



CHAPTER XIX.

Paxton's finger was upon the trigger of his weapon, when Marion Oakburn appeared in the door through which the man who was the object of the detective's pursuit, had fled. The cashier's daughter was in deadly peril of her life at the instant when she presented herself before Paxton. Had the detective's finger involuntarily contracted even to the least extent, a bullet would have been sent speeding on its mission of death. Fortunate was it that the detective's weapon was not discharged. Amazement at the presence of Marion Oakburn, and astonishment at her conduct in interposing to favor the escape of the supposed assassin, for the instant held the detective spellbound, and he recoiled. He was mentally dazed by this startling denouement. The thought that the fugitive whom of all things he desired to arrest was escaping, broke the spell almost instantly. "Stand aside, Miss Oakburn! You are impeding the course of justice, and interfering with me in the discharge of my duty," he said taking a forward step. As he made this advance, Paxton's acute ear caught the sound made by the closing of a door somewhere in the rear of the building, and almost simultaneously he heard a low whistle from the same direction. Paxton fancied the whistle was intended as a signal. As if understanding it, and as though acting in obedience to a secret mandate, the moment the whistle sounded Marion Oakburn lowered her weapon, with which she had menaced the detective, and sprang aside out of the doorway. It was of course all important to cut off the escape of the fugitive. Thinking only of overtaking him, Paxton darted through the interior door and rushed through a passage beyond the next apartment. At the end of the passage a door confronted him, but he tore it open and rushed out into the open air. Saul Hedden closely followed. The detective and his companion and themselves in the dense gloom of the impenetrable night. But Paxton was provided for such an emergency, and he produced a pocket lantern, lighted it, and then flashed its beam about him. A narrow alley in the rear of the building which they had just left was before them. It was folly to think of pursuing the supposed assassin, for it was utterly impossible to tell in what direction he had fled. Realizing that failure had again overtaken him, Paxton ran back into the use. He feared that Marion Oakburn might so elude him. His apprehension proved to be well founded. Reaching the room in which he had the cashier's daughter, he found it deserted. "Too late! She also has eluded me!" Paxton exclaimed. The aged woman who had admitted the cashier and his companion was nowhere to be discovered. The idea occurred to Paxton that she might have concealed somewhere in the building, and he hastily searched the premises, assisted by Hedden. They soon assured themselves that the house was deserted. Despite the adverse result of his undertaking when success seemed almost in his grasp, Paxton attributed his failure to circumstances against which he could not have guarded. Marion Oakburn appeared to her flight, the hunted man of whom the detective was in pursuit would not be escaped. Paxton was disposed to accept his decision on this occasion more philosophically than might have been expected, for as his disappointment undoubtedly there was many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip, and never was the truth of adage more forcibly illustrated than when he said: "The search of the house had been completed. Paxton and his companion were standing in the front apartment which had first entered. "Hark!" exclaimed Hedden in a warning tone, as the detective spoke, and he up his finger as a sign for silence. They heard several peculiar whistles, the sounds emanated from various directions. Hedden's face assumed an apprehensive expression. "You look frightened," said Paxton, "but I am. Do you know what is the meaning of these signal whistles—for they are not?" "Well, I do. The dangerous gang known to the police, which is composed of denizens of this neighborhood, resembling. The old female 'house' even the street."

