

THE STURGIS WAGER
A DETECTIVE STORY.

By EDGAR MORETTI.
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CHAPTER XX.—CONTINUED.

There was a brief silence, broken at last by Sprague, who asked: "Sturgis hesitated." "That depends upon how we look at it," he said, gravely, at length; "he has paid the penalty of his crimes."

"What do you mean?" "He is dead," answered the reporter. "Dead? But I tell you I saw him—"

"No," the reporter's voice sank to a whisper; "murder." "Murder?" repeated the artist, startled. "But how do you know that?"

"This lump of lead tells the story," said Sturgis, holding up the shapeless piece of metal which he had taken out of the vat. "What is it? A bullet?" "Yes; the bullet which Chatham carried in his arm from the time that he was wounded by Arbogast, the bullet which has enabled me to trace him step by step, from his flight from the overturned cab to Dr. Thurston's and finally to his death in this very room; the bullet whose peculiar shape is recorded in this shadow picture taken by Thurston by means of the Roentgen rays."

So saying, he handed Sprague the photograph. But the artist had ceased to listen. "In this very room?" he mused aloud, looking about him with awe. "Yes. The story is simple enough. The man whose instrument Chatham was is not one who would care to be lumbered up with tools, which become positively dangerous as soon as they cease to be useful. This man, totally unhampered by pity, gratitude or fear, determined to destroy the accountant, whose discovery might have imperiled his own welfare. When he mated a human life on two, when weighed against the possible loss of his own life or liberty, or of his high social standing and his enormous wealth; for this man is both renowned and rich, and he appears to have brought wholesale murder to a science."

"Do you mean to say that wholesale murder can be indulged in with impunity in a city like New York, at the end of the nineteenth century?" asked Sprague, aghast. "Yes; when it is done in the systematic and scientific manner that has been employed here. For this murderer is the most remarkable criminal of modern times. He has not been satisfied with killing his victims; he has succeeded in completely wiping them out of existence. Criminals have often attempted to destroy the bodies of their victims, but they have never before succeeded as this man has. He is a chemist of remarkable talent, and he has discovered a compound in which bone as well as human tissue is rapidly and totally dissolved. There it is in your tank. See how completely the liquid has destroyed the bone handle of this knife."

The reporter did not finish his sentence. He suddenly grasped his companion by the arm and stood transfixed, his eyes dilated, his neck craned in a lightning attitude, every muscle tense like those of a wild animal in ambush about to spring upon its approaching prey.

"Presently a click was heard as though a bolt had been shot from its socket. "Draw your revolver!" Sturgis whispered hoarsely to his companion. "Quick!—Look there!"

"At the same time he drew his own weapon and pointed in the direction of the door at the head of the stairs. The door opened and a man entered, quietly smoking a cigar. "Dr. Murdock!" exclaimed Sprague with horror.

Murdock, still holding the door ajar, eyed the two men for an instant, his impassive face betraying not the slightest sign of emotion. Then, talking his cigar from his lips: "Ah, gentlemen, he drew in his ironical way, 'I am delighted to see you. I trust you will make yourselves perfectly at home for a few minutes. I shall return directly. You can continue to work out your little problem in the meantime, Mr. Sturgis.'"

With these words he calmly turned to leave the room. "Stop!" shouted Sturgis, leveling his revolver at Murdock's head; "stand where you are or die!"

The reporter's shot rang out almost before he had finished his sentence; but Murdock, unscathed, passed out of the room, closing the door behind him. Sprague, dazed by the rapidity with which this scene had been acted, stood rooted to the spot, without having made any attempt to use the revolver which he had drawn at Sturgis's bidding.

The reporter sprang up the stairs and threw his weight against the door. But it was doubtless intended to withstand great shocks, for it remained unshaken. "Check!" came the sound of a mocking voice from the other side of the door.

Then, rushing down the stairs again, Sturgis shouted to his companion: "Come quick! We must get out of here!"

And he led the way through the subterranean passage toward the cellar of the Manhattan Chemical company. CHAPTER XXI. THE DEATH CHAMBER. Before the men had gone many steps a grating sound reached their ears from the direction of the skylight. They looked up and saw sliding steel shutters slowly and ponderously close, like grim jaws; and suddenly they felt themselves cut off from the outside world.

"As we were saying, Mr. Sturgis—"

The words came in Murdock's mocking tones. Sturgis quickly held the lighted candle above his head and peered in the direction whence came the sound. A panel of the door at the head of the stairs had been pushed up, revealing a small opening, covered by a strong and closely-woven wire netting.

"As we were saying, 'murder will out!' Nevertheless, it is sometimes easier to weld a chain, even of circumstantial evidence, than it is to predict who will be bound in it."

