

SPELLING AND SUSPICION

By COLIN S. COLLINS

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With a gesture of impatience Elder rose. After nine months on a foreign mission the little fat seemed wonderfully homelike, and he had hoped for an evening of quietude. Probably it was one of the chaps who had heard of his return and who had looked him up with the best of intentions.

It was all very kind of him, but Elder would rather he had remained away until the morning, and it was with a slight frown that he threw open the door leading to the hall.

He gave a start of surprise as he perceived a woman's figure silhouetted against the brighter light in the hall, but Elder was accustomed to receiving strange visitors at all hours, and he stepped aside to permit her to enter.

It was not until they were in the tiny sitting room that the girl threw back her veil. Elder started back. "Erica," he cried, "this is most indiscreet."

"You receive other women on business," she defended as she clasped her hands.

"On business," he repeated. "Surely you can have no business with a detective."

With a little cry the girl sank into a chair. "Jack Brayton told me at the Benningtons that you were back," she said. "I could not sleep until I had seen you. I came on from there. I had gone to consult Mr. Bennington. I shall take only a few minutes."

Curiously Elder watched her, the woman he had loved for years. Versed in the play of expressions, he could see that it was something serious which had led her to violate convention, but he could not imagine what had brought her to seek his aid.

"I suppose you know," she went on, "that Uncle Jim is dead?"

"Mr. Westcott?" he gasped. "Why, I saw him the night I left. He looked good for a dozen years."

"He was killed," the girl went on. "There was an effort made to make it



"CONVICTED!" HE GASPED. "WHY, PAUL WOULD NOT HAVE KILLED A FLY."

appear a suicide, but the letter he was supposed to have left upon the table was found by the coroner to be a forgery."

"Have they any clew?" he asked, his professional interest aroused.

"They say that Paul did it," she said, crying softly. "He was convicted yesterday."

"Convicted," he gasped. "Why, Paul would not have killed a fly."

"There was a handwriting expert who testified that some of Paul's characteristics were found in the letter. They had a darkened courtroom and lantern slide enlargements. Paul was uncle's sole heir, and he was known to be in debt."

"Have they taken an appeal?" he asked. "Surely the case will not be uncontested."

"There is an appeal," she answered. "but Vincent, the lawyer, says he has no hope; that he cannot hope to controvert the expert's evidence. Can you help me?" She rose from her chair and held her hands toward him.

"I can and will," he answered heartily. "Believe me, Erica, before the next trial comes we shall have the proofs ready and Paul will go free."

For a moment she looked into his eyes. Then she dropped her veil and turned away. "I must go now," she announced. "Will you come to me tomorrow?"

"I was there this evening," he said simply. "They told me you had gone out, but I heard nothing of the trial. I will come at 11."

He learned little that was new in the morning. Paul Westcott was James Westcott's sole heir. He had been caught in a hole in Wall street, and it was believed that he had committed the murder in the hope that he might realize upon this fact to borrow the money to save his margins. A letter announcing the action as a suicide was clearly shown to be a forgery, though a clever one, and the case indeed looked black.

Elder came away from the house disheartened. He was certain that his friend had not committed the murder, but even to one of the best detectives in the country the case looked hopeless.

He went to the lawyers and arranged for a copy of the testimony, and when that was forthcoming he shut himself in his room to study it.

At the end of a couple of days he locked the typewritten pages in his desk and gave himself over to his social duties. Elder was a detective through love of the work, not because it was necessary for him to earn his living in this fashion, and on those rare occasions when not engaged in a pursuit he was welcomed in fashionable homes.

His reappearance in society was accepted as being an acknowledgment that there was nothing to be done for Paul Westcott, for he was known to have been Erica's suitor, and it was argued that if there was any hope he would have disappeared in search of the murderer.

In spite of this Erica seemed hopeful, and the trial, through political influence, was pushed to appeal. Gordon Westcott, her cousin, was opposed to the haste and argued violently against it, but he had always been hostile to Elder, and it was natural that he should object to any of the latter's suggestions.

As in the previous trial, the evidence hinged almost entirely upon the letter. There was brief testimony to the effect that Paul Westcott had been in danger of being wiped out in the market to prove motive. It was shown that upon his arrest he had been unable to negotiate loans and had lost heavily. Then the prosecution put in the evidence of a handwriting expert, who had testified at the previous trial and who discussed learnedly the individual peculiarities that, even in a forgery, will unconsciously betray themselves.

Almost letter by letter he compared the formation of the characters of the supposed last message with Paul's handwriting, and with each fresh slide there was more firmly established in the minds of the jury the fact that Paul must have written the letter.

With the letter the prosecution rested the case, and the defense began. Elder was the first witness, and, to the surprise of every person, he took his stand by the lantern which had figured so spectacularly at both trials.

He first flashed upon the screen half a dozen examples of Paul Westcott's handwriting and then in succession showed another hand displaying many of the same characteristics.

"You will perceive that the two men whose handwritings I have shown have many traits in common," he said, "but in his eagerness to prove guilt by angle and curve the previous witness has neglected his orthography."

"The first examples were those written by the defendant prior to the commission of the crime. The ones last shown were written by his cousin, who studied under the same tutor in his uncle's house. I will now show half a dozen examples of the late James Westcott's handwriting, asking the jury to note that in every instance 'until' is spelled properly, as it was in the examples shown of Paul Westcott's hand. Only in Gordon Westcott's letters will the word be found to be persistently misspelled 'untill,' as was the case in the forgery. A writer unconsciously betrays himself, but in this instance it was the spelling, not the formation, which told tales."