desperate odds. The people have a mortal hatred for spies and informers, as you well know, and if we were surrounded and overpowered we'd stand but a small chance for our lives." "That is true," assented Paxton. They ran to the rear door, gained the alley, and sped away through the darkness. Hedden's previously acquired knowledge of the locality now served him well. Without hesitation he threaded the maze of narrow alleys that led away from this the most dangerous of all the slums of the great city. The last development—the discovery of Marion Oakburn in the abode of the remate receiver or stolen goods, and her open defense of the supposed assassin of her own father—furnished Paxton food for the most startling reflections. At the same time he was more than ever mystified and perplexed. He had come to believe with Stanmore that Marion had been abducted, and that she was held a captive by those who were interested in her disappearance. But it now seemed to the detective that he could no longer entertain that opinion. It appeared that he must abandon that theory. "If Marion Oakburn was a captive, she would not have been armed, and she would not have attempted to secure the escape of the suspected man even at the peril of her life as she had done." Thus Paxton reasoned. Notwithstanding all this, the detective still entertained a certain vague suspicion which he had never entirely banished from his mind. The idea would present itself that Marion Oakburn was governed by some mysterious impulse, which was a secret locked in her own heart. For the time, however, Paxton put the perplexing rebus out of his mind, and he said to himself: "I will think no more of the possible cause of this girl's conduct at present. I have need only to concern myself with seeking to capture her and the supposed assassin." "This last defeat shall not prove a Waterloo for me," he added resolutely. In safety he and his companion emerged from the dangerous locality into which their quest had led them, and then they parted. "No more of this work for me. Tomorrow I leave with my wife and child for the far West, where I shall begin a new life. I want to leave the old way behind me forever. We shall never meet again, Paxton," said Saul Hedden, and then the two men shook hands cordially. "Success to you, Hedden. Stick to your good resolution, and life will yet be to you worth living," said the detective. Hedden turned away, and Paxton never met him again, but some years later he heard that he was prosperous and happy in the far Western land, where he had gone in quest of a new life. In the morning the detective met Stanmore. The latter had called at Paxton's office by appointment. Stanmore listened eagerly, and he was inwardly much disturbed, as the detective saw, despite his efforts to preserve his equanimity. But Stanmore's faith in Marion Oakburn was unshaken by what he heard. He was loyal to his belief in Marion's innocence. He protested that if the real truth was ever unearthed, it would then be known that the cashier's daughter was a true-hearted, noble girl. "Thus he had always defended Marion. In the course of a conversation which ensued, Paxton produced the letter which he had abstracted from the package of correspondence which the corner had found in John Oakburn's safe. He read the letter to the detective. Stanmore's face assumed a strange expression as he listened, and when Paxton read the name, "Donald Wayburn," with which the letter was signed, he started violently. "And what importance do you attach to that letter?" he asked. "The greatest." "In what way? Please make yourself clear," said Stanmore. Paxton thereupon explained how he had put circumstances together and formed the theory that possibly the author of the threatening letter, Donald Wayburn, and the suspected man who carried the skeleton keys to Garrison's office might prove to be one and the same. In silence Stanmore listened until Paxton concluded, and then said: "Your theory does not strike me as a probable one. I would think no more of attempting to connect this Wayburn with the case, it seems to me. "Pratt and Weeks, as we are aware, thanks to the discovery of marked money in their possession, must be in some way connected with John Oakburn's murder. Through them, I hope the key to the mystery will reach us," he added. The conversation soon ended after this. The following morning Paxton was on his way to his office, when, as he passed the boardinghouse where Levi Kregde had lived, he saw a rag-picker overhauling the contents of an ash barrel standing in a passage, leading to the rear of the house. Prompted by a new idea, Paxton paused for a moment.

