



A MIDNIGHT TRAGEDY. THE CRIME OF THE BROKER'S OFFICE.

CHAPTER IV.

Gerald Paxton, the detective, was a young man, ambitious man. He had entered upon the profession in which we find him engaged several years previous to the occurrence of the crime of a broker's office, as the murder of John Oakburn was designated, and he had labored with enthusiasm and met with several successes which had attracted attention to himself to such an extent that he was regarded as a rising man. But as yet he had not attained the eminence which his ambition craved.

Paxton was ever anxious to take advantage of circumstances, and when he left the broker's office after the investigation he believed that he had at last found a case that might open a great future for himself and enable him to win celebrity and eminence. He comprehended that in the case of John Oakburn's murder all the elements of supreme interest were united—magnitude of crime, mystery, uncertainty of issue, and difficulty of solution. In short, that it was just such a case as he longed to undertake, and he was filled with enthusiasm which aroused all his energies, and made him feel the keenest anxiety and hope.

He smiled as he thought how simple the police sergeant regarded the whole affair, and how readily he had jumped to a solution of the whole matter. "Circumstances may still further implicate Stuart Harland, but I have embarked in the case with the assumption of his innocence, which I shall undertake to establish in the face of all the circumstantial evidence that may be brought against him, and I shall succeed," muttered Paxton, in a tone of conviction.

His faith was firm, his determination indomitable, and the possibility of failure was never inclined to admit. He had not concluded his investigation, although it was his policy to conceal this fact from the police sergeant. After walking to the office of the police and his companions, Paxton turned down a side street, made a detour, and, doubling on his own tracks, he returned to the broker's office.

Stealthily, as though he wished to conceal his presence from the two officers who were on guard in the office, Paxton entered the passage between the office and the adjoining building and proceeded to critically inspect the ground under the window in the rear compartment of the office.

The night was doubly dark in the narrow passage where the shadows are dense and black, and the detective was obliged to produce his pocket lantern, which was of the bull's-eye type, in order to inspect the ground in a satisfactory manner. The result was a discovery. The imprints of a man's feet were discovered in the ground beneath the window, where the earth was soft and yielding owing to a thaw.

The impressions were quite distinct, and the print of a double row of nails, which must have studded the sole of the boots or shoes which had made the tracks were quite clearly defined. Paxton also detected certain marks or abrasions on the paint on the side of the building under the window, which had undoubtedly been made by some one who had climbed up to it.

He caught the window-sill, and with a firm grasp drew himself up to the window, which he examined, making the further discovery that there were certain marks under the edge of the shutters. "I was not in error. This window was opened from the outside and not from the inside, as our worthy police sergeant so positively affirmed. I see plainly where an iron bar was forced under the shutter to pry off the fastening. Yes, the assassin entered from the outside through the window," said Paxton to himself, in a satisfied tone.

He let himself down from the window again and having once more carefully inspected the track under it he procured a piece of board which he placed at hand, and covered them so as to preserve them from observation. He understood the value of such mute evidences as these, and he never neglected any precaution which might eventuate to his advantage. With the certitude of the truth of a positive theory which he had formed for a basis, he proceeded to erect a superstructure intended to sustain his hypothesis and convince others of its truth. Revolving in his mind various conjectures and possibilities suggested by his discoveries, Paxton repaired to his own apartments. Before retiring, however, he made from memory a very exact diagram of the premises where the murder had been committed. If Stuart Harland was to be placed in front of his life by reason of John Oakburn's murder, he had in Gerald Paxton a defender whose services would prove invaluable—one who feared not to enter the lists against any opponent. The following morning the crime was made known to the public through the newspapers and there was much excitement on Wall street and throughout the city. The street in the immediate neighborhood of the broker's office was thronged with an eager and excited multitude, and morbid curiosity, to view the

remains of the victim of the tragedy impelled many to seek an entrance. But the policeman on guard permitted no one to enter. At nine o'clock a. m. the coroner, his clerk, a number of police officers, including the sergeant who had accused Stuart Harland, and Paxton, the detective, arrived, and entered the office. Mr. Garrison and his clerks presented themselves soon after, and they were admitted, as were also a number of gentlemen from the assemblage without, who were selected by the coroner to serve as a jury.

