

I LOVE YOU, DEAR.

A scent of violets in the air,
And singing birds,
And beauty new-born, fresh and fair,

THE STURGIS WAGER
A DETECTIVE STORY.

By EDGAR MORETTE.
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CHAPTER XIX.—CONTINUED.

"That will do," observed Sturgis, presently; "the old woman is coming as fast as she can."
"Who old woman?" asked the detective.
"I don't know. Perhaps I ought to have said an old woman. I hear her hobbling on the stairs."

east wall to within a few feet from the rear of the building. Here, in the northeast corner, rose narrow shelving, on which were arranged a collection of bottles containing a varied assortment of chemicals.
The detectives searched the cellar.
"Your man is not here, at any rate," said the leader, when at last he had returned to the foot of the stairs; "perhaps he'll try to give us the slip by way of the roof. Come along, Jim; let's go upstairs now. Hello! what are you doing there, Mr. Sturgis? Think you'll find him in one of those bottles?"

"Then she was not betrothed to the other fellow, after all?"
"No; that seems to have been a mistake."
"I am glad of that, very glad," said the reporter. "By the way, you have not yet told me the young lady's name."
"I thought I had mentioned it yesterday morning. Didn't I? No? My fiancée is Miss Murdock."



BEGAN TO SEETHE AND BOIL.

fact that neither of these two men had derived much, if any, pecuniary profit from his crime. The bookkeeper, as we have seen, was a mere cat's-paw in the control of the accountant, and his posthumous confession has given us the explanation of the power exerted over him by his accomplice.
It was not so easy to establish the motive which controlled the actions of the accountant, who was himself only a tool in the hands of a higher intelligence. The deus ex machina of this crime is a man of genius who has hardly appeared upon the scene at all, but whose traces I have found at every turn. He was the brains of the whole scheme; the other men in his hands were mere puppets. Through the accountant, this master spirit managed the bookkeeper; and the accountant himself was controlled by him more directly, but no less surely. If he held the former through his fear of exposure and consequent ruin, he influenced the latter through even more potent motives. He is the father of a beautiful girl, whom he did not scruple to use as a decoy. The price agreed upon for the accountant's assistance was the hand of this daughter, for whom the young man had doubtless conceived a passionate love. Whether or not the leader would have had the power to carry out his part of the contract matters little; for it is highly probable that he never had the slightest intention of so doing. He evidently realized very early in the game that the bookkeeper could not long escape the clutches of the law. But as he had taken every precaution to prevent him from knowing anything of his very existence, the fate of the unfortunate bookkeeper would have mattered little to this heartless villain, had not the probability remained that, when brought to bay, the bookkeeper would denounce the accountant's connection with the crime. This would have been extremely awkward, since the accountant was very likely in possession of some dangerous secrets. The safest way out of the difficulty was to quietly suppress the now useless bookkeeper. This plan was decided upon, and would doubtless have been carried into execution, had not fate otherwise decreed. After the bookkeeper's death, under the circumstances which I have related, it became quite probable that the accountant's connection with the case would be discovered; for luck had been against him from the start, and he became more and more entangled in the chain of circumstantial evidence of whose existence his leader was soon fully aware. In the first place, the accountant was wounded; and thus not only partially disabled, but also—what is far worse—conspicuously marked. A man who carries his arm in a sling can hardly fail to attract attention, especially when this distinguishing mark is accompanied by another equally glaring one in the form of a head of brilliant red hair—"Hold on, Sturgis!" interrupted Sprague, who had been listening with growing interest; "don't you know the accountant's name?"

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LEGEND OF THE TOPAZ.

Pretty Story of the Restoration of a Blind Emperor's Sight by a Snake.
The topaz is called the stone of gratitude, and the old Roman books record the following legend from which the stone derives its attribute, says the Philadelphia Press:
"The blind Emperor Theodosius used to hang a brazen gong before his palace gates and sit beside them on certain days, hearing and putting to right the grievances of any of his subjects. Those who wished for his advice and help had but to sound the gong, and immediately admission into the presence of Caesar was obtained.
"One day a great snake crept up to the gate and struck the brazen gong with her coils, and Theodosius gave orders that no one should molest the creature, and bade her tell him her wish. The snake bent her head in homage and straightway told the following tale:
"Her nest was at the base of the gateway tower, and while she had gone to find food for her young brood a strange beast covered with sharp needles had invaded her home, killing the nestlings and now held possession of her little dwelling. Would Caesar grant her justice?
"The emperor gave orders for the porcupine to be slain and the mother to be restored to her desolate nest. Night fell, and the sleeping world had forgotten the emperor's kindly deed, but with the early dawn a great sergeant led into the palace, up the steps into the royal chamber and laid upon each of the emperor's closed eyelids a gleaming topaz. When Emperor Theodosius awoke he found he was no longer blind, for the mother snake had paid her debt of gratitude."

CHAPTER XX. THE LEAD-LINED VAT.

Sprague seated himself upon the long pine box; and Sturgis, dropping into the only chair, began his narrative. As he talked, he carelessly whittled the cover of the wooden box with the knife which he still held in his hand. He began with an account of his investigation at the Knickerbocker bank, and explained the result of his observations and inferences down to the time of his visit to Murdock's house, omitting, however, to mention any of the names of the actors in the reconstructed drama.
"See you," he concluded, "we have established the identity of the body in the vat, and of the young man who disappeared after the vat was upset. But one of the most salient features of the case, from the start, was the