had found under the window of Garrison's office. As the rag-picker drew up the boots, Paxton sprang to his side. The Italian—for such he was—evidently fangled he was about to be robbed of his prize, for he clutched the old boots tightly in one hand, while he brandished his iron hook in the other, menacingly, as the other came up. "Me find a the boot, me keeps," the rag-picker said. "Precisely so, my friend. You will sell the boots, though?" said Paxton. "Me sell a. You give a the mon." "Here is half a dollar." "You take a the boots." The exchange was made in a moment. Paxton would cheerfully have given a much larger price for those well-nigh worthless old boots, for as the Italian held them up, he had caught a glimpse of those soles. He had observed that the soles of the boots were encircled by double rows of nails in a peculiar manner, and he believed he had discovered the boots which had made the imprints on the earth under the window of Jason Garrison's office. Paxton took the boot which had thus fallen into his possession to his office, and upon testing them, he found that his supposition was correct. The boots were a perfect fit for his casts, and the rows of nails were the same in both casts and boots. Of course the presumption was, that the boots had belonged to Kregde. But regarding this point the detective desired to positively convince himself. Paxton called upon the landlady of Kregde's late boarding-house, and from having seen them in his room, a chambermaid identified the boots as belonging to Levi Kregde. This sufficed to prove, to the detective's entire satisfaction, that Levi Kregde entered the office of Jason Garrison on the night of John Oakburn's murder, through the rear window. But meanwhile the trial of Stuart Harland was concluded. All that men could accomplish in behalf of the accused had been done by his attorney and friends. The result was a verification of Lawyer Saybrook's prediction. The jury had failed to agree. They were discharged, and Stuart Harland was remanded to prison to await the process of the law. In his case, a new trial would now be necessary. But Harland was not destined to remain in prison until he was again placed on trial for his life. The young man was admitted to bail in the sum of twenty thousand dollars. His wealthy aunt became his security, and signed his bail bond. Edna Garrison, and Stuart's friends, who had latterly dreaded a conviction, were rejoiced at the result of the trial. But Stuart was himself dejected and gloomy. He was aware that public sentiment was against him, and he felt that he could enjoy no rest or peace of mind while the awful shadow of doubt rested upon him. After his release, Stuart called upon Paxton. The detective received Harland very cordially, and the latter said very abruptly: "Paxton; I am determined to take a part in the work you have undertaken for my salvation. Tell me how to help you. I must do something." "I understand how you feel, and I honor you for your inability to rest while others are laboring to unearth the mystery in the solution of which you have a vital interest. But you are a novice in the business," answered Paxton. "But I have an interest to work as no other man can feel bound to." "True. And you would be more likely than any one else to recognize the man who exchanged overcoats with you, even if he were disguised. You might undertake a search for the villain on your own account. Chance may favor you," said Paxton. He saw that the young man was inclined to brood upon his misfortune, and he wished to divert his mind, even though he had no great hope for the result. From that day Stuart Harland seemed to have but one object in life, and that one motive was to find the man whose acquaintance he made on the train on the night of the murder. Paxton had resolved to attempt to take up the trail of Marion Oakburn and the suspected man from the house of the female "fence," whose name, by the way, was Mrs. Kitts. Paxton, personally and through the instrumentality of his agents, acquired a surprising fund of information regarding the woman. Among other items, the detective learned that Mrs. Kitts had acquired a modest fortune in the pursuit of her nefarious and illegal business. That she was the owner of real estate in the neighborhood where she dwelt, and that she employed a rascally old drunken lawyer by the name of Ajax Crawley to transact all her business. The circumstance was discovered by one of Paxton's agents that, on the last night of every month, Ajax Crawley was in the habit of visiting the old woman and arranging her accounts for rent and the like. Mrs. Kitts was one of those women of whom the notorious Mother Mandelbaum, the female "fence," of whose career the newspapers at the time of her exposure and flight from New York, gave an account, is a type. It was Paxton's idea that Mrs. Kitts knew where Marion Oakburn and the man, whose escape the latter had favored, were now in hiding. Believing this, his course was clearly indicated. He must win the old woman's confidence. To accomplish this, he had determined to impersonate Ajax Crawley, and accordingly Paxton visited the rascally old lawyer, who occupied a dingy little den, and by courtesy an office, in the neighborhood of Mrs. Kitts' abode. It was the detective's purpose to study the old lawyer's habits, and to meanly impersonate. Paxton created an excuse for his