The usual preliminaries being concluded, and the jury duly sworn, the inquest proceeded as is usual in such cases. The surgeon made a thorough examination of the wound which had occasioned John Oakburn's death, and extracted the bullet, which was found to be a large lead ball of peculiar, conical shape, entirely unlike bullets intended for ordinary pistols.

The bullet was transferred from hand to hand and viewed with interest by all. Paxton, the detective, particularly examined it minutely, and, after he had whispered to the coroner for a moment, he was permitted to retain possession of the singular, death-dealing ball. He carefully deposited it in his pocketbook, as though he regarded its preservation as a matter of the utmost importance. "There is no possibility of suicide in this case, I presume," said the coroner, addressing the surgeon.

"No, sir, suicide may be positively excluded. The position of the fatal wound, the direction taken by the bullet, and the nature of the indentations at the margin of the orifice where the ball entered, all serve to prove that the shot was not fired by the dead man himself. The wound clearly shows to a practiced observer that the bullet came from a distance of probably in the neighborhood of twenty feet," answered the surgeon.

Paxton paced the distance from the body of the murdered man, which lay where it had fallen, to the door leading to the hall. "It is eighteen feet from the door to the body," said the detective. "Indeed!" Judging, then, from the position of the body and the relative location of the wound, I should say that he was shot by some one who stood at the door and who discharged his weapon while his victim's back was turned. The shot entered at the base of the skull," answered the surgeon.

"The impossibility of suicide may be regarded as positively established," he added. The police sergeant was now sworn, and he related what discoveries had resulted from the investigation which he had made the preceding night, in company with Paxton. "I did not fail to dwell upon the circumstance of Stuart Harland's disappearance from the house, a few moments before the discovery of the crime, according to the statement of Judith Kregde. To hear him one would have supposed that he had taken the lead in the investigation of the preceding night, and that he deserved all the credit for the discoveries then made; Paxton said nothing, however, but a sarcastic smile played upon his lips as he listened.

"Mr. Garrison was next sworn, and he testified that John Oakburn was an exceedingly eccentric man, excessively frugal, and economical. That he supposed in the course of the years he had been in his service, the old cashier must have accumulated a modest competency, though he was never known to speculate, and that Oakburn was always extremely reticent regarding his personal affairs. The broker further stated that the aged cashier had a hobby for collecting ancient coins and weapons, which he kept in his little safe. Also that the deceased was a precise and a very methodical man, and that he kept his letters, correspondence and papers carefully filed away in his safe with his collection of ancient coins and weapons.

When Mr. Garrison's testimony was concluded the coroner summoned Marion Oakburn and Judith Kregde, and the two women entered the office a few moments subsequently. Marion's face was lividly pale, and there was an expression of mental suffering and anxiety upon her features. The coroner addressed the cashier's daughter, stating that he deemed it necessary to examine her father's private safe and Marion assented, saying in conclusion: "I think you will find my father's safe-key on his person."

The pockets of the victim of the mysterious tragedy were accordingly searched, and the key, of which he was in quest, was found by the coroner, who forthwith opened John Oakburn's safe. All present inspected the contents of the dead man's private "strong-box" with considerable curiosity. It contained a large, and no doubt valuable, collection of ancient coins of all nations, arranged in admirable order and numbered and labeled with an exactitude which told of the owner's precise and methodical ways. There was also in the safe a collection of small weapons. There were pistols, poniards, stilettos, yatagans, Malay creeses, and the like. Besides all this, a compartment contained the private papers of the deceased, letters, papers of business, bills receipted and other documents.

