INITIALS ONLY

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SYNOPSIS.

George Anderson and wife are a remarkable looking man come out of the theatre. Mrs. Challoner, a friend of Mrs. Anderson, takes them to the Clermont. Challoner says that the beautiful Miss Billy Gilbert has fallen desperately in love with Stephen Chase. The hotel manager declares him to be Orlando Brotherson, a millionaire. Mrs. Challoner tells Mrs. Anderson and others about another Chase affair. Brotherson disappears. Gryce, a detective, mentioned him to a chair. At his visitor sank into it, he remarked, with all the considerables exacted by the situation.

"It is unknown property, Mr. Chalmer. But we have some reason to think it belonged to your daughter."

"I have seen it, or one like it, often in her hand." Their attention was suddenly diluted and the hand stretched forth to grasp it quickly drew back. "Where—where was it found?" he hoarsely demanded. "O God! am I to be crushed to the very earth by sorrow?"

Mr. Gryce hastened to give him such relief as was consistent with truth.

"It was picked up—last night—from the lobby floor. There is seemingly nothing to connect it with her death. Yet—"

The pause was eloquent. Mr. Chalmer gave the detective an agonized look and then turned white to the lips. Then gradually, as the silence continued, he found himself able to breathe and he said not unintelligibly.

"Honestly I believe that she is the victim of some heartless stranger. I do now. I speed you to find that stranger. Spare no effort or money. Let the two detectives look their seals.

Mr. Gryce nodded; so did Sweetwater.

She was not shot. She was not poisoned. She was not killed by a fall dead from a mortal wound in the breast. Though all the signs indicated proof of her having inflicted this wound upon herself, there was, there is no alternative, I dear, than to pronounce her death suicidal."

"I'm sorry that I've been able to add to your distress," Gryce began.

The coroner darted him a quick look.

"You are not satisfied? You have discovered something?"

The detective frowned at his hands crossed over the top of his cane, then slowly shook his head.

The verdict you mention is the only natural one, of course. Since you have been talking with Miss Challoner you have changed it?"

"Yes, and she has settled an important point for us. There was no possibility, of course, that the paper-cutter found in the dead girl's room at nice had never gone with her into the next room. That she, or some other person, had dropped it in passing through the door. But this gift as to suros me that her mistress did not enter the room with the paper-cutter in accompanied her down in the elevator, and left it in the room of the mezzanine. She can also swear that the paper-cutter was in a book she carried—the book we found lying on the couch. And she remembers distinctly seeing its pearl-handled knife protruding a little distance from its pages. Could anything be more unsatisfactory? It was going to away, if the young lady had been of the unsuspicious type and the paper-cutter genuine. But Miss Challoner's evidence is not to be overthrown by letters—" here his arm shifted a little and he looked down at the sheet of fine texture verdict. Love—" he went on, "and the paper-cutter was a present of a letter he had chosen from those left with him by any of the many admirers his natures. When it enters as a factor in a suicide, it is generally known. And Miss Challoner evidently knew nothing of any such present from this source