



TRAGEDY
THE CRIME OF THE BROKERS OFFICE.
W. E. MOTT.

obtained a good look at his face though when he turned and saw me at the door. "This is news, certainly," said Paxton, as the watchman paused.

"But I have not told you all," the latter added. "After I gave up the chase of the man I discovered at the door of Garrison's office, I returned there and made an examination. I found wax on the keyhole, and of course I knew at once the fellow had been taking a wax impression."

"Describe the man," said Paxton. "He was a well-made young fellow, with light hair and mustache and blue eyes. There was a small scar across one of his eyebrows, I think. That's the best I can do for you in the way of a description; you know I only had a glance at him," replied the watchman.

"This account of the man seen at the office door accords with the description Stuart Harland gave of the man who took his overcoat," said the detective. "I think I could recognize the fellow again if I were to see him," said the watchman.

Paxton asked several more questions and then the watchman took his departure. Stanmore, too, withdrew and the detective found himself alone.

The watchman's story had confirmed his theory that the man who had the skeleton keys and wax impressions was the assassin of John Oakburn or the confederate of the murderer.

But Paxton determined to place Levi Kredge under surveillance, for he entertained a suspicion of the janitor which had been materially strengthened by the information that Stanmore had given him.

That very day the detective placed one of his most reliable assistants on Kredge's track, and he also directed another co-laborer to shadow the brokers—Pratt & Weeks.

The quest for the man who had taken Stuart Harland's coat and whom the watchman had seen at the door of Garrison's office was continued, and Paxton began to think he had the game well in hand.

Little did he anticipate the startling and mysterious developments that were to follow, as he advanced in the campaign against the mysterious assassin.

When Stanmore found himself in the street at the conclusion of his interview with Paxton, he turned to a cab stand, and, entering one of those convenient vehicles, he directed the driver to proceed to the residence of Jason Garrison.

"Marks & Bock have informed me that Pratt & Weeks are the unfortunate broker's pressing creditors. The loss of the money which has found its way into the hands of those Wall street bandits may place Garrison at their mercy," said Stanmore, mentally.

While he was approaching Jason Garrison's home Daniel Pratt was leaving the broker's residence.

An hour previously, while Garrison was wondering why he had not yet heard from his importunate creditors, there came a loud ringer at the doorbell, and a servant admitted Pratt.

Garrison received him in the library, and a stormy scene ensued. Recriminations were exchanged, and both men were enraged. Pratt persistently demanded his money, and controlling his passion said:

"On account of the loss which you have sustained by the robbery, we have delayed calling on you, but now we can wait no longer."

"You know I am unable to meet your demand. The theft of the money with which I had meant to pay you prevents my doing so. If you would grant me time?"

"Impossible; my partner will not consent."

"Can I make no terms with you?"

"Pratt did not immediately answer, but he made the transit of the room several times, while he furtively glanced at Garrison."

Finally, as though he had arrived at a decision upon some point which he had been considering, he said in a low voice:

"Mr. Garrison, there is one way in which all this might be arranged without inconvenience to yourself."

"How do you mean?" asked Garrison, eagerly.

"I admire your daughter!"

"Sir!" thundered the broker.

"Hear me; I am honorable in what I say. I would make your daughter Edna my wife."

"Never! Never!"

"But if you consent your debt will be canceled. I promise you that."

"Your proposition is an insult. I would choose rather to see my daughter in her grave. Go! Leave my house, you infernal scoundrel; for I shall do you an injury," cried Garrison.

White with rage Pratt hastened to the door, but at the door he paused and hurled back the threat:

"I'll turn you into the street; I'll beggar you unless you think better of this. You shall have one more chance. I'll call at 6 o'clock for your final answer."

The street door banged behind him a moment later.

Edna Garrison had heard all.

It chanced she was in an apartment adjoining the library, and the voices of the two men, raised in anger as they were, reached her distinctly.

Edna joined her father as soon as he was alone.

"You are my own dear, dear father. You spurned that villain as you should have done!" she cried, throwing her arms about his neck.

Jason Garrison caressed the golden head that nestled affectionately on his bosom, and he said:

"The future looks dark for us, my dear. My greatest hope now is that I may be able to negotiate a loan on my property. I did not dare to mortgage it before fear of spoiling the sale, which I thought was sure to be made. Fortunately, Pratt & Weeks do not know that I own real estate in Colorado and they will not seize that."

"We will hope for the best, father," answered Edna, cheerfully.

A few moments subsequently, while father and daughter were still conversing, the bell rang again, and immediately the broker's servant presented Richard Stanmore's card.

"Stanmore," muttered Garrison, "I know no one of that name, but you may show the gentleman here."