There was no money in the safe. The coroner examined the papers and then submitted them to Marion, who also looked them over carefully. Amongst all the documents no certificate of stocks, no deposit receipts, or anything whatever to indicate or prove that John Oakburn possessed any money or property was discovered. Paxton was on the alert and nothing escaped him. He made a mental memorandum of the contents of the murdered man's safe, and when Marion had concluded the examination of the letters and papers it contained, he came to her side and said in a low tone: "I am very much interested in this case, Mr. Oakburn, and I mean to sustain my opinion that Stuart Harland is the assassin, which you heard me assert last night. I know you share my opinion, and if you will permit me to look over these papers and letters you will perhaps enable me to make some advantageous discovery."

"You are at liberty to examine my father's papers, though I do not think you will find any clew to the assassin here. But I trust you may prove Mr. Harland's innocence, of which there can be no doubt," replied Marion, and she surrendered the letters and papers from the safe to the detective. The documents were spread out upon a desk in the rear office and the coroner was examining one of Mr. Garrison's clerks in the outer office to which Marion, who seemed deeply interested in all the proceedings, now repaired, thus leaving Paxton alone. He subjected the murdered man's papers to a most critical inspection. Letter after letter was examined with interest, and in an old file of correspondence the detective found one particular letter which seemed to fasten his attention, for he read it over twice very carefully.

Then, casting a glance at the door leading to the outer office to assure himself that he was not observed, he slipped this particular letter into his pocket. "The end entirely justifies the means in this case; I desire to retain this letter, and yet I do not wish to call any one's attention to it as yet," he thought. After he had examined every letter and paper he turned his attention to the collection of weapons for a moment. He discovered nothing further of interest, and so he entered the outer office. Meanwhile Mr. Garrison's clerks conferred the evidence by the broker, and Judith Kregde was examined. Her evidence differed not materially from the statement she had made the preceding night. Marion also related how she had discovered her father.

The detective heard Mr. Garrison whisper to Marion after she had given her evidence. "Are you informed regarding your father's financial affairs? Do you know where the money he must have saved is deposited or how it is invested?" "No, sir, my father seldom spoke of the matter, but I supposed, though, that he had accumulated a modest fortune, for he used to say that he soon meant to retire from business and purchase a beautiful country residence where he could raise his own fruit and flowers. He was very fond of floriculture and horticulture. From remarks he let fall at different times, I was sure that all his fortune was locked up in his little safe, the cashier's daughter answered. "This is strange. There is no money in the safe, and yet it has not been opened. I am sure your father had saved a large sum of money, as I have said. He was eccentric in other matters, may be not have been so in this? I think it possible he may have secreted his money in some strange place, his sudden demise presenting his revealing the secret," said Garrison. "It may be so, sir, but if my father's money is never found I shall not want, for I recently received a legacy of three thousand dollars from a distant relative, and then, too, should it become necessary, I am willing to work for an honest livelihood."

although he entered at the same time as the bank president, it was clear that they were not acquainted. The banker addressed a few words to the coroner, and then the two retired to the interior office and closed the door, but a moment subsequently the latter reappeared and invited Paxton and the police sergeant to join him. The detective and the officer of police entered the rear office, and when the door had been carefully closed behind them the coroner said: "I desire that you should hear a surprising statement which Mr. Southwell has to make, but which would lose its value if it should be made public. Paxton felt that some important disclosure relating to the crime was coming.

CHAPTER V. "In order that you may understand how it came about that certain precautions were taken at our bank which may now prove of service to you, gentlemen, in the task of detecting the murderer of John Oakburn, and in recovering the stolen money, I must make a brief explanation," began the banker. "The fact is," he continued, "we have had occasion to doubt the honesty of one of our employes—our cashier, in fact—and, night before last, I secretly marked all the money which I anticipated he could possibly have occasion to pay out yesterday. I marked one package of one hundred thousand dollars in notes of one hundred in red ink in the upper left-hand corner of the back of each note. The balance of the money was marked in a different way, which it is not necessary to explain. I changed to be present in the bank when John Oakburn presented the check for seventy-eight thousand dollars and I saw our cashier pay it from the package I had so marked with the letter 'V' in red. He threw the balance remaining after he cashed the check into a compartment of the money drawer where I found it after business hours. Just twenty-two thousand dollars of the marked money remained, so I knew that the money paid to John Oakburn was all marked, as I have said, and that no one else received any of the notes thus marked."