call, and during the interview he closely studied his man. When he left Crawley's office the detective carried with him a sample of Ajax Crawley's peculiar orthography, which he had appropriated, and in his mind there was a mental picture of his living model. Two days subsequently was the last day of the present month, and on that afternoon, through the instrumentality of one of Paxton's assistants, Mr. Ajax Crawley, attorney at law, became helplessly intoxicated, and he was arrested and locked up for the night. Assured that the real Crawley could not appear upon the scene to thwart him and expose his ruse, Paxton disguised himself to perfectly represent Crawley, and set out for the den of the female "fence." He had appeared before half a dozen of his agents in his office, where his marvelous disguise was completed, and they had one and all assured him that there was no possibility of his identity being questioned. If such men, experienced as they were in disguises and past masters of all the arts of their strange vocation, gave the detective this assurance, he could have little cause to fear the woman with whom he had to deal, cunning though she was. Paxton arrived at Mrs. Kitts' house at about eight o'clock in the evening. He was accompanied by one of his men, a shrewd fellow, who had been in Paxton's service a long time. He remained without. It chanced that this man and Paxton had both acquired the trade of telegraphy in their youth, and since they had been thrown together in detective work, they had utilized their knowledge of this art serviceably more than once. After Mrs. Kitts had seen Paxton's face through the wicket in the door, she admitted him without delay. "Well, you are in time, Ajax. Here's an old friend of yours. What's the matter with you? Have you been drinking too much? That you don't recognize him?" said Mrs. Kitts. And she pointed to a low-shouldered, thick-set man, who was seated at the further side of the room, smoking a short black pipe. Of course the detective did not know the name of this dangerous-looking fellow, but he was equal to the emergency, and imitating the voice of Ajax Crawley, he said, crossing to the fellow: "How are you, old man? Didn't notice you until Mother Kitts spoke." "Tolerable, Ajax, tolerable," answered the other. Some conversation followed, and as they turned to a desk, Mrs. Kitts said: "Well, you may as well get to work, Crawley." "All right, I'll tend to business de facto," answered Paxton, who had noticed that it was Crawley's habit to use law Latin in ordinary conversation. Mother Kitts, as she was familiarly called, produced account books, and seating herself at the desk, Paxton began to busy himself with the accounts. Mother Kitts watched him, and suddenly her eyes became fixed upon Paxton's hand that held the pen with which he was writing. As she looked her yellow eyes dilated, and a startled expression came over her features. She had pressed out of the pen was the peculiar cover of the pen which she said to the man with the pipe, in a whisper. CHAPTER XXI. Mrs. Kitts' companion sprang to his feet and drew a murderous-looking knife. He seemed about to rush into the detective's presence, but the woman grasped his arm and held him back. The two whispered together earnestly for a moment, and then Mrs. Kitts returned to the apartment in which Paxton remained, and presently the man also sauntered in, while the detective unsuspectingly continued to work at his accounts. Unobserved by Paxton, the man to whom Mrs. Kitts had communicated her startling discovery regarding her friend, carefully worked his way along until he was behind Paxton's chair. But while Mother Kitts and her confederate were both plotting against the detective, the latter had taken advantage of their absence to secure a letter which he had discovered at the moment of his entrance partially concealed under a sofa. Paxton naturally surmised that the missive had been lost by some one, and he concealed it on his person as he picked it up, intending to improve the first favorable opportunity to read it. In order to divert the attention of the detective from her confederate, Mrs. Kitts began a conversation with Paxton the moment she returned to the outer apartment after warning the confederate regarding her discovery. The cunning creature conversed about her business affairs in the most natural and unconcerned manner in the world. Paxton replied as best he could, but now that she had detected his disguise, the woman craftily shaped her remarks so that his replies served to confirm her suspicions. The detective sat close to a window which was closed by a heavy outside shutter. While Mrs. Kitts was talking, and while her confederate gained a position in Paxton's rear, the latter heard a faint, scarcely audible tapping on the window shutter without. It was only by the exertion of a supreme effort that Paxton avoided giving a violent start, which would have awakened a suspicion in the mind of the old woman. He meant to impersonate. Paxton created an excuse for his

