THE STURGIS WAGER

A DETECTIVE STORY.

By EDGAR MORETTE.

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CHAPTER V.—CONTINUED.

"Point five," resumed Sturgis, "the right arm was broken just above the wrist."

"Yes," said the physician, "I thought at first that the arm might have been broken in the collision with the cable car; but the discoloration of the flesh proves conclusively that the fracture occurred before death."

"Precisely. Now, it is possible that the man broke his arm when he fell, after being shot; but the contused wound looks to me as if it had been made by a severe blow with some blunt instrument."

"Possibly," admitted Thurston.

"This broken arm, if we can place it in its proper chronological position, may prove to be of some importance in the chain of evidence," mused Sturgis. "If the fracture occurred before the man was shot, that, of course, excludes the possibility of suicide; but, on the other hand, it also brings in an obstacle to the hypothesis of murder."

"How so?"

"Because we have settled, you will remember, that the shot was fired from the right of the victim, and close to him. Now, if he did not fire the shot himself the person who did must have reached over his right arm to do so. In that case, unless the victim was asleep or stupefied, would he not instinctively have raised his arm in self-defense, and thus deflected the weapon upward?"

"Evidently."

"Well, it is idle to speculate on this line for the present. Let us come to point six. You remember I called your particular attention to the cabman. Do you still think he was only drunk?"

"No," replied Thurston; "while he had unquestionably been drinking heavily, he also showed symptoms of narcotic poisoning."

"Then the presumption is that he had been drugged by those who wished to place the wounded man in his cab. I observed him closely and I am satisfied that he knows as little about his dead passenger as we do. He probably knows less about him, at all events, than the young man in the sealskin cap who gave the police the slip during the excitement which followed the overturning of the cab."

Sturgis paused a moment.

"This, I think," he continued, "covers all the evidence we have thus far collected in the Cab Mystery. It is quite satisfactory, as far as it goes, for it is circumstantial evidence, and, therefore absolutely truthful. In the Knickerbocker bank mystery we have as yet no satisfactory data whatever; for everything we have heard concerning it has its origin in the fallible evidence of witnesses, and has, moreover, reached us third or fourth hand. There is, however, one fact that may, or may not, prove to be important. Have you noticed that these two mysteries are contemporaneous, and, therefore, that they may be related?"

"Do you think there is any connection between the two?" inquired Thurston, interested.

"I do not allow myself to think about it at all as yet," replied Sturgis; "I simply note the fact, that, so far as time is concerned, the Cab Mystery could be the sequel to the Knickerbocker Bank Mystery—that is all. Facts, my dear boy, are like words. A word is only an assemblage of meaningless letters until it becomes pregnant with sense by context. So, a fact, which, standing by itself, has no meaning, may, when correlated with other facts, become fraught with deep significance.

"And now," he continued, after a pause, "I think our work is concluded for the present. I shall be able to lay it aside for the night. Let me offer you a glass of sherry. Pleasant evening we spent at Sprague's to-night. I have a great admiration for him as an artist, and a great fondness for him as a man. Most of his friends are strangers to me, though. You know I have very little time to indulge in social dissipation. By the way, who is that Dr. Murdock with whom I have made this bet?"

"Oh! he is a physician, though now retired from practice. He devotes himself entirely to scientific research, especially in the domain of chemistry. He has made some important discoveries in organic chemistry, and they say he has succeeded in proving some of the supposed elementary metals to be compounds. He has quite an enviable reputation in the scientific world. I understand he is a remarkable man."

"That is evident at a glance. He showed himself this evening to be a clear thinker and a brilliant speaker. I should say he was something of a genius, and I should judge, moreover, that he was a man of magnificent nerve, capable of the most heroic actions, or—"

Sturgis hesitated.

"Or——?" asked Thurston.

"Or of the most infamous cruelty and crime. It all depends upon whether or not his great mental attributes are under the control of a heart; a point upon which I am somewhat in doubt."

CHAPTER VI.

THE ARTIST.

Sprague was a dilettante in art as he was in life. If he had not been rich, he might perhaps have become a great artist. But, lacking the spur of poverty, he seemed incapable of sustained effort. Occasionally he was seized with a frenzy for labor; and, for weeks at a time he would shut himself up in his studio, until he had creditably accomplished some bit of work. But the fever was soon spent, and a reaction invariably followed, during which palette and brush were taken up only in desultory fashion. Thus it was that at the age of eight and twenty, Sprague had painted a few pictures which had attracted favorable attention at the annual exhibitions of the Academy of Design, and which the critics had spoken of as "promising;" and thus it was that the promise was as yet unfulfilled, and that Sprague, though a man of undoubted talent, was not likely ever to rank as a genius in his profession.

