

simply brands him as illegitimate, refuses to argue the question, and rams the things into an auction-room?—No; we asked him for proofs. In my letter of 16th February I say, “I enclose a circular which shows the proofs of kinship required before the residue can be paid to the next-of-kin.”

2918. *Mr. Loughrey.*] Does he not refer you to a number of people who knew him—Mr. Ferguson, of the Harbour Board, Wellington, and other gentlemen of good standing, who knew he was recognised as the son of this lady?—But to this day he has not appeared.

2919. *The Chairman.*] Now, Mr. Hamerton, have you looked thoughtfully at the last act of this sorrowful drama? When the very watch that belonged to this poor fellow's mother was sold, you became the purchaser of it for your daughter, and she is in possession of it to-day, notwithstanding that you had recognised young Dallon as the son of that woman whom you supposed to have borne him in illegitimacy? Has it never occurred to you that your position was altogether a very sad and sorry one in connection with this unfortunate case?—It has never occurred to me in that light, but it does so now you mention it, and as some little reparation I will consign that watch to the son if I can find him.

2920. But that will not get over your last touching act of the drama—that such a thing could have happened, that such a picture should now present itself?—I can only make restitution to him as far as I can. It is a pity it has happened.

2921. But then, of course, there are dozens of cases where the office, through its officials, have possessed themselves of parts of dead people's estates?—Well, without looking through it I cannot tell. However, so far as I can make restitution I shall. The crime does not appear a heinous one in my eyes.

2922. Then, you only think it wrong in that estate?—Simply because of the circumstances, which you have brought to my mind more graphically than was ever brought before.

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FRIDAY, 24TH APRIL, 1891.

Mr. STANLEY HAMERTON examined.

2923. *The Chairman.*] You have just brought up two parcels in Mrs. Dallon's estate, have you not?—Yes.

2924. When did you get the smaller parcel?—From the Chief Clerk this morning.

2925. From the Rev. Mr. De Castro?—Yes.

2926. Did he say anything to you?—That he found it in one of his private drawers in his table.

2927. His writing-table?—Yes.

2928. In his office?—Yes.

2929. You remember yesterday, when you brought up a key of his safe that contains the jewellery? You were here yesterday, and a key of the safe was handed to you by the Commissioners?—Not by the Commissioners—by the Accountant.

2930. Then you had the key of the safe in your possession?—Yes.

2931. Do you remember my asking you to keep that key and not to allow it out of your possession?—It was already gone out of my possession. I had already given it back to the Accountant.

2932. Then you have not opened the safe, since you have not had the key since?—No.

2933. You unlocked the jewellery-safe yesterday?—Yes.

2934. And you made a search for that packet of lace that you brought up this morning?—Yes.

2935. You are sure it was not in that safe when you searched?—Yes; quite sure.

2936. Now, can you not call to mind that the Commissioners asked you yesterday not to part with the key until we met this morning?—Of course, the messenger opens the strong-room, and the jewellery-box is inside the strong-room. It is not inside another safe.

2937. How many people go to the strong-room?—They are passing in and out all day getting books.

2938. Then any one in the office can go in at any time of the day?—Yes.

2939. Do you mean to tell me the jewellery is placed in the strong-room without being under separate lock and key?—It is under lock and key in a cupboard.

2940. You had the key of that cupboard yesterday?—Yes.

2941. Do you not remember my asking you not to part with that key until you saw us this morning?—Yes, but I had already given it back to the Accountant.

2942. Then, why did you not say so at the time?—I thought you were alluding to the strong-room itself.

2943. If you thought I was alluding to the strong-room, how is it you allowed the strong-room to be opened this morning?—I had to come here early, and it was opened.

2944. Have you had any conversation with the Rev. Mr. De Castro this morning?—Yes.

2945. About the search you were making yesterday?—Yes.

2946. Will you be good enough to tell the Commissioners all that has passed between you both?—Well, when he came this morning —

2947. Sit down, and be frank and open, because we are here for a purpose, and if we do not get our information one way we will another?—This morning, when Mr. De Castro came, I was telling him we had missed this parcel of lace, and soon after I saw him with a parcel. I told him I had searched in the jewellery-box, and through the parcels we had down there, and he told me he got it out of his drawer in his table. He told me he kept a few things there, and that this big parcel was over from the first sale, and the second parcel of lace was over from the second sale.