Edna retired, and Stanmore entered the broker's office.

Stanmore introduced himself, and a short conversation ensued which we need not dwell upon.

Suffice it to say that when Richard Stanmore took his departure, as he presently did, Jason Garrison held his check for the sum of seventy-eight thousand dollars.

"You have saved me from ruin," said Garrison, whose gratitude was boundless, as they parted at the door.

"Do not mention it, sir. It affords me pleasure to think that I am felling the plot of Pratt & Weeks to ruin you. Ours has been merely a business transaction. I have loaned you a sum of money; you have given me valuable Colorado property as security for the loan. You have nothing to thank me for. Rather should I be grateful to you for the opportunity to block one of those villainous games. I'll crush these vipers yet!" answered Stanmore.

His last words were uttered in a fierce voice, full of intensity, and Garrison felt that in him the Wall-street villains, Pratt & Weeks, had a dangerous foe.

Stanmore pressed Garrison's hand, and a moment later he had left the house, into which he had brought hope and joy.

True to his promise, Pratt called at the Garrison residence promptly at six o'clock that evening, but, acting upon his master's instructions, the servant refused to admit him.

Pratt left the door fuming with rage and vowing vengeance.

What was his surprise, however, upon returning to his office to learn that during his absence Jason Garrison had called and settled his indebtedness in full.

"Where did he get the money?" demanded the irate schemer.

"Therein is the mystery," answered Weeks.

"My scheme has failed. With the father in my power and the lover in prison charged with murder, I meant to bring the girl to my terms," muttered Pratt, and after a moment's reflection he added:

"But the game may not be entirely lost yet. Edna Garrison may not be beyond my reach after all."

Pratt's motive for wishing to fasten the crime of John Oakburn's murder on Stuart Harland is clearly discernible now. The conspirator regarded the young man with all the hatred such a nature as his could feel for a successful rival. He had determined to wed Edna Garrison. Stuart was an obstacle in his way to be removed. But Pratt was one who was invariably governed by mercenary motives, and it was remarkable that he should seek to wed the daughter of a ruined man.

Stuart Harland received a visit from Paxton the day following that which witnessed his interview with the broker and with his betrothed.

Harland, of course, preserved profound secrecy regarding the motive for his secret journey on the night of the murder, but he told Paxton of the suspicion regarding Levi Kredge which had occurred to him. He also related the incident of his having detected the janitor listening at the door of the private office.

Paxton gained no further information from Stuart, and he left the young man after assuring him that he could rely on him to make every possible effort to detect the cashier's assassin and thus prove his innocence.

That same day Paxton's auxiliary, who was shadowing Levi Kredge, reported that the fellow was constantly in secret communication with Pratt & Weeks, and further, that he had learned that the treacherous janitor had been playing the spy at Garrison's office for a long time.

"You have done well, Sayer. I am getting considerably interested in this Levi Kredge, and I'll relieve you from duty and take the place of his shadow for to-night. I'll take him when he leaves Garrison's office to-night," said Paxton to his agent.

The janitor soon came out upon the street and hurried away.

"I shall not follow him now; I've an idea we shall learn more by watching his doings."

I noticed a light in the window at the rear of the house. Let us creep back and take an observation of Judith Kredge at home. I suspect Levi brought her a note for some one. I should like to be positive whether it was for Marion Oakburn, as I naturally suspect it must be," said Paxton.

They reached the rear of Garrison's office again in a few moments and crept to a window through which the light streamed, and which was in an apartment belonging to Oakburn's suite of rooms, though it was on the ground floor.

Crouching beside the window the detective and his companion peered into the brilliantly lighted room beyond. A glance told them that the apartment served for a kitchen, and they saw Marion Oakburn and Judith Kredge.

The cashier's daughter stood in the center of the room, listening with a surprised and startled expression on her pale features to something Judith Kredge was telling her. But Paxton could not hear a word that was spoken in the apartment.

Presently Judith drew a letter from her pocket, and handed it to Marion. The latter hastily read the missive. Then she said something in an excited way and cast the letter into the kitchen fire where it was instantly consumed.

Drawing a photograph from her bosom Marion held it up for Judith to see, and Paxton and Stanmore both obtained an excellent view of the pictured face.

Stanmore staggered back from the window with an ejaculation of surprise.

Paxton stole across the street to follow Kredge, and just at that moment Richard Stanmore turned an adjacent street corner and the two men came face to face.

The detective's disguise prevented his recognition by Stanmore, but Paxton made himself known with a word, and added, hurriedly:

"I am in pursuit of Kredge, and I cannot pause a moment. You can accompany me if you like. I need not warn you to observe silence and caution. Our man has entered the passage yonder."