"This is most fortunate," said the police sergeant as the banker concluded. "The most lucky of coincidences. We are much obliged to your cashier for being the indirect cause of this clue," Paxton remarked. "Meanwhile" when Paxton and the police sergeant were called into the interior compartment of the office by the coroner the handsome old gentleman whose appearance we have noted had quite by accident gained a position close to the door between the two apartments. Without any intention of becoming an eavesdropper he overheard enough of the bank president's remarks to comprehend the truth, and at the same moment he saw Levi Kregde close beside him, and the expression on the janitor's face told him the fellow had also overheard the bank president.

The magnificent eyes of the handsome old gentleman were fixed upon the face of Levi Kregde for an instant in a searching glance, but the fellow was not aware of the scrutiny to which he was subjected. A look of recognition appeared upon the old gentleman's face and his eyes flashed ominously as though the sight of the janitor awakened angry thoughts in his mind; and he moved toward the outer door while Levi Kregde was yet intently listening and did not observe his movement. When presently the banker and the others came out of the rear office the stately old gentleman was gone. During the interview between the gentlemen in the interior office the jurors and the others present had been conversing among themselves, and no one except the aged stranger and Levi Kregde heard aught of what had passed between them there.

When the strange old gentleman first entered the office Marion Oakburn seemed attracted irresistibly by his face, and she gazed at him like one fascinated, until he withdrew. Beyond a swift, passing glance as he came in, the aged stranger had not seemed to notice her. The magnificent old man, Levi Kregde also left the broker's office, and if anyone had followed him they would have seen him make his way swiftly to the private entrance of the office of Messrs. Pratt and Weeks, and enter unceremoniously, as though perfectly certain of his reception.

Before Paxton and the coroner came out of the office in which they had heard the banker's statement, the detective took the latter aside and asked him to grant him the opportunity to give his version of the investigation which he had conducted the preceding night. Immediately upon his return to the main office the coroner called Paxton as the next witness. "I am very much interested in your statement, until he came to speak of the discovery of the broken fastenings on the window shutters, did not differ in substance from the testimony given by the police sergeant. Thereafter, however, he continued: "But, gentlemen, the fastenings of the window blinds were not broken from the inside. On the contrary they were forced by means of an iron bar inserted under the shutters from without and on the ground beneath the window are the tracks of the assassin. There are also marks on the side of the building which were made by his shoes when he clambered into the office through the rear window. It seems clear, therefore, that the assassin and thief could not have been a resident of this house, and I also assume that he had no positive knowledge of the money in the safe. I have made a careful study of this case, and I have arrived at the following conclusion: When the assassin entered the office, John Oakburn was not in it. He came soon after. The assassin was in the outer office and he concealed himself beside the desk near the door. Oakburn did not discover the intruder, and opened the safe to assure himself that the large sum of money which he had placed there was secure. The assassin saw the money. The light determined him. He meant to leap upon the old man then, but before he did so the latter locked the

safe and turned away. At the moment, while his back was turned, the assassin leveled his pistol at the old man's head and discharged the fatal shot. But no one heard the report of a pistol. The plain that point by assuming that the weapon used was an air pistol, which is discharged without a detonation. After Oakburn fell the assassin secured the safe key, committed the robbery, and then let himself out through the street door. He selected that route for his departure because he knew there was less danger in it than by going through the window. He reasoned that even if he was seen leaving the house boldly, by the front entrance, he would not be questioned, while, on the other hand, if he chanced to be discovered getting out of the window he was lost.