Sturgis, with his keen insight into human nature, fully realized the potential capacities of the artist, and at times he could not control his impatience at his friend's inert drifting through life. But, with all their differences, these two men held each other in the highest esteem, each admiring in the other those very qualities which were lacking in himself.

The artist lived in a fashionable quarter of the city, in a bachelor apartment which included a large and commodious studio fitted up according to the latest canons of artistic taste.

On this particular New Year's morning, after waking and observing, by the filtering of a few bright sunbeams through the closely drawn blinds, that it was broad daylight, he stretched himself with a voluptuous yawn and prepared to relapse into the sensuous enjoyment of that semi-somnolent state which succeeds a night of calm and refreshing sleep.

Just as he was settling himself comfortably, however, he was startled by a knock at the bedroom door. Most men, under the circumstances, would have betrayed some vexation at being thus unceremoniously disturbed. But there was no suspicion of annoyance in Sprague's cheery voice, as he exclaimed:

"You cannot come in yet, Mrs. O'Meagher. I am asleep, and I shall be asleep for another hour at the least. Surely you cannot have forgotten that to-day is a holiday. Happy New Year! You have time to go to several masses before—"

"Get up, old lazybones; and don't keep a man waiting at your door in this inhospitable way, when he is in a hurry," interrupted a voice whose timbre was not that of the housekeeper, Mrs. O'Meagher.

"Oh! is that you, Sturgis?" laughed the artist. "Aren't you ashamed of yourself to come routing honest men out of bed at this unseemly hour? Wait a minute, till I put on my court costume, that I may receive you with the honors and ceremonies due to your rank and station."

A couple of minutes later the artist, pituresquely attired in a loose oriental dressing gown and fez, opened the door to his friend, Ralph Sturgis.

"Come in, old man," he said, cordially extending his hand to the reporter; "you are welcome at any hour of the day or night. What is it now? This is not your digestion call, I presume."

"No," replied Sturgis, "I merely dropped in to say that I should be unable to take our projected bicycle trip this afternoon. I shall probably be busy with the Knickerbocker bank case all day. By the way, if you would like to come to the bank with me, I shall be glad of your company. I am on my way there now."

"I should like nothing better," said Sprague, "but I have made an appointment for this morning with a—er—er—with a sitter."

"What, on New Year's day, you heathen!"

Sturgis observed the artist closely, and then added, quizzically:

"Accept my congratulations, old man."

"Your congratulations?" inquired Sprague, coloring slightly.

"Yes; my congratulations and my condolence. My congratulations on the fact that she is young and beautiful, and possessed of those qualities of mind and heart which—and so on and so forth. My condolence because I fear you are hit at last."

"What do you mean?" stammered the artist, sheepishly; "do you know her? What do you know about her?"

"Nothing whatever," replied Sturgis, laughing, "except what you are telling me by your hesitations, your reticence and your confusion."

The artist spoke after a moment of thoughtful silence.

"Your inductions in this case are premature, to say the least. My sitter is a young lady, so much is undeniably true. And there is no doubt in my mind as to her possession of all the qualities you jocularly attribute to her; but my interest in her is only that of an artist in a beautiful and charming woman.

"At any rate," he added, after a moment's hesitation, "I hope so; for I have heard that she is as good as betrothed to another man."

The reporter's keen ear detected in his friend's tones a touch of genuine sadness of which the artist himself was probably unconscious. Laying his hand gently upon Sprague's shoulder, he said, gravely:

"I hope so, too, old man; for you are one of those foolish men whose lives can be ruined by an unhappy love affair. I suppose it's useless to preach to you—more's the pity—but, in my humble opinion, no woman's love is worth the sacrifice of a good man's life."

"Yes, I know your opinion on that subject, you old cynic," replied Sprague, "but you need not worry on my account; not yet, at all events. I am still safe; the portrait is almost finished; and I should be a fool to walk into such a scrape with my eyes wide open."

