"My name is Seymour Wilbraham Wentworth. I am brother-in-law and secretary to Sir Charles Vandrift, the South African millionaire and famous financier. Many years ago, when Charlie Vandrift was a small lawyer in Cape Town, I had the (qualified) good fortune to marry his sister. Much later, when the Vandrift estate and farm near Kimberley developed by degrees into the Cloetedorp Golcondas, Limited, my brother-in-law offered me the not unremunerative post of secretary; in which capacity I have ever since been his constant and attached companion." An illustrious scientist, Allen came to fiction as a more lucrative avenue than more serious writing. As well as writing ghost and detective stories, he introduced us to the illustrious Colonel Clay, a precursor of other gentleman rogue characters; he notably bears a strong resemblance to Maurice Leblanc’s Arsène Lupin, introduced some years later. - Summary by Lynne Thompson, quote from the first chapter

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