Sturgis and Sprague stood in the glimmering light of the candle, silently watching the glowing eyes behind the screen. "Mr. Sturgis, you are a clever man," continued Murdock, "an uncommonly clever man. I frankly admit that I had underrated your ability. But then we are all fallible, after all. I made my share of blunders, as you seem to have discovered; but you will doubtless now concede that your own course has not been entirely free from errors. And now that we have reached the conclusion of this interesting game, I have the honor to announce: 'Mate in one move!'"

Perhaps you are surprised that I should take the trouble to explain the situation to you so clearly. I do so in recognition of your superior intelligence. I see in you a peer. If matters could have been so arranged, I should have been proud to work in harmony with such a man as you; and indeed, when a short time ago I invited you to my laboratory, it was my intention to offer you a compromise which I hoped I might be able to persuade you to accept. I felt that you would prove an ally who could be trusted. But, alas, that is impossible now, on account of your friend's presence. With all due respect to Mr. Sprague, as an amateur of the world and a prince of good fellows, it may be said that he is not one of us. Much to my sorrow, therefore, I am left no alternative to the course I am about to adopt. The fault, if anybody's, is your own, after all, Mr. Sprague. There is a homely but expressive adage concerning the danger of 'monkeying' with a buzz saw. Why, my dear friend, did you 'monkey' with Mr. Sturgis' buzz saw, instead of sticking to your palette and maulstick?"

"But I fear I am growing garrulous, gentlemen. If I had time, I should like to explain to Mr. Sturgis the details of some of the more important, and in my humble opinion, more brilliant schemes of which I have been the abettor—the promoter; for I dislike to be judged by the bungling operations which have so nearly caused me to lose this latest little game. But this cannot be. I shall have to continue to confine to the pages of my journal, as I have done for years, the interesting events of, I may say, a somewhat remarkable career, which I hope will some day, after my death, find their way in print to public favor. My dream has always been that some such man as Mr. Sturgis might ultimately edit these memoirs; but, alas, the faintest of human dreams are seldom destined to be realized."

"Now, then, gentlemen, before finally parting with you, I wish to honorably carry out the terms of my wager with Mr. Sturgis. I concede the fact that, to all intents and purposes, he has won the bet, and I authorize you, Mr. Sprague, as stakeholder, to pay him the amount I deposited with you. As I have already suggested, he has made some perhaps excusable mistakes; but, then, as he himself stated the other night, 'a detective has a lifetime in which to correct a blunder.' A lifetime! It is not in accordance with Mr. Sturgis' usual practice to use so vague a term. A lifetime is not necessarily a very long time, Mr. Sturgis."

During this tirade Sturgis and Sprague had remained standing with their eyes fixed upon the gleaming carbuncles which peered at them from behind the grated peephole at the top of the stairs. The artist seemed to realize that the fight was lost. His attitude was that of a brave man accepting, with calm despair, an unpleasant but inevitable doom. The reporter had drawn his revolver at the first sound of Murdock's voice, but had immediately returned it to its pocket upon realizing that the chest was protected by a bullet-proof grating. No pistol and collected, he remained inscrutable. It was impossible, even for the sharp eyes of Murdock, to determine whether he was at last resigned to his fate, or whether his active mind was still on the alert for a loophole of escape.

"The bit of candle which he held in his hand had burned so low that at last he was unable to hold it without risk of burning his fingers. Whereupon he coolly set it down upon the stone floor, where presently the wick fell over into a pool of molten paraffine, and the flame sputtered noisily, sending fitful gleams through the darkness. "Well," continued Murdock's voice, "it is a very rare and great satisfaction to play a game with an adversary worthy of one's steel. You have played well, Mr. Sturgis. I think you would have won modestly; and you are losing as I would myself have lost, had our positions been reversed. Good-bye."

The gleaming eyes disappeared from the grating and the sliding panel closed with a metallic click. "Now, then," said Sturgis to his companion, "the last chance lies in the speaking tube. But first help me move this box."

NOTES FROM THE PARIS EXPOSITION.

"The Singer Manufacturing Company, of 149 Broadway, New York, show their usual American enterprise by having a very creditable exhibit, located in Group XIII, Class 70, at the Paris International Exposition, where they show to great advantage the celebrated Singer Sewing-Machine which is used in every country on the globe, both for family use and for manufacturing purposes. The writer was highly pleased with this display, and observed with much satisfaction that it was favorably commented upon by visitors generally."

The Grand Prize was awarded by the International Jury to Singer Sewing-Machines for superior excellence in design, construction, efficiency and for remarkable development and adaptation to every stitching process used in either the family or the factory. Only one Grand Prize for sewing machines was awarded at Paris, and this distinction of absolutely superior merit confirms the previous action of the International Jury at the World's Columbian Exposition, in Chicago, where Singer machines received 54 distinct awards, being more than were received by all other kinds of sewing machines combined.