"Humph!" ejaculated Sturgis, skeptically, "when a man makes a fool of himself for a woman, it matters little whether his eyes be open or shut; the result is the same."

Sprague laughed somewhat uneasily; and then, as if to change the subject:

"Come and see the picture," he said. "I should like your opinion of it."

The reporter consulted his watch.

"I shall have to come back some other time for that," he replied; "I must hurry off now to keep my appointment with Mr. Dunlap."

He started toward the door; but suddenly facing Sprague again, he held out his hand to the artist, who pressed it cordially.

"Good-bye, old man," he said, affectionately, "be as sensible as you can, and don't wantonly play with the fire."

And before Sprague could frame an answer, the reporter was gone.

The artist remained thoughtfully standing until his friend's footsteps had died away in the distance. Then he turned and walked slowly into the studio. Here, in the middle of the room, stood an easel, upon which was the portrait of a beautiful young girl.

Sprague gazed at it long and earnestly. Then he heaved an almost inaudible sigh.

"Sturgis is right," he said to himself, turning away at last, "and—and I am a confounded idiot!"

CHAPTER VII.

AGNES MURDOCK.

In a quarter of the city which is rapidly surrendering to the relentless encroachments of trade, there still stand a few old-fashioned houses, the sole survivors of what was once an aristocratic setlement.

One by one their fellows have been sapped and swept away by the resistless tide of commerce, until these ancient dwellings, stubbornly contesting a position already lost, now rear their sepulchral brownstone fronts in stiff and solitary grandeur—huge sarcophagi in a busy mart.

One of these houses stands well back from the street line, the traditional backyard of the ordinary New York dwelling having been sacrificed, in this instance, to make room for a tiny garden, which is separated from the street by a tall spiked iron railing, behind which grows an arbor vitae hedge. The former serves as a defense against the marauding of the irrepressible metropolitan gamin; while the latter confers upon the occupants of the garden a semblance of protection from the curious gaze of the passers-by.

This property, having been the subject of an interminable lawsuit, had remained for many years unoccupied, and was even now beginning to be regarded by some of the neighbors as haunted, when at last it was bought by Dr. Murdock, a wealthy widower with an only daughter. For some months masons and carpenters were at work; and then, one day, the new occupants entered into possession.

The Murdocks lived quietly but luxuriously, like people accustomed to wealth. They had their horses and carriages, their house at Lenox and at Newport, and their yacht. Their circle of acquaintances was large, and included not only the fashionable set, but also a scientific, literary and artistic set. For Dr. Murdock was a chemist of national reputation, a member of several scientific bodies and a man of great intelligence and broad culture.

On this particular New Year's morning Dr. Murdock was seated in his study, apparently absorbed in reading the daily papers, a pile of which lay upon his table. His occupation might perhaps more accurately be described as skimming the daily papers; for each journal in turn was subjected to a rapid scrutiny, and only a few columns seemed occasionally to interest the reader.

There was no haste visible in the doctor's actions, each one of which appeared to be performed with the coolness and deliberation of a man who is not the slave of time; and yet, so systematic were they, that, all lost motion being avoided, every operation was rapidly completed.

In a short time the pile of newspapers had been disposed of, and the doctor, lighting a choice cigar, leaned back in his comfortable armchair and placedly puffed the wreaths of fragrant smoke ceilingward. He was apparently satisfied with the world and with himself, this calm, passionless man. And yet a sharp observer would have noted an almost imperceptible furrow between the eyes, which might perhaps have indicated only the healthy mental activity of an ordinary man; but which, in one given so little to outward manifestation of feeling as Dr. Murdock, might also betoken more or less serious annoyance or displeasure.

While the chemist sat in this pensive attitude, there was a rustle of skirts outside, and presently there came a gentle knock at the door of the study.

"Come in!" said Murdock, removing the cigar from his lips.

The door opened, admitting a tall and beautiful young girl, evidently not long out of her teens.

"Did I disturb you, father?" she asked, stepping lightly into the room.

"No, Agnes," replied Murdock, courteously; "as you see, I am indulging in a period of dolce far niente."

The young girl laughed a clear, silvery laugh, as her eyes fell upon the pile of newspapers.

"If the reading of a dozen newspapers is dolce far niente, I should think you would welcome hard work as a pleasant change."

"Oh!" replied her father, "the work I have done on those has not amounted to much. I have only been gleaning the news from the morning papers.

