

# THE DIAMOND BUTTON

FROM THE DAILY OF A LAWYER AND THE  
LITERARY WORKS OF A HUMORIST.

By BARCLAY NORTH.

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CHAPTER II.

THE CORONER TAKES CHARGE.

The coroner came up at this moment and the sergeant gave him all the facts in his possession.

"The official, who was a physician, examined the body.

"Death was instantaneous," he said, "the knife passed between the ribs and pierced the heart; a powerful blow."

The two policemen who had gone into the park returned. They brought with them a pair of trousers, a coat and a hat; they had been found at different places, but on a line with the supposed flight of the murderer, first the coat, then the trousers and lastly the hat—tossed on one side or the other, on the grass.

The coroner closely examined them, and then handed them to the sergeant. There was nothing whatever in the pockets.

They were of cheap quality, such as you see in front of Chatian street clothing stores on wire frames, marked six, eight and ten dollars a suit.

Apparently they had never been worn before, for the creases, which come from being folded in piles on the counters, were still in them.

"Worn for the purpose of being thrown off," commented the sergeant. "Where is the vest?"

"We didn't find any."

"Look again."

The two officers moved off to obey the order.

"Has the body been searched?" asked the coroner.

"No."

"Then search it."

Little was revealed. A handkerchief, a pair of kid gloves, a card case filled with cards, bearing the name of "James Bolloyd Templeton," a receipted tailor's bill, a wallet containing memorandum, descriptions of real estate in various parts of the city, a gold watch, ninety-nine dollars in bills, less than a dollar to silver change, a gold watch and chain, a few cigar.

These articles were placed in the handkerchief, tied up, and given to the coroner.

"The body may be removed, sergeant," said the coroner. "Have the clothes taken to the station house. Have you the names and addresses of the witnesses?"

"Yes, also the names of those who were last with the deceased."

"That is well."

"Except the address of this man, turning to Wessing, who had never left the side of the sergeant."

"I am a stranger in the city," he replied. "I live in Philadelphia; I came from there this evening."

"You can't last night."

"Yes, this is the morning, a now day."

"Where are you staying?"

Wessing hesitated.

"The truth is, sergeant," said Wessing. "I have no lodgings yet. My vase is over there at that hotel, about to take a turn in the park, smoke my cigar and then go back to take a room."

"Um, well, I will accommodate you with lodgings for the rest of the night."

"What?" said Hollbrook. "I saw no more than I do."

"That may be," replied the sergeant, grimly; "but I may know more than you do. At all events, he must give a better account of himself than he has yet done."

This made the sergeant suspicious.

"The truth is, sergeant," said Wessing. "I have no lodgings yet. My vase is over there at that hotel, about to take a turn in the park, smoke my cigar and then go back to take a room."

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This made the sergeant uneasy.

"That I will do, but I prefer doing it at the station house rather than in this office."

"Well, let us go."

"I will go, too," said Hollbrook, who was strongly attracted by Wessing.

"As you please," rejoined the sergeant, then turning to an officer he said: "Watch the boy. I will send a letter to him as soon as I can."

Arriving at the station house, after all had been explained except the coroner and Hollbrook, Wessing gave a straight-forward account of his coming into the city from Philadelphia the night previous, and his determination not to register himself at any hotel until after he had taken something to eat; that having eaten at an eating-house on Fourteenth street and in a cigar, he caught his breath smoking in the park and cool off before he returned to the hotel.

He gave names and addresses in Philadelphia whereby his statements could be verified by telegraph.

The sergeant, however, determined to hold him until verification could be made.

To this Wessing acquiesced so readily that Hollbrook was convinced he had nothing to fear from investigation.

So expressing himself, he remarked to the sergeant: "Be careful you do not have a suit for false imprisonment on your hands."

This made the sergeant uneasy.

The coroner, however, would say nothing to relieve the officer.

"Have no fear," said Wessing, "you are only doing your duty."

This complaisance secured for Wessing the captain's room for the night rather than a cell.

Hollbrook, having nothing to detain him, went away.

When he reached the square he went over to the spot where the murder had been done. He had no purpose in going there; an irresistible impulse—a strong fascination—drew him thither.

The square was deserted again and quiet reigned. The invaders had gone back to their haunts, the tramps to their benches in the park, the "night hawks" slept again on their holes, while they awaited the belated ones who might require their services. The moon shone brightly. The silence was oppressive; unbroken only at intervals by the snatches of drummers song in the distance and the occasional rumble of the trains on Third Avenue.

Hollbrook meditated on the uncertainty of life. The man Templeton was young, strong, in health, and in a moment he had been struck down and was dead. He walked the streets late at night himself at times, and the same fate might easily have overtaken him. But this manifestly was not a murder for the purpose of robbery. And was it a woman blow struck in absent vehemence through his flesh? Hollbrook was greatly delighted with the summons. He had been attentive, but he had received little encouragement from the young lady.