window shutters as an imitation of the click, click of a telegraphic instrument. More than this, he recognized the letters and words for which in the telegraphic alphabet these sounds stood. In a moment the detective mentally read the following startling "sound" message: "You are found out! Man behind you!" Not a feature of the detective's face underwent the slightest change, and his manner remained as composed as before. But suddenly he turned around upon the man behind him, who contemplated attacking him, and said, carelessly: "Give me a chew of tobacco." As the detective wheeled about the wretch, who had his knife in his hand, suddenly concealed it. He was taken by surprise, and he stammered: "All right; yes, tobacco. Here's my box." As he spoke he presented a tobacco box. Paxton carelessly arose and reached out as if to take the box which the other held out to him, but instead of so doing he shot his hand by the box and suddenly clutched the fellow's throat. With all his power he hurled him aside. Then he bounded to the street door. Mrs. Kitts had taken the precaution to lock the door, and she had removed the key. As Paxton gained the door there came a heavy rap upon it from the street side. "Open the door, old woman, if you do not desire the police force I have stationed without to break it down," said Paxton calmly. Mother Kitts was surprised and alarmed. She could not comprehend how Paxton had discovered that his disguise was penetrated, as it was clear to her he must have done. She was alarmed at the coming of the police, whom she feared, and she did not doubt that they were at the door in force and she made haste to unlock it. The man whom Paxton had handled so roughly picked himself up, and stood glaring at the detective like some ferocious animal that feared to make a leap and yet longed to do so. As he heard the knock on the door, and also heard Paxton inform the old woman that the police were at the door, the desperado suddenly changed his mind, though he had been about to attack the detective. [TO BE CONTINUED.] A Hard-Headed Farmer. "Miss Minnie Bertha Learned will now give us some very interesting experiments in chemistry, showing the carboniferous character of many ordinary substances, after which she will entertain us with a short treatise on astronomy, and an illustration of the geological formation of certain substances, and close with a brief essay entitled, 'Philosophy vs. Realism.' Thus spoke the president of a young ladies' seminary on the class-show day. A hard-headed, old-fashioned farmer happened to be among the examining board, and he electrified the faculty, and paralyzed Miss Minnie by asking: "Miss Minnie tell me how much and three-fourths pounds of butter would come to at fifteen and a half pound?" "Well, really, I—I—" gasped Miss Minnie. "You tell me who is the vice president of the United States?" "I—I—Mr. B., isn't he? Or—" "You tell me where the Mississippi river rises and sets?" "I—I—don't just know." "I reckoned ye didn't. Gimme the good old days when gals and boys went to school to learn sense." College Girls Like to Eat. A feast of reason and flow of soul do not satisfy the modern college maid, as the housekeeping records of the Baltimore Woman's College show. For this year contracts have been made for 23,000 pounds of beef, 12,000 pounds of mutton, 9,000 pounds of poultry, 4,000 pounds of pork, and 3,000 pounds of veal. Four thousand five hundred dozen of eggs will also be used. Large quantities of fish and oysters, which are purchased week by week and not contracted for yearly, 11,000 pounds of sugar, 125 barrels of flour, and 3,000 pounds of crackers, 1,200 pounds of coffee, 100 pounds of tea, 120 pounds of chocolate, and 650 gallons of ice-cream have been ordered. Some of the other items include 7,500 pounds of butter, 5,600 gallons of milk, 3,000 pounds of lard, 475 bushels of potatoes, 150 cans of canned vegetables, and 160,000 pounds of ice. Fruit, groceries and other vegetables are purchased as they may be needed. These amounts are required to feed 300 girls. A large proportion of the Russian immigration to this country is of very undesirable character. There is possibly more reason in the Russian policy of sending criminals to Siberia than is commonly supposed. Along with these are some whose offenses are mainly political, who may have better characters. But even of the political exiles a large part are ready and willing to commit any crime, even murder, if it will aid them in their political purposes. Not long ago ten Siberian exiles made their escape and found their way to San Francisco. For a while there was much pity for them and rejoicing over their escape. But they quickly resumed their criminal career. Four of the ten are in jail under indictment for murder, and all the others have at the time or another been under sentence for crimes of greater or less