

tached. Her son's conduct had grieved and impoverished her; she had broken down nervously; and in this weak condition a chill had proved fatal to her. It had been aggravated by the deliberate neglect of Peter Clark, who had refused to call in a doctor until too late. Briggs had been heard to say that he hated one man only, and that was his nephew. On one occasion he said to him, before witnesses, 'If the sheriff balks, Peter, I hope I shall be there to do his work for him.' There was thus the greatest possible animus.

"Four. Financial relations of the parties.

"The Briggs Family Settlement disposes of the sum of ninety-four thousand pounds. From one-sixth part of this Briggs drew an income; Clark, on the death of his parents, was entitled to a similar amount. The balance was held in trust for the next generation; that is, if either Briggs or Clark had children, the fund would be divided among these on their attaining majority. If Briggs died without children, the income would accumulate with the bulk of the fund in expectation of heirs to Clark; but if Clark died first, Briggs, as sole survivor of the earlier generation, would enjoy the income at present paid to Clark in addition to his own. Thus Briggs would find his income doubled if Clark died, while, if Briggs died, Clark could only benefit indirectly through his children, if he ever had any. Thus we see that Briggs had a strong financial motive for the murder; whereas Clark would gain nothing whatever. Nor had Clark any other motive for killing Briggs: on the contrary, he was always hoping to conciliate his uncle, and get him to help him, both directly in a financial way, and indirectly through his influence. The bearing of this will be seen later, when we touch upon the actual circumstances of the crime.

"Briggs had been making some elaborate experiments in connection with aircraft, and was in great need of money. Eight months earlier he had mortgaged his house, down to the Old Red Sandstone. This emphasizes the motive for the act.

"Five. Conditions immediately antecedent to the murder.

"Clark had been staying in the neighborhood, and had pestered his uncle intolerably. On one occasion he had come into the laboratory while the professor was eating his lunch. The butler, who was present, says that this was exactly two weeks before the murder. He remembers the date, because it was a Sunday, and lunch had been late, owing to his having been over the moor to church.

"He swears that he heard the professor say the following words: 'Mark me, Peter. At the house I don't mind so much; but if you come bothering me here, I shall most assuredly have recourse to assassination.' With that he had risen, gone over to his desk, taken up the revolver, and tapped it, nodding his head repeatedly. The boy, thoroughly scared, had slunk out of the laboratory.

"Six. The day of the murder.

"This was a Sunday. Briggs had again passed the night in the laboratory. The butler had gone over to church, leaving his wife at home. She heard the clock strike twelve, the signal for her to prepare lunch. Immediately afterwards she was startled by the sound of a shot; but she was not particularly alarmed, as small explosions frequently occurred in the laboratory.

"This fixes the moment of the crime within one

or two minutes, and the medical evidence confirms it.

"She expected her husband to return at 12.15; he did not do so. She went out to look for him, and saw him driving towards the house with another man, who proved subsequently to be the vicar of the parish. Reassured, she returned to her kitchen.

"The butler, with the vicar, drove to the house, took out the horse, and went over together to the laboratory.

"This is what they saw. The professor was stooping over the body of Clark. He was apparently in deep thought, and seemed undecided as to what to do. The men were shocked into silence, and had the fullest opportunity of watching the actions of Briggs.

"He remained motionless for some little while; ultimately he laid down his revolver, which was still in his hand, and picked up a Brown automatic, which was firmly grasped in that of Clark. This was done with the evident intention of representing the death of Clark as the result of suicide.

"This latter weapon, although loaded, had not been discharged; the Webley had been fired recently, and the empty shell was still in the chamber; as appeared later. It was a Webley bullet which killed Clark; it had been fired from a very close range, estimated at two yards by the experts.

"The vicar now interrupted by a shocked exclamation. Briggs remained intent upon the automatic, looking at it as if it were some strange new object.

"The professor looked up as the two men approached him. He waved a hand. 'Go away! go away!' was his only remark.

"The vicar sent the butler to fetch the police and a doctor; he himself remained on guard. Briggs went over to his desk, put the automatic on one side, and buried his head in his hands. It was clear to the vicar that he was stunned by the realization of what he had done.

"But the vicar made a supreme effort. He went over, put his hand on his shoulder and shook him roughly. 'Man,' he cried, 'Don't you realize what you have done?' Briggs answered: 'By God, you bet I do.' This is the only intelligible remark that has been drawn from him. A plain confession. Then silence.

"Seven. Subsequent events.

"It has proved impossible to rouse the professor from his apathy. He has made no defence of any kind. He remains crouched and inattentive; when addressed he merely repeats: 'Go away! go away!' He would not even plead when brought into the court: he said nothing when he was sentenced this morning.

"The reason for this course of conduct is evident. He is a man of the acutest intelligence, and realizing that he was caught practically in the act, is relying for escape upon simulation of dementia. We investigated the point on his behalf, supplying him with writing materials as if it were part of the prison routine. After a short time he seized on them with apparent eagerness. Here is what he wrote: 'Revolve—gyre—explode—balance—soul—wings—action and reaction.' Under that he drew a thick line. The rest of the sheet is covered with abstruse mathematical formulae, evidently intended to impress us still further with the idea of madness; but although they are unintelligible to the mathematicians to whom they have been submitted, they