



THE CRIME OF THE BROKER'S OFFICE.

CHAPTER VII. (Continued.) He returned to the depot whence he had come, and the very next train carried him back to New York city.

He thought of the exchange of overcoats which he had made with his traveling acquaintance, and muttered: "By Jupiter! I left the keys and the key impressions in my coat pocket. I hope they will not be the means of getting the young fellow with whom I exchanged coats into trouble."

When Stuart Harland alighted from the railway train the officers who were on the watch when the stranger was taken, were still at their post. Harland had not taken five steps, when a heavy hand fell on his shoulder, and as the light of the policeman's lantern was reflected full in his face, the officer said, in a stern voice, as he grasped the young man's arm: "You are my prisoner! I arrest you on the charge of being a fugitive from justice!"

These two police officers were watching for Stuart Harland, for to the Police Sergeant Smith had wired the young man's description, and when they stopped the man who had taken Harland's overcoat, they were on the alert for the latter.

Stuart Harland's surprise was unbounded, and he was indignant, as well. "What is the meaning of this outrage? there is certainly some mistake!" he exclaimed.

In a few words the police officers acquainted him with the fact of John Oakburn's murder, of which Sergeant Smith's dispatch had informed them. "One of the officers added: "My instructions are simply to arrest you and return you to New York City at once."

"I suppose I must submit, but if you will only permit me to visit the house of a friend for a few moments, I shall be under obligations to you," said Stuart. "Impossible; the return train will leave in ten minutes," replied the officer. "I have had my journey for naught," he muttered.

his knowledge of Marion's secret visit to the office never entered his mind. "When can he be the guilty one?" Stuart asked himself, and although there was no clue to guide his suspicions, by some mental process which he could scarcely have explained himself, his thoughts reverted to Levi Kredege, the janitor.

Perhaps the vague suspicions of this man, who observed his mind unobtrusively, were prompted by an opinion which he had recently formed that Levi Kredege was a spy and a sneak.

Stuart had twice caught the fellow with his ear at the key-hole of Jason Garrison's private office, when confidential transactions were taking place there. The second time Stuart's anger gained the ascendancy, and he kicked Kredege out of the office.

The young man had not forgotten that Kredege had flushed upon him a look of ferocious hate as he slunk away without resenting the assault.

The fellow had not uttered a word, but Stuart had read murder in the fierce burning light of his eyes, and from that moment he knew that the seemingly ingenuous and servile cripple was a dangerous man.

The thought now occurred to Stuart that it might have been the fellow's purpose in listening at key-holes and in spying about the office to obtain knowledge which would enable him to commit a robbery when there was money in the safe.

So deeply impressed did Stuart become with the idea that Kredege was concerned in the murder that he determined to mention the matter to Mr. Garrison, to whom he had never mentioned the matter. He was, however, in a desperate mood, and he was determined to say nothing if he could not be sure of success.

Meanwhile, when Daniel Pratt was making his statement before the coroner, the elegant and gentlemanly man who had entered the office just behind him seemed strangely excited. His hands were clenched, his lips compressed themselves into a rigid line, and his beautiful, luminous dark eyes blazed with a dangerous light.

Despite this evidence of his more than passing interest in the proceedings before the coroner's jury, he was, as we have stated, an entire stranger to all present. "Did he hold some secret knowledge of the facts in this life-drama which caused his emotion?"

When he hastily left the office after he overheard the banker inform the coroner regarding the mark on the money which had been stolen from Jason Garrison's safe, he hurried directly to the office of Messrs. Pratt and Weeks.

The office of this firm of brokers was arranged something after the manner of a bank, and at the moment when the stately old gentleman entered it Mr. Weeks, Pratt's partner, was behind the counter, counting engaged in counting a package of money.

Producing a one-hundred-dollar note from his pocketbook, the old gentleman whom we have followed strode forward, and presenting the note at a little wicket in the screen, he asked: "Will you please accommodate me with change?"