"Yes," he added, answering her surprised look, "it takes a deal of skim milk to yield a little cream."

The last paper which Murdock had been examining lay upon the desk before him. From the closely printed columns stood out in bold relief the glaring headlines:

MURDER IN A CAB.

MYSTERIOUS ASSASSINATION OF AN UNKNOWN MAN, IN BROAD DAYLIGHT.

CABMAN REILLY DENIES ALL KNOWLEDGE OF THE CRIME.

Miss Murdock's glance rested carelessly upon these words for an instant. They aroused in her nothing more than the mild curiosity which attaches to events of palpitating human interest, when they have been congealed in the columns of the daily newspapers and served to palates already sated with sensational verbosity.

"Mary said you wished to speak to me," said the young girl, after a short pause. "I thought I would step in to see you before going to Mr. Sprague's."

"To Sprague's?" inquired Murdock, fixing his keen eyes upon the young girl. "Ah, yes; I remember he spoke of the appointment last night. How is the portrait coming on?"

"It is almost finished. Probably only one or two more sittings, at the most, will be necessary."

Agnes seemed slightly embarrassed by the fixity of her father's searching glance. She settled herself in an armchair and assumed a look of deferent expectancy.

[To Be Continued.]

Different Denominations.

"A man gave over a hundred dollars for a copper cent the other day."

"That's nothing. An English syndicate has just paid $2,000,000 for a woolen mill."—Harlem Life.

A RESCUE AT SEA.

Eerilous Situation Relieved by the Timely Utterances of a Spell-Binder.

"Help! Help!"

In a panic the passengers rushed to the side of the ship, and gazed helplessly at those struggling in the waves, says Harper's Bazar.

It was indeed a perilous situation.

What was to be done? There seemed to be no rope at hand, and there was trouble in lowering the lifeboat, and, as is usually the case, none of the sailors could swim.

A lawyer suggested a writ of habeas corpus, but that was found impracticable, as there was not a judge on board, and no one to serve such a writ, anyway.

At that instant a man of commanding presence pushed into the frenzied crowd and struck an attitude, close to the rail.

The drowning ones recognized him as a famous political orator, and their spirits rose:

"Fellow citizens," he began, "we face a crisis!"

The next moment a cry of joy went up.

For the people in the water were hanging on his words, in which position they continued till the boats were lowered.

O--I--C

When a preparation has an advertised reputation that is world-wide, it means that preparation is meritorious. If you go into a store to buy an article that has achieved universal popularity like Cascarets Candy Cathartic for example, you feel it has the endorsement of the world. The judgment of the people is infallible because it is impersonal. The retailer who wants to sell you "something else" in place of the article you ask for, has an ax to grind. Don't it stand to reason? He's trying to sell something that is not what he represents it to be. Why? Because he expects to derive an extra profit our of your credulity. Don't you see through his little game? The man who will try to sell you a substitute for Cascarets is a fraud. Beware of him! He is trying to steal the honestly earned benefits of a reputation which another business man has paid for, and if his conscience will allow him to go so far, he will go farther. If he cheats his customer in one way, he will in another and it is not safe to do business with him. Beware of the Cascaret substitutor! Remember Cascarets are never sold in bulk but in metal boxes with the long tailed "C" on every box and each tablet stamped C. C. C.

Housewife and Burglar.

The burglar had entered the house as quietly as possible, but his shoes were not padded and they made some noise. He had just reached the door of the bedroom when he heard some one moving in the bed as if about to get up, and he paused. The sound of a woman's voice floated to his ears. "If you don't take off your boots when you come into this house," it said, "there's going to be trouble, and a whole lot of it. Here it's been raining for three hours, and you dare to tramp over my carpets with your muddy boots on. Go downstairs and take them off." He went downstairs without a word, but he didn't take off his boots. Instead he went out into the night again, and the "pal" who was waiting for him saw a tear glisten in his eye. "I can't rob that house," he said. "It reminds me of home."—Lewiston (Me.) Journal.

Homeseekers' Excursions Via Chicago & Eastern Illinois Railroad.

On the first and third Tuesdays of June, July and August the Chicago & Eastern Illinois Railroad will place on sale Homeseekers' Excursion tickets to various points in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas.

One Fare (plus $2.00) for the Round Trip. Tickets are limited on going trip fifteen days from date of sale with stop-over privileges in Homeseekers' Territory. Returning tickets are limited twenty-one days from date of sale.

