

# Waring's Peril

By Capt. Chas. King, U. S. Army.

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[Continued from Last Week.]

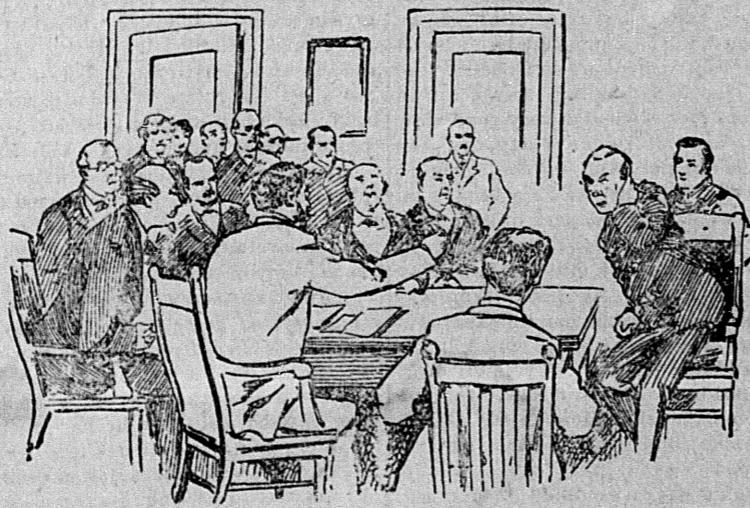
And Mme d'Herville had given her testimony, which, translated, was to this effect: She had known the deceased these twenty years. He had been in the employ of her lamented husband, who died of the fever in '55, and monsieur had succeeded to the business, and made money, and owned property in town, besides the old family residence on the levee below. He was wedded to Emilie only a little while before the war, and lived at home all through, but business languished then, they had to contribute much, and his younger brother, M. Philippe, had cost him a great deal. Philippe was an officer in the zouaves raised in 1861 among the French Creoles, and marched with them to Columbus, and was wounded and came home to be nursed, and Emilie took care of him for weeks and months, and then he went back to the war and fought bravely, and was shot again and brought home, and this time M. Lascelles did not want to have him down at the house; he said it cost too much to get the doctors down there; so he came under Madame's roof, and she was very fond of the boy, and Emilie would come sometimes and play and sing for him. When the war was over M. Lascelles gave him money to go to Mexico with Maximilian, and when the French were recalled many deserted and came over to New Orleans, and M. Lascelles was making very little money now, and had sold his town property, and he borrowed money of her to help, as he said, Philippe again, who came to visit him, and he was often worried by Philippe's letters begging for money. Seven thousand dollars now he owed her, and only last week had asked for more. Philippe was in Key West to buy an interest in some cigar business. M. Lascelles said if he could raise three thousand to reach Philippe this week they would all make money, but Emilie begged her not to, she was afraid it would all go, and on the very day before he was found dead he came to see her in the afternoon on Rampart street, and Emilie had told her of Mr. Waring's kindness to her and to Nin Nin, and how she never could have got up after being dragged into the mud by that drunken cabman, "and she begged me to explain the matter to her husband, who was a little vexed with her because of Mr. Waring." But he spoke only about the money, and did not reply about Mr. Waring, except that he would see him and make proper acknowledgment of his civility. He seemed to think only of the money, and said Philippe had written again and must have help, and he was angry at Emilie because she would not urge with him, and Emilie wept, and he went away in anger, saying he had business to detain him in town until morning, when he would expect her to be ready to return with him.

Much of this testimony was evoked by pointed queries of the officials, who seemed somewhat familiar with Lascelles' business and family affairs, and who then declared that they must question the stricken widow. Harsh and unfeeling as this may have seemed, there were probably reasons which atoned for it. She came in on the arm of the old family physician, looking like a drooping flower, with little Nin Nin clinging to her hand. She was so shocked and stunned that she could barely answer the questions put to her with all courtesy and gentleness of manner. No, she had never heard of any quarrel between M. Lascelles and his younger brother. Yes, Philippe had been nursed by her through his wounds. She was fond of Philippe, but not so fond as was her husband. M. Lascelles would do anything for Philippe, deny himself anything almost. Asked if M. Lascelles had not given some reason for his objection to Philippe's being nursed at his house when he came home the second time, she was embarrassed and distressed. She said Philippe was an impulsive boy, fancied himself in love with his brother's wife, and Armand saw something of this, and at last upbraided him, but very gently. There was no quarrel at all. Was there anyone whom M. Lascelles had been angered with on her account? She knew of none, but blushed, and blushed painfully. Had the deceased not recently objected to the attentions paid her by other gentlemen? There was a murmur of reprobation among the hearers, but Madame answered undisturbed, though with painful blushes and tears. M. Lascelles had said nothing of disapproval until very recently; au contraire, he had much liked Mr. Waring. He was the only one of the officers at the barracks whom he had ever invited to the house, and he talked with him a great deal; had never, even to her, spoken of a quarrel with him, because Mr. Waring had been so polite to her, until within a week or two; then—yes, he certainly had. Of her husband's business affairs, his papers, etc., she knew little. He always had certain moneys, though not large sums, with all his papers, in the drawers of his cabinet, and that they should be so disturbed a state was not unusual. They were all in order, closed and locked, when he started for town the morning of that fatal day, but he often left them open and in disorder, only then locking his library door. When she left for town two hours after him, the library door was open, also the side-window. She could throw no light on the tragedy. She had no idea who the stranger could be. She had not seen Philippe for nearly a year, and believed him to be at Key West.

