heavy instrument, possibly a sabre, wielded by a practised hand. Rupprecht had been struck beyond doubt in the narrow street, a *cul-de-sac* at one end, and he must have rushed back into the house-porch to drop, dying, in the hall. Again, the position of the wound showed plainly that it had been given on the very door-step. Here were many facts. Here, too, was the chance of taking the criminal



THE WATERLOO BRIDGE MYSTERY.

red-handed, at the very time of the crime. The victim, last of all, was never quite unconscious, and he gave his own explanation of the murder, with plain indications of the murderer; yet nothing was ever brought home to a soul. Rupprecht when questioned, hanging between life and death—at a moment when, presumably, no man lies—declared that he had been struck down by Schmidt, a woodcutter, with a hatchet; that he recognised him by his voice; that Schmidt owed him no money, but that they had quarrelled. There were many Schmidts in the village, all woodcutters, and all were arrested; but to none could the crime be brought home. On one suspicion long rested, Abraham Schmidt, but his hatchet did not fit the wound. Moreover, he proved a clear *alibi*, and it was shown that he was a hard-working, peaceable man, a good husband and father, and he was in due course released. Then the law fixed upon the victim's daughter, whom he had mentioned after he had been picked up; but neither she nor her husband, who was also implicated, and although both of them lived on bad terms with Rupprecht, could possibly have committed the murder. Many other persons were arrested, interrogated, charged, but in every case suspicion, however plausible, fell to the ground. The mystery has remained a mystery, and the only solution offered was that the usurer had been slain by some disappointed

called—the case of the girl found nearly dead in an Eltham lane, and the suspicion in which fell upon her master, a printer in Greenwich. This person, Edmund Pook, was arrested on a speciously devised chain of reasoning, for which the police were afterwards blamed by the judge; Pook was held to be innocent,



THE PRETTY CIGAR GIRL (p. 382).

suppliant for a loan, or some debtor, unable otherwise to purge his debt, and that in both cases concealment was rendered easy by Rupprecht's plan of keeping no written record of his transactions. No one—not even his nearest relatives—were cognisant of Rupprecht's dealings, and it was generally believed that the only person to give a clue was the murdered man. So the secret was buried with him.

One or two more murder mysteries may be mentioned before leaving this branch of the subject. There was the Pook affair, as it was

and no further light was thrown on the affair. The triple murder in Ireland of Lord Leitrim, his clerk, and the car-driver was an agrarian outrage on which the seal of secrecy was strictly enforced; still some sort of clue might have been looked for, and was yet never found. At an earlier date the supposed crime of Johan Franz, accused of murdering a housekeeper when he was committing a burglary, is an instance of the uncertainties of circumstantial evidence, strong suspicion of an individual's guilt being met by coincidences as strongly affirming his innocence. Certain papers belonging to Franz were picked up in the room near the body; he had a shirt tied up with string similar to that with which the murdered woman had been bound. Yet it was proved by independent testimony that Franz had actually lost his papers, and

that the string or twine was of a kind very commonly used. Franz was acquitted, and the crime must be still attributed to persons unknown.

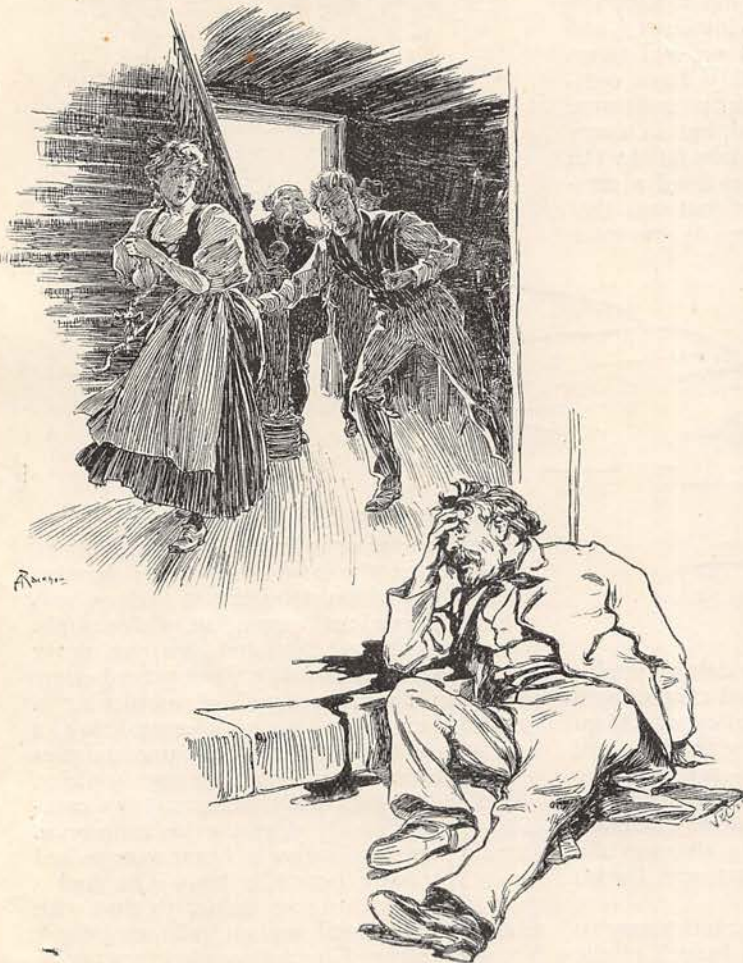
In the once notorious Bravo case there was strong presumption of guilt, but the inquest upon the dead man could not fix it upon any particular person. It was a strange story, probably nearly forgotten now after the lapse of twenty years, of a man undoubtedly poisoned by tartaric emetic who still declares solemnly and upon his death-bed that he has committed suicide by taking laudanum. Sir William Gull, one of the most eminent doctors then practising, plainly saw that this was not truth; yet the dying man persisted in his assertion which was further unmistakably falsified by the autopsy after death.