"Lead on; I am a novice in this business, but you shall have no cause to complain of indiscretion on my part," answered Stanmore.

Paxton glided into the passage with the stealthy tread of a professional trapper, and equally silent in his movements, Stanmore followed at his heels.

The detective caught a glimpse of Kredge's vanishing form as the latter disappeared at the further end of the narrow way, and he gained the extremity of the passage and peered cautiously beyond it.

He saw Levi Kredge and his sister Judith standing in the dark shadows near the rear door of Oakburn's flat.

The secret meeting was, in itself, a suspicious circumstance, the detective thought.

Eagerly he listened to the conversation of Kredge and his sister. Their voices distinctly reached his ears, and their words were plainly overheard.

"Well, did you get the money?" asked Levi.

"Yes; and I mean to keep it," answered his amiable sister.

"You won't share with your affectionate brother, eh?"

"No; this belongs to me."

"That's so. You are a shrewd one, Judith. But take care you don't over-reach yourself. Marion Oakburn strikes me as being a deep one, too."

"Let me alone to look out for myself."

"It's an ill wind that blows nobody good, and the murder of John Oakburn has turned out to be a windfall for us both."

"What have you gained? How has it profited you?"

Before Paxton heard Kredge's answer, for which he was listening with absorbing interest, he heard footsteps in the passage, and he knew that danger of discovery was imminent.

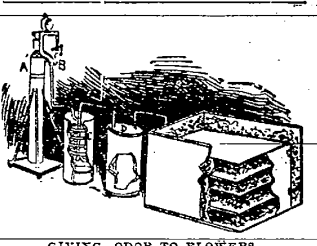
As for the detective he was never more surprised in all his life, but he betrayed little emotion, for he was used to surprises and figured to meeting with the unexpected.

There was the most excellent reason for astonishment, however, for the photograph which Marion Oakburn had produced was that of a young man with light hair and mustache who had a scar above one eyebrow.

Paxton and Stanmore believed they recognized the man who had exchanged overcoats with Stuart Harland, and whom they thought to be the assassin of Marion's father.

ADDING PERFUME TO FLOWERS
How the Odor Is Strengthened and Fixed by Artificial Means.

Few people know, perhaps, that some flower dealers, with the aid of the chemists, have devised a means of increasing and fixing the odor of flowers before they ship them or offer them for sale. The accompanying illustration shows the apparatus used.



The flowers are put into a wooden box previously cooled with ice. In the bottom of the box is a tube provided with perforations, and into and through this tube is sent a current of carbonic acid gas charged with the characteristic odor of the flower.

On the left of the picture is a cylinder A containing the carbonic acid in a liquid form. Its flow is controlled by a regulator B at the top of the cylinder. The gas is slightly heated by petroleum in passing through the worm-pipe C, and then bubbles up through the essential oil in the tank D.

From the tank D it passes into the box where the flowers are, carrying the odor of the oil with it. After a certain length of time the flowers become impregnated with the transferred odor, and that odor becomes fixed. Sometimes, in order to facilitate the fixing of the odor, the flowers are impregnated with a little vasoline.

Men will not live right unless they first believe right. No man is fit to lead others who is untrue to himself.

A mote in the eye will put the whole world out of joint. That man is a stranger to himself who reads no books. Woman can be the devil's best friend or his worst enemy.

Only when there is perfect trust can there be perfect peace. God sometimes puts us in the dark to show us that he is light.

God's tests are seldom known to those who are being tested. The devil has use for all his skill when he makes a hypocrite.

The man who serves God only when he feels like it will never do a full day's work. To say "Our Father," means "my brother," to every man, or it means nothing. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." No matter whether it lives in a hut or a palace.

All some people want with religion is to keep them from trembling when it thunders. If there were more mothers like Mary, there would be more Christians like Christ.

When we ask God to bless others, we should also pray that he will do it in His own way.

CHAPTER XI. (Continued.)
 "Mr. Paxton, I presume," said Stanmore.

"Yes, sir, at your service," responded the detective.

"Then I have a note of introduction for you," said Stanmore, and he presented a letter, which Paxton read, for which he arose and shook hands with the old gentleman warmly.

Stanmore's introductory letter was written by the Chief of the New York City police, and it stated that the bearer, Richard Stanmore, Esq., was the writer's personal friend.

The letter concluded in these words: "Any assistance you may render Mr. Stanmore, who will make his business known, will be duly appreciated by myself and well remembered by the gentleman in question, who is a man of vast wealth."

The letter was duly signed.
 "Mr. Paxton," said Stanmore, "I have interested myself in the case of the murder of my old friend, John Oakburn, and I desire to especially engage you to solve the mystery of his fate."