Alphonse, the colored boy, was so terrified by the tragedy and by his detention under the same roof with the

murdered man that his evidence was only dragged from him. Nobody suspected the poor fellow of complicity in the crime, yet he seemed to consider himself as on trial. He swore he had entered the library only once during the afternoon or evening, and that was to close the shutters when the storm broke. He left a lamp burning low in the hall, according to custom, though he felt sure his master and mistress would remain in town over night rather than attempt to come down. He had slept soundly, as negroes will, despite the gale and the roar of the rain that drowned all other noise. It was late the next morning when his mother called him. The old mammy was frightened to see the front gate open, the deep water in the streets, and the muddy footprints on the veranda. She called Alphonse, who found that his master must have come in during the night, after all, for the lamp was taken from the hall table, the library door was closed and locked, so was the front door, also barred within, which it had not been when he went to bed. He tapped at his master's bedroom; it was empty and undisturbed. Neither had Madame nor Mlle. Nin Nin been to their rooms. Then he was troubled, and then the soldiers came and called him out into the rain. They could tell the rest.

Cram's story is already told, and he could add nothing. The officials tried to draw the batteryman out as to the relations existing between Lieut. Waring and Madame, but got badly "bluffed." Cram said he had never seen anything in the faintest degree worthy of comment. Had he heard anything? Yes, but nothing worthy of consideration, much less of repetition. Had he not loaned Mr. Waring his team and carriage to drive Madame to town that morning? No. How did he get it then? Took it! Was Mr. Waring in the habit of helping him?



"HAVE YOU EVER SEEN THIS KNIFE BEFORE?"

self to the property of his brother officers? Yes, whenever he felt like it, for they never objected. The legal official thought such spirit of camaraderie in the light artillery must make life at the barracks something almost poetic, to which Cram responded: "Oh, at times absolutely idyllic." And the tilt ended with the civil functionary ruffled, and this was bad for the battery. Cram never had any policy whatsoever.

Lieut. Doyle was the next witness summoned, and a more God-forsaken-looking fellow never sat in a shell jacket. Still in arrest, physically, at the beak of old Braxton, and similarly hampered, intellectually, at the will of bold John Barleycorn. Mr. Doyle came before the civil authorities only upon formal subpoena served at post headquarters. The post surgeon had straightened him up during the day, but was utterly perplexed at his condition. Mrs. Doyle's appearance in the neighborhood some weeks before had been the signal for a series of sprees on the Irishman's part that had on two occasions so prostrated him that Dr. Potts, an acting assistant surgeon, had been called in to prescribe for him, and, thanks to the vigorous constitution of his patient, had pulled him out in a few hours. But this time "Pills the Less" had found Doyle in a state bordering on terror, even when assured that the quantity of his potions had not warranted an approach to tremens. The post surgeon had at last, desperately, miserably, "the letters are S. B. W., and it belongs to up his eyes one instant, groaned, shuddered, and said:

"Oh, my God, yes!"  
"Whose property is it or was it?"  
At first he would not reply. He moaned and shook. At last:  
"Sure, the initials are on the top," he cried.

But the official was relentless.

"Tell us what they are and what they represent."

People were crowding the hallway and forcing themselves into the room. Cram and Ferry, curiously watching their ill-starred comrade, had exchanged glances of dismay when the knife was so suddenly produced. Now they bent breathlessly forward.

The silence for the moment was oppressive.

"If it's the knife I mane," he sobbed at last, desperately, miserably, "the letters are S. B. W., and it belongs to

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