Should it be possible that any of our readers are unfamiliar with the celebrated Singer Machine, we would respectfully advise that they call at any of the Singer salesrooms which can be found in all cities and most towns in the United States.

CURRENT TOPICS.

Forest fires are driving the grizzly bears into Colorado towns. In Italy bread and sugar cost about three times what they do in England. The world's production of lead amounted in 1908 to 777,000 tons. A Spanish bullfighter's fee for a special performance is about \$3,000. Col. Henry Peyton, on the staff of Gen. R. E. Lee, is dead in St. Louis. Big crabs are found in India. Some of them measure two feet in length. The skin of elephant Charlie, killed in Crystal Palace, London, weighed a ton.

In Spain the infant's face is swept with a pine bough to bring good luck. In Ireland a belt of woman's hair is placed about the child to keep harm away. A \$500,000 yarn mill is to be erected near Talladega, Ala. It will have 20,000 spindles. Garlic, salt, bread and steak are put into the cradle of a new-born baby in Holland. Most spiders are possessed of poisonous fangs, but very few are dangerous to human beings.

The total Chinese losses during the siege of the legations in Peking are estimated at \$,000. The arbitration law has been in constant use in New Zealand for about four years and a half. In Nebraska there are 141 log schoolhouses, 517 built of sod, one of baled straw and one of steel. It is estimated that the number of Germans and their descendants in the United States is 15,000,000. The "burning mountain" of Montpelier, in Vermont, France, is a coal mine which has been burning for several years.

In the completed list of 40,822 pieces of game killed by Emperor William since 1872 there is only one whale. A New York florist says that the lily of the valley is poisonous, and its stem should not be placed in the mouth. The total quantity of diamonds found in 1898 in the Transvaal was 22,843 carats, valued at £43,730 (\$212,512.04). The army death rate is lower in Great Britain than in any other country, in France it is nearly six times as high.

The emperor of Austria always used to send the late king of Italy annually a present of 100,000 picked Virginia cigars. Kansas has two head of cattle, one hog, one-third of a horse, and one-fifth of a sheep for every man, woman and child in the state. Fort Marion, in Florida, is the oldest fort in the United States. It was built in 1565, of logs, but has since often been remodeled. The German emperor has been known to change his costume 12 times in 18 hours. His wardrobe contains more than 1,000 suits. A nugget of zinc found recently weighs exactly a ton. It is a beautiful object, being covered with cubes of pink spar and galena.

Forty years ago Japan had only coasting vessels. Now it has several steamship companies, the largest of which runs thirty-three vessels. The tube of a twelve-inch gun has fifty spiral grooves, inside, which cause the shot to revolve 75 times per second as it rushes through the air. The Turkish mother loads her child with amulets and a small bit of mud, steeped in hot water, prepared by previous charms, is stuck on its forehead. Mobile beats Birmingham in population by the slim margin of fifty-four. The new census gives Mobile a population of 38,469 and Birmingham 38,415. Three million more years is the limit of human life on earth. One such, at least, is the computation recently made by Dr. T. J. J. See, astronomer of the naval observatory at Washington. Pope Leo XIII. owns a pearl left to him by his predecessor on the throne of St. Peter which is worth \$100,000, and the chain of 32 pearls owned by the Empress Frederick is estimated at \$175,000. All the English railways have now agreed to carry 150 pounds of baggage for each first-class passenger free of charge, 120 pounds second-class and 100 pounds and 60 pounds, respectively, as previously. The soft hat was introduced to America about 1850 by Louis Koeuth. The army campaign hat and the Rough Rider had their origin in a Tyrolean hat that was brought here by an American traveler. The humorist gets his better from the steam of his Chicago Daily News.

A LITTLE NONSENSE.

An Easy Answer.—"Sixteen boys went to the canal on a summer's afternoon to swim," said the teacher, "but five were told not to bathe. How many went in?" "Sixteen," said Sam.—Buffalo-News.

How He Caught Cold.—"Henry, I dreamed of planting sweet peas last night." "Oh, yes; of course you dreamed you made me dig up the ground for you, and that's the way I got this awful cold."—Baltimore American.

Progress in Cooking.—"How are Susie and Emma getting along in cooking school?" "They're progressing wonderfully. They have learned how to make cunning little turtles out of raisins and cloves."—Kitchen Magazine.

"Nonsense, Mr. Smith," she said, after rejecting him, "you'll find a girl at last to love you. One is as good as another, so what's the difference?" "It isn't the difference in girls that bothers me," said he, mournfully, "it's their indifference."—Philadelphia Press.