Remember that we now have in service a new wide vestibuled train between Chicago and Waco and Ft. Worth, Texas, leaving Chicago daily at 1:50 P. M. Through Pullman Sleeping Cars and Free Reclining Chair Cars. For further particulars call on or address any agent Chicago & Eastern Illinois Railroad or C. L. Stone, G. P. and T. A., Chicago.

He Wouldn't Tell.

The argument by analogy or hypothetical case is often dangerous. A very stately and dignified clergyman used to tell a story illustrative of the risk of this method. One of his parishioners was much addicted to drink and one night the vicar met him coming home in such a condition that he remonstrated with him on the spot, and by way of clinching his argument, asked: "What would you say if you were to see me reeling down the street in a state of hopeless intoxication?" The offender appeared to be deeply impressed and answered, fervently: "I wouldn't tell a soul, sir."—San Francisco Argonaut.

The merits of the preparations of the J. & C. Maguire Medicine Company of St. Louis, Mo., are beyond all question. This firm has succeeded in furnishing the Army and Navy. They went into business in 1841, and have steadily grown in favor with the public, not having one failure to report in 59 years! Their Benne Plant, Cundurango, etc., have become a household word. They are sold by all druggists. Ask for booklet free, and if you ever get Diarrhea, Dysentery or Cholera-Morbus, give the Benne Plant a trial, and you will be convinced. Every article made by the Maguire Medicine Company is guaranteed to do what is claimed for it.

Those Loving Girls.

Maude—If I only had my life to live over again—

Clara (interrupting)—Why, I thought that's what you were doing.

"What do you mean?"

"I heard you tell the census man you would be 22 your next birthday."—Chicago Evening News.

Do Your Feet Ache and Burn?

Shake into your shoes, Allen's Foot-Ease, a powder for the feet. It makes tight or New Shoes Feel Easy. Cures Corns, Itching, Swollen, Hot, Callous, Smarting, Sore and Sweating Feet. All Druggists and Shoe Stores sell it, 25c. Sample sent FREE. Address, Allen S. Olmsted, Le Roy, N. Y.

Love does not usually laugh at a parrot which says: "Now, George, you stop!" although to our mind this is much funnier than the average locksmith.—Detroit Journal.

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CURE SICK HEADACHE.

World to End This Year.

This is the recent decision of one of the prominent societies of the world, but the exact day has not yet been fixed upon, and while there are very few people who believe this prediction, there are thousands of others who not only believe, but know that Hostetter's Stomach Bitters is the best medicine to cure dyspepsia, indigestion, constipation, biliousness or liver and kidney troubles. A fair trial will certainly convince you of its value.

An Insinuation.

The Plumber—I believe that we will all follow the same vocation in the next world as we do in this.

The Carpenter—Well, if that is true, you will be out of a job.

"Why so?"

"What use will they have for plumbers where there is no water?"—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Labor Saver.

Biggs—Old man Miggs is lazy.

Jiggs—Is he?

"Yes, indeed. Why he rented a parrot for the summer just to have it swear at the heat for him."—Baltimore American.

I am sure Piso's Cure for Consumption saved my life three years ago.—Mrs. Thos. Robbins, Maple Street, Norwich, N. Y., Feb 17, 1900.

Just about seven-eighths of the people should cut out that part about forgiving one's enemies before they repeat the Lord's prayer.—Atchison Globe.

Each package of PUTNAM'S FADELESS DYES colors more goods than any other dye and colors them better too. Sold by all druggists.

The oldest of a crowd of girls, though she may be only 18, is always made to feel as if she is a wrinkled spinster.—Atchison Globe.

If you want "good digestion to wait upon your appetite" you should always chew a bar of Adams' Pepsin Tutti Frutti.

Max O'Rell says Paris is so fast that they use quicksand in the hour glasses! Max is a dizzy joker, but time flies all the same.

To Cure a Cold in One Day

Take Laxative Bromo Quinine Tablets. All druggists refund money if it fails to cure. 25c.

Fortunate is the liar who loses his reputation.—Chicago Daily News.

Hall's Catarrh Cure

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The retired actor is naturally played out.—Chicago Daily News.

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Vegetable Compound cures the ills peculiar to women. It tones up their general health, eases down overwrought nerves, cures those awful backaches and regulates menstruation.

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