"I am satisfied that it is erroneous to suspect Stuart Harland, and I regard the fact of his departure on the night of the crime rather as evidence in his favor than otherwise. "Suppose any person of ordinary intelligence planned and executed the crime, he certainly would have comprehended that flight would be tantamount to a confession of guilt, and he would not for a moment think of taking such a not for a moment think of taking such a natural proceeding would have been to conceal the stolen money, and, putting a bold face on the matter, remain here as an innocent man. "Who the assassin is, it is true, I cannot yet determine, but I shall solve the mystery, and sooner or later place my hand upon the right man."

Paxton had arisen, and as he spoke his intense, resonant voice, clear and penetrating, thrilled his hearers, and turned the jurors' opinion to a certain extent in Stuart Harland's favor. "If the verdict of the coroner's jury had been rendered then, it would have been that John Oakburn came to his death at the hands of some person or persons unknown. But it was decreed that the inquest should not terminate then. (TO BE CONTINUED.)

Pillar at Rheims. The famous trembling pillar at Rheims presents a curious problem to architects. The church of Saint Nicaise is surrounded with pillars constructed to prevent the walls from straining. At the entrance of the church is a bell tower. On one of the bells in the tower the phenomenon of the trembling pillar depends. When this bell is rung or even touched the top of this pillar sways. It goes and returns about seven inches on each side, although the base of the pillar is immovable, and the stones are so firmly cemented that it seems like a solid piece of stone. An authority who states that no satisfactory solution of this peculiarity has been given, writes: "What is very singular is that although the four bells are about the same distance from the trembling pillar only one of them has any effect on it. The others may be rung singly or all together without moving it. In 1775 a little window was made in the roof of the church opposite the pillar. A board was placed on top of the pillar, and on it were put two glasses of water. Then the bell was rung. Immediately the pillar began to sway, and at the fifth stroke of the bell, the two glasses were thrown off. The ringing of this bell has no effect on the pillars between the phenomenon one and the tower, nor on any of the others. But formerly it was the first pillar which swayed, then it became immovable, and some years ago the one next to it became the eccentric one."

Lessons in Hands. There are hands, long, slender, nervous ones, that nature meant to hold the brush or pen; there are others a trifle shorter, but with very slender tips, that can touch the keys of the piano or do anything that requires quickness of motion. There is the flat, dimpled hand that is expressionless, though it may be affectionate, and there is the short square one that bespeaks determination of will, a talent of coarseness, and a temper that will smolder like a dry fire and break out and rage some day. Trust a woman who sits with her thumbs up; she may be determined, but she is truthful. The one who conceals her thumbs is apt to be deceitful as untruthful. Look at the thumb if you want to judge of people's intellectual strength, for the longer it is, proportionally, the stronger the brain.—Philadelphia Times.

Tender-Hearted Women. "Like mistress, like maid," is a saying that is probably oftener true than "like master, like man." The story told that Mile. Augustine Brohan, celebrated French comedienne, was extremely humane to all animals no matter how humble, one day, at table, found a fly caught on her plate. She took it up tenderly with her thumb and finger, and called her maid "Marie," she said, "take this fly—careful, don't hurt him—and put him out doors." The girl took the fly and went away, but presently Mile. Brohan saw her standing near with a troubled expression on her face. "Well, Marie," she said, "did you do as I told you?" "No, mademoiselle, I have the fly still. I couldn't venture to put him out doors—it was raining, and he might have been hurt."

Many Gypsies Yet. The majority of the Scottish gypsies have spread over a vast tract of country. Here they have gradually become lost to view as a distinct race. In Europe, they are found the greatest number to-day in Hungary and Wallachia, where there are 500,000.

