

JAPP:

On Monday evening last, did you purchase strychnine for the purpose of poisoning a dog?

ALFRED:

No, I did not. There is no dog at Styles, except an outdoor sheepdog, which is in perfect health.

JAPP:

You deny absolutely having purchased strychnine on Monday last?

ALFRED:

I do.

JAPP:

Do you also deny *this*? I am handing him the register in which his signature was inscribed.

ALFRED:

Certainly I do. The hand-writing is quite different from mine.

JAPP:

Then what is your explanation of Dr. Bauerstein's statement?

ALFRED:

His assistant must have been mistaken.

JAPP:

Alfred, would you mind telling us where you were on the evening of Monday, July 16th?

ALFRED:

Really—I cannot remember.

JAPP:

That is absurd, Alfred.

ALFRED:

I cannot tell you. I have an idea that I was out walking.

JAPP:

In what direction?

ALFRED:

I really can't remember.

(Alfred/Japp)

JAPP:

Were you in company with anyone?

ALFRED:

No.

JAPP:

I am to take it then that you decline to say where you were at the time when you were positively recognized as entering the dispensary to purchase strychnine?

ALFRED:

If you like to take it that way, yes.

JAPP:

There are two witnesses who will swear to having heard your disagreement with Emily.

ALFRED:

Those witnesses were mistaken.

JAPP:

I believe, Alfred, that you yourself took the coffee to your wife that evening?

ALFRED:

I did not take it to her. I meant to do so, but I was told that Dr. Bauerstein was at the hall door, so I laid down the coffee on the hall table. When I came back a few minutes later, it was gone.

JAPP:

"Alfred. Alfred." Your wife's dying words repeated here. Can you explain them in any way?

ALFRED:

Certainly I can.

JAPP:

You can?

ALFRED:

Dr. Bauerstein is much of my height and build, and, like me, wears a beard. In the dim light, and suffering as she was, my poor wife mistook him for me. You read my dear wife's last words as an accusation. They were, on the contrary, an appeal to me.