The motive for murder rather than suicide was to be found in unhappy domestic relations, although suicide was for the same reason not

impossible. Suspicions turned chiefly on a certain bottle of burgundy, from which Mr. Bravo alone at dinner had drunk three glasses; the decanter had been left all day in the dining-room cellarette, so that anyone in the house might have tampered with it. In the evening the residue of the burgundy was thrown away. Two other people—Mrs. Bravo and her companion, Mrs. Cox—had dined with Bravo, and all had partaken of the same food but not of the wine. There could be no doubt, then, that the burgundy had been drugged and presumably with tartaric emetic, but no one could say by whom. Neither suicide nor accident could explain Bravo's death; it was murder, but mysterious murder, and such it still remains.

Of crimes less heinous than taking life many have occurred, and will yet occur without being definitely cleared up. Incendiarism, such as the repeated devastating fires at that

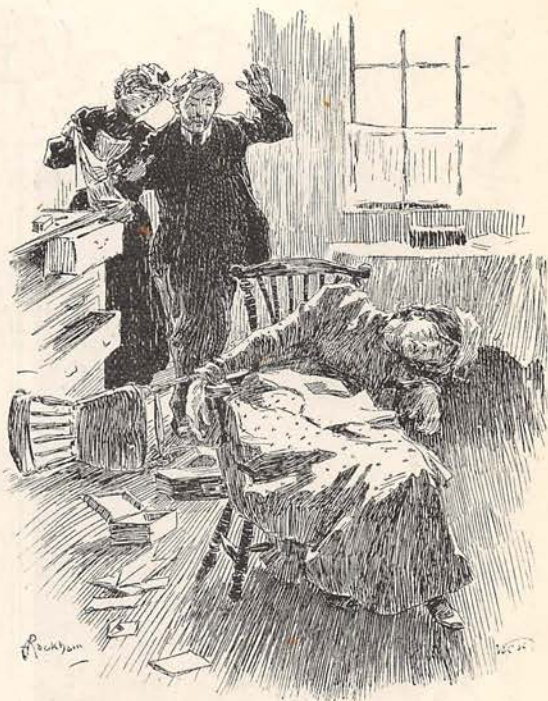
great emporium, Whiteley's—work, no doubt, rightly attributed to nefarious causes, to the action of spite, jealousy, possibly revenge for fancied wrongs—in any case no precise explanation has ever been made public. Robberies of every category from banks, country houses, bullion merchants, stockbrokers, collectors. £40,000 in notes and bills of exchange, with twelve hundred sovereigns, were stolen from Rogers's Bank in Clement's Lane in 1844, no doubt by using a safe key left by accident on the premises. There was never more clue to this than the restoration of the notes and paper, which were, no doubt, useless to the thief, on payment of the reward of £2,500 offered for their recovery; they were returned, but not the sovereigns, through the Parcels Delivery three years later. In 1848 a box of two thousand sovereigns was stolen *en route* between Praeds, the London bankers, and Cornwall without being traced. The same happened when the premises of Messrs. Baum, the bullion merchants, were broken into, and £10,000 in cash stolen therefrom. No clue was



THE FINDING OF RUPPRECHT (p. 384).

obtained to the robbery of Mr. Cureton, of the British Museum, who was assaulted by three visitors who came ostensibly to see his collection of coins, and robbed him while insensible. Jewel robberies, accomplished without leaving traces, have been frequent; for instance, the daring theft of the Duchess of Cleveland's diamonds from Battle Abbey, which was entered on the "portico burglary" principle at dinner-time by means of ladders placed against the wall. The "swag" in this case was valued at nearly £10,000, and included diamonds, rubies, emeralds, some of them the gift of royalty, but none of them were recovered; nor did the police ever come upon the track of the thieves. A very similar case occurred only a few years ago at Ramslade on the Thames, when the house of Mr. White, of the United States Embassy, was broken into, and jewels worth some £5,000 abstracted. The thieves were never caught, but only the other day some portion of the jewel boxes or cases were recovered empty among the timbers of a Thames lock.

The immunity sometimes enjoyed by the criminal need not, however, encourage candidates for the perpetration of crime. There is nowadays a much keener *flair* on the part of the detective police, and they have greater chances of success from the publicity given to crimes by the newspaper press, the improved international arrangements for the tracking of suspected persons, and their extradition when caught. Great crimes are undoubtedly cosmopolitan nowadays; they are often planned in one European capital, committed in another, and the criminals take refuge in a third. This is especially true of London, Paris, Brussels,



THE CASE OF JOHANN FRANZ (p. 385).

Vienna, and Berlin; the detectives of all countries are in close touch, and when called upon render each other prompt and often most effective assistance. Finally, the general acceptance of the principle of extradition ensures proper retribution in the end. But you must "first catch your hare," and, as has been shown in the foregoing pages, the hunt is not always entirely successful.

ARTHUR GRIFFITHS.

A DROP OF DEW.

DRIGHT drop of dew,
How much I envy you—
To hang all night
Upon the rose's breast,
With lip to lip in silence prest,
Must be a rare delight;

And then to wake
From dreams
What time the morning beams,
And soft winds make
A music all about thee must be bliss—
The while the sun
With smiling face
Salutes thee with a kiss,

And deeming thy brief hour run,
Draws thee in kindness to his warm embrace.

Ah! would that I
In dreams might lie
Through Life's dark hour
Upon the breast of Love,
As thou upon a flower,
Till breaks the light
Upon my waking sight
And mercy smiles upon me from above.
Then might I be,
Like thee,
Exhaled to heaven,
Pure and forgiven.

MATTHIAS BARR.