A Mania for Mutilating Ears. A lunatic of a particularly dangerous kind is at large in Paris. He seems to have a mania for cutting off the lobes of people's ears. The facts have come out in a strange way. A boy went into a wine-shop in the Rue de Reully and asked for a glass of brandy. It was noticed that there was blood on his face and clothes, and before any questions could be asked of him he fell in a swoon. The lad was carried to the St. Antoine Hospital, where it was found that his ears had been cut with a sharp instrument. When he recovered consciousness he gave his name and address, and described a very unpleasant adventure he had met with. While walking in the street an elderly, well-dressed man spoke to him, and in the course of conversation said: "You have a spot on your nose. You must be careful or it will get worse. If you like I will remove it for you by rubbing it with a little harmless fluid." The lad, who took him for a benevolent doctor, went with him to a lonely spot in the Bois de Vincennes where, after making some pretense of examining the nose, he suddenly took out a pair of scissors and cut off the lobes of the lad's ears one after the other, and then ran away.

Big Pulpwood Rafts. The monster raft of pulpwood which has been expected at Long Tail Point, Wisconsin, has arrived in tow of the tugs Sampson and Saugutuk. There are about 600 cords of pulpwood in the raft, which is about one mile in circumference and is worth in round figures \$40,000. The raft was on the road eighteen days from Detroit, Mich. There are 550 boom sticks around the raft, and these are worth \$18,000 or \$14,000. The tug A. J. Smith is on the way with another big raft.

An Upright Man. There is certainly some slight feeling of humiliation in being bent down and obliged to creep along for fear of a snap in the spinal column. It is such a plain show of deceptiveness that we feel embarrassed. It is seen every day when lumbago takes root, hold on a slight in the back. There is very little sympathy for one in such a plight, for it is so well known that St. Jacobs Oil will cure it promptly and that neglect is the cause of so much disability. Why not keep the remedy always on hand and prevent such discomfort?

Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup for children teething, softens the gums, reduces inflammation, allays pain, cures wind colic, 25c a bottle. We have not been without Pisco's Cure for Consumption for 20 years.—LIZZIE TERRELL, Camp St., Harrisburg, Pa., May 4, 1884. If afflicted with sore eyes see Dr. Isaac Thompson's Eye-Water. Druggists sell at 25c per bottle. A very ingenious machine has been perfected for driving in tacks and nails automatically. U-10

It Will Pay To make some provision for your physical health at this season, because a cold or cough, an attack of pneumonia or typhoid fever now may make you an invalid all winter. First of all be sure that your blood is pure, for health depends upon pure blood. A few bottles of Hood's Sarsaparilla will be paying investment now. It will give you pure, rich blood and invigorate your system.

Hood's Sarsaparilla Is the One True Blood Purifier. Hood's Pills are tasteless, mild, effective. All druggists, 25c.

Walter Baker & Co. Limited. The Largest Manufacturers of PURE, HIGH GRADE COCOAS and CHOCOLATES. On this Continent, have received HIGHEST AWARDS from the great Industrial and Food EXPOSITIONS IN EUROPE AND AMERICA. Caution: In view of the fact that the labels and wrappers on our goods, consumers should make sure that our place of manufacture, namely, Dorchester, Mass., is printed on each package.

SOLD BY GROCERS EVERYWHERE. WALTER BAKER & CO. LTD., DORCHESTER, MASS.

PROFITABLE DAIRY WORK can only be accomplished with the very best appliances. Cream Separator and better the skimmed usable feed. make no mistake. Davis, Neat, catalogue Agents wanted. VIS & BANKIN BLDG. & MEFG. CO. Cor. Randolph & Dearborn Sts., Chicago.

ASTHMA POPHAM'S ASTHMA SPECIFIC. Popham's Asthma Specific is a powerful and reliable remedy for Asthma, Hay Fever, Cough, and all other respiratory ailments. It is made from the finest natural ingredients and is guaranteed to give relief. Price, 25c per bottle. Popham's Asthma Specific, 23, New York, Popham's Pills, N. Y.