"In one moment, sir," replied Weeks, and he continued counting the money, while the old gentleman remained standing beside the open work screen. From this position he obtained an excellent view of the money with which Weeks was engaged, and he made a discovery.

He plainly saw that each note in the package of money which Weeks was counting was marked distinctly with a "V" in the upper left-hand corner of the back of the same.

It seems that the stranger must have acted upon previously acquired knowledge when he hurried straight to the office of Pratt & Weeks, the moment he received the knowledge that the stolen money was all privately marked.

"It is the money John Oakburn's murderer stole from Jason Garrison's safe," said the aged stranger mentally, and he thought: "Now, if he only gives me the marked money, I shall be able to trace the evidence that the stolen money has found its way into the possession of these vultures. Are these birds of prey the assassin's accomplices?"

In a moment or so Weeks had counted the marked money, and then he picked up one hundred dollar note, and handed the stranger had placed upon the counter. "How will you have it?" he asked.

certitude that the janitor had brought the stolen money was marked. "This affair is growing more and more mysterious. Kredege must have known that the stolen money was in the possession of Pratt and Weeks. He is their spy, that is clear," he thought.

Who he applied at Garrison's office, he did not immediately enter his building, and while he stood before it, he saw Pratt approach and gain entrance to the office. He then entered himself, as stated.

At the conclusion of the inquest, the mysterious old gentleman, who was so curiously interesting himself in the case of John Oakburn's murder, walked to Broadway and took the omnibus to the Astor House, for at this date Jacob Astor had not made his successful innovation, and there were no horse cars on the great business thoroughfare of the great city.

Some weeks previous to the occurrence of the incidents thus far recorded, the old gentleman had arrived at the hotel, and registered the name, "Richard Stanmore."

Mr. Stanmore seemed to be a stranger in the city, but to have a great deal of business with Wall street business men.

Particularly intimate were his commercial relations with the firm of Messrs. Marks & Buck, accommodation loan brokers, who had established themselves on Wall street a year previous. Also with Judson, Kirk & Son, another Wall street firm largely interested in various mining and railway speculations.

The name was another firm not on Wall street, with whom Mr. Stanmore was evidently on the best of business terms. The firm in question was that of Benjamin & Co., a Jewish money-lending house which negotiated large loans, and was in its way of business an old street operator had been glad to come for financial aid when the market took a long run "the wrong way."

Almost every evening a representative of each of the firms mentioned was closeted with Mr. Stanmore in his apartments in the hotel.

Surprising as it may seem, however, in view of the fact we have mentioned, Mr. Stanmore was entirely unknown personally on Wall street, and he never visited the offices of the business firms we have mentioned.

All of this smacked of mystery, and there was much more in the doing of Mr. Stanmore that seemed to be inexplicable.

Very much to Mr. Garrison's surprise, the day following the night of the murder and robbery drew to a close, and no one from Pratt & Weeks called upon him to demand the money he owed them.

In view of the fact that Mr. Pratt had insisted that the \$78,000 must positively be paid that morning at an early hour, if the debtor wished to avoid unpleasant consequences, Mr. Garrison thought it was remarkable that he had not heard from him.

Pratt had hurried away from the broker's office without exchanging a word with Mr. Garrison.

Edna had been informed by her father of Stuart's imprisonment, and the devoted girl received the news in a way, for she was sustained by the belief that innocence would triumph.

Jason Garrison was in a state of intense nervous excitement and alarm. He shut himself up in his library, and at every unusual sound he started apprehensively, though he was in momentary expectation of the occurrence of some terrible calamity.

At nightfall, as he was looking over the evening paper, he suddenly leaped to his feet, and exclaimed, excitedly: "Can this be true! Can this be true!"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

ABOUT CASH CUSTOMERS. One Grocerman Says He Prefers Those Who Trade on Credit. It seems strange, but it is true, nevertheless, that customers who pay cash for their purchases are not considered very desirable by butchers and grocers, and especially those who do not send children, or messengers after the goods, but go themselves and have the articles selected and weighed or measured under their personal supervision.

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