"Oh," said the coroner, "we have the right to detain him as a witness."

The sergeant felt better, the responsibility now rested on the coroner as well; nevertheless he proposed another visit to their prisoner.

His name was Flora Ashgrove, and she was spoken of in the clubs as "The

handsome Flora."

Burner did not credit any man with having the favor of the fair lady. Her acquaintances of her own sex said she mingled for enterments and failed despite her beauty. Twenty men knew she had refused the offer of one man at least.

"I know the case," said the sergeant. "My mother, for certain reasons, believes she is the nearest heir, if not the sole one—that is, she thinks she is a relative. I have come to New York at her request, first to identify the deceased man with our relative if I can, and having established the identification, to determine whether my mother is an heir."

"Phew!" he added. "It may have lain there all night. But stop! The street sweeping machine passed over this spot twenty minutes or less before the two met and would have swept it away."

He examined it closely.

"The button belongs to a man who commands money and is particular in his dress. Good! Bar keepers and policemen do not wear diamond buttons of this kind, nor cables, nor tramps sleeping in the park, nor indeed many laymen. It belonged either to the murderer or his master."

He felt pleased with himself, and thought he would make a shrewd detective.

"Perhaps it belongs to the coroner," he said aloud. "Not probable," he added on another thought. "A coroner awakened in the middle of the night to view a body recently killed would hardly array himself with diamond buttons. At all events I suppose I must turn it over to the authorities. In the meantime I shall go to bed."

He put the button in his purse and entered his hotel.

It was a curious coincidence that at the moment Hollbrook picked up the button a young man of fashion, who had just returned from his club to his apartments, half a mile distant, took off his coat and discovered that the buttons on his right cuff were torn out and his cuff button gone.

He looked at it a moment, muttered an oath and asked himself, "How was that done?"

The coroner turned to a mysterious case, sergeant," said Ryan.

"I hope to have track of it by tomorrow."

"I don't think you will. I know of this of this man Templeton. He was an upright man, not given to dissipation or to having alliances which would bring him into trouble. He was a real estate

man, doing a fair business, living quietly, going into society somewhat but not to the best, fond of the theatres, but not of the actresses. A reputable man. No, you will have to look deep for the motives."

The sergeant stood somewhat in awe of the reporter, for he believed in his shrewdness and experience.

"You think then the murderer way laid him?" he asked.

"No, I do not; the meeting he had in Templeton. But I think he had it in for him to proceed with his disrobing.

The sergeant thought he saw an opportunity to expose the coroner's carelessness, and he took advantage of it.

"The circumstances surrounding the death, the remark of the murderer shows surprise at the meeting. The dead shows it was intended—the remark does too."

"I agree with you there."

"The wallet containing the money of engagements may furnish you."

"No good, they relate to his daily business."

The sergeant looked annoyed.

"There is the knife."

"Properly worked that may amount to something."

"Then there are the clothes found in the park."

The sergeant brought them out.

"Never worn but once and but for a short time. Clean."

He handed them back.

"There is one you have not spoken of," said the reporter.

At this moment an officer brought in a "drunk," and when the sergeant turned again the reporter, much to his chagrin, was gone.

CHAPTER IV.

A NEW CHARACTER EXPOSED.

W. H. Hollbrook left the station house the coroner and the sergeant entered into a consultation to the best method of proceeding.

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CHAPTER V.

CUPID EXAMINES HIS ARROWS.

HE diamond button first occupied the thoughts of Hollbrook on awakening on the morning of the 21st.

"Unless the examination of the friends the man was with last develops something," he said to himself.

"Perhaps it will," he said.

The sort of sparring not having brought forth anything, they were silent for a short time, when the sergeant put in a feather.

"What could have been the motive?"

The coroner returned the ball.

"It could not have been robbery, evidently."

"At all events there was no attempt made."

"Unless after the blow the man was frightened by the cry of Wessing."

"That's one view of it, certainly."

"This having brought forth nothing, the sergeant, however, determined to hold him until verification could be made.

To this Wessing acquiesced so readily that Hollbrook was convinced he had nothing to fear from investigation.

So expressing himself, he remarked to the sergeant: "Be careful you do not have a suit for false imprisonment on your hands."

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His name was Tom Bryan.

When the others hurried off with their information he remained, asking permission to write his report at the desk.

He wrote hurriedly, the coroner, who had been detailed by the reporters, propped up to go home.

As he was about to leave, Bryan asked:

"Do you think Wessing to be connected with this crime?"

"No," replied the coroner unguardedly.

The sergeant said to himself, "Hm, I didn't give him a 'stiff' after all."

The coroner could have bitten his tongue for his carelessness.