"I also show a letter from Gordon Westcott to a money lender, written immediately after the murder, in which he calls attention to the fact that, as Paul Westcott could not inherit, the estate would be divided between himself and his cousin Erica and that then he would be able to make the deferred payments."

The defense rested its case, and as soon as the opposing counsel had summed up the jury brought in a verdict of "Not guilty," and Gordon Westcott was placed under arrest.

Erica, her arm about her brother's neck, reached forward in the cab.

"Fred," she said, "I will take back all I said about not marrying you until you gave up your detective work."

"What's the incentive to give it up," he laughed as he kissed her, "when a simple matter of spelling pays me so large a fee?"

The Test of Hardness.

A good many people appear to think that resistance to a blow is a test of hardness in minerals, whereas it is resistance to erosion. Ignorance of this fact led a man not long ago to experiment on what appeared to be a large and unusually clear garnet of rather light red color. He took a hammer to it and smashed it to atoms. A diamond is the hardest substance in the world, yet it may be broken by a tap from a hammer or even a fall on the sidewalk, as it is apt to split along any of the cleavage lines, which are parallel to its faces. Experts test an undetermined gem first with a file and after with fragment of stone of differing hardness. If it yields to the file, it is a glass or something no more durable than that.

If you knew the value of Chamberlain's Salve you would never wish to be without it. Here are some of the diseases for which it is especially valuable; some nipples, chapped hands, burns, frost bites, chilblains, chronic sore eyes, itching piles, tetter, salt rheum and eczema. Price 25 cents per box. For sale by Frank Hart and leading druggists.

REPORT OF THE CONDITION OF THE Astoria National Bank

at Astoria, in the State of Oregon, at the close of business, June 18, 1906.

RESOURCES.

Loans and discounts	\$313,722.13
Overdrafts, secured and unsecured	4,084.79
U. S. Bonds to secure circulation	12,500.00
Premiums on U. S. bonds	600.00
Bonds, securities, etc.	\$9,159.85
Banking house, furniture and fixtures	4,000.00
Other real estate owned	8,233.41
Due from State Banks and bankers	4,790.57
Due from approved reserve agents	187,354.07
Checks and other cash items	2,816.92
Notes of other National banks	1,890.00
Fractional paper currency, nickels, and cents	339.05
Lawful money reserve in bank, viz.:	
Specie	\$63,271.75
Legal-tender notes	2,197.00
Redemption fund with U. S. Treasurer (5 per cent of circulation)	625.00
Total	\$645,571.54

LIABILITIES.

Capital stock paid in	\$50,000.00
Surplus fund	10,000.00
Undivided profits, less expenses and taxes paid	37,803.06
National Bank Notes Outstanding	9,800.00
Individual deposits subject to check	\$289,227.78
Demand certificates of deposit	30,444.15
Time certificates of deposit	218,496.55
Total	\$645,571.54

State of Oregon, County of Clatsop,

I, J. E. Higgins, cashier of the above-named bank, do solemnly swear that the above statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

J. E. HIGGINS, Cashier.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 23d day of June, 1906.

E. Z. FERGUSON, Notary Public.

Correct--Attest:
GEO. H. GEORGE,
GEO. W. WARREN,
A. SCHERNECKAU,
Directors.

REPORT OF THE CONDITION OF THE First National Bank

At Astoria, in the State of Oregon, at the close of business, June 18th, 1906.

RESOURCES.

Loans and discounts	\$385,868.77
Overdrafts, secured and unsecured	4,439.83
U. S. Bonds to secure circulation	25,000.00
Premiums on U. S. bonds	500.00
Bonds, securities, etc.	74,580.00
Other real estate owned	3,000.00
Due from National banks (not reserve agents)	38,523.96
Due from State Banks and bankers	51,782.95
Due from approved reserve agents	158,986.51
Checks and other cash items	358.14
Notes of other National banks	6,030.00
Nickels and cents	187.95
Lawful money reserve in bank viz.:	
Specie	\$125,200.00
Legal-tender notes	520.00
Redemption fund with U. S. Treasurer (5 per cent circulation)	1,250.00
Total	\$753,308.11

LIABILITIES.

Capital stock paid in	\$100,000.00
Surplus fund	10,000.00
Undivided profits, less expenses and taxes paid	24,034.09
National Bank notes outstanding	18,000.00
Due to State banks and bankers	181.62
Individual deposits subject to check	\$575,973.44
Demand certificates of deposit	146,968.96
Certified checks	150.00
Total	\$753,308.11

State of Oregon, County of Clatsop, I, S. S. Gordon, cashier of the above-named bank, do solemnly swear that the above statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

S. S. GORDON, Cashier.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 21st day of June, 1906.

V. BOELLING, Notary Public.

Correct--Attest:
J. C. FLAVEL,
W. F. MCGREGOR,
JACOB KAMM,
Directors.

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Men's Dress Shirts, formerly	\$ 1.00	Now	\$.19
Men's Working Shoes, formerly	\$ 2.00	Now	\$ 1.35
Men's Working Pants, formerly	\$ 1.50	Now	\$.95
Men's Hats, formerly	\$2.50 and \$ 3.00	Now	\$ 1.49

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