"You know," said Senator Sorghum, reprovingly, "I told you that what I wanted from you was a good breezy speech." "Well," answered the professional orator, "I thought that was what I gave you. Nearly everybody who heard it said my arguments were only wind."—Washington Star.

Retort Courteous.—Mrs. Nextdoor—"I notice you've got new paper in your hall." Mrs. Peppery—"Yes, how do you like the design?" Mrs. Nextdoor—"It seems to me it's rather loud." Mrs. Peppery—"Yes, that's why we selected it. We thought it might draw the sound of your daughter's piano-playing."—Philadelphia Press.

POISON IVY AND ANTIDOTE. Spotted Touch-Not Said to Speedily Counteract the Ivy's Effects. Poison ivy belongs to the sumac family and derives its botanical name from the ancient Celtic "rhudd," red, and the Greek "toxicodendron," or poison plant. The origin of the poison, which causes great suffering to many people, was for a long while a mystery, as the plant itself contains no active poison, as do many plants, but it now seems to be certain that the plant nourishes deadly bacilli, which enters the pores of the skin and give the poisoned parts their characteristic appearance. The three leaves are pale green and the creeping plant is to be found in many parts of the island of Montreal. It is closely related to the Rhus Venenata, or "poison sumac," sometimes, also, called "poison dogwood." Poison sumac, however, is a shrub, with the drupe greenish-yellow and only grows in swamps. The flowers are green and it is very poisonous. The ordinary sumac, with red fruit and crimson hairs, is not dangerous, says the Montreal Witness.

It is said that some people cannot go into the neighborhood of poison ivy without suffering from the poison of the plant, while others can handle it without any ill effects. Many antidotes to the poison have been recommended, as it affects different people differently, and among the most efficacious have been strong soapsuds and bicarbonate of soda. One perfect and painless result of this toxicodendron poisoning is that with many people the parts poisoned are liable to be affected for several years afterward at about the same period the disease was originally caught. This plant grows erect as well as decumbent, and in the former case is known as poison oak.

In addition to the aids of the druggist, however, nature is said to have provided a most efficient remedy for this toxicodendron poisoning, in the shape of the widely-spread flower and bicarbonate of soda. One perfect and painless result of this toxicodendron poisoning is that with many people the parts poisoned are liable to be affected for several years afterward at about the same period the disease was originally caught. This plant grows erect as well as decumbent, and in the former case is known as poison oak.

UNUSED RAILROAD TICKETS. According to This Account It is an Easy Matter to Obtain a Refund for Them. Some men with unused railroad tickets on their hands will sell them to scalpers, while others go to the railroad company that issued them and obtain their value in money. Most persons, however, do neither, and accept the loss when the ticket is worth less than a dollar. Indeed, many persons do not realize that the railroad companies stand ready to redeem unused tickets even of small value, so that the companies must be richer by many thousands of dollars a year through this ignorance, says the Chicago Inter Ocean.

KNOW ALL ABOUT GENIUS.

A Poet's Wife Describes It and Shows She is Thoroughly Posted. "I have just finished a sonnet," said the poet, according to the Atlanta Constitution. "Thank heaven!" exclaimed the begonia, "that'll buy a beefsteak and a sack of flour!"

"And here is an ode for the state fair." "How fortunate! Ham is 15 cents a pound, and we haven't had any in six weeks!"

"I have also written a love song which is as tender as an April rose." "What a dear, sweet soul you are! I'm sure that's good for a can of lard and a gallon of molasses!"

"Woman!" said the poet, sternly, "do you know what genius is?" "Sometimes it's telling the butcher to call again, shutting the door on the baker, hidin from the house rent man, and singing, when Sunday comes, 'I would not live always; I ask not to stay!'"

He Addressed the Jury. A man who had been seen the inside of a courtroom until he was introduced as a witness in a case pending in one of the Scottish courts, on being sworn, took a position "half bent" and exclaimed: "I beggin telling his story to the judge. The judge, in a bland and courteous manner, said: 'Address yourself to the jury, sir.' The man made a short pause, but, notwithstanding what had been said to him, continued his narrative. The judge was then more explicit, and said to him: 'Speak to the jury, sir; the men sitting behind you on the benches.' The witness at once turned around, and making an awkward bow, said with perfect gravity: 'Good morning, gentlemen.'"—Buffalo Courier.

If the poor insist upon playing golf, it will be with this precisely as it was with apendicitis; our best people will drop it. JOURNAL.

CALIFORNIA'S SPLENDID SHOWING AT THE PARIS EXPOSITION. Following is an extract from a letter recently written by Mr. Wm. H. Mills, of California, while in Paris in charge of the Southern Pacific Company's exhibit at the Exposition. It is remarkable for two reasons, first, as evidence of the great interest which is everywhere manifested in that wonderful State; also for the valuable information it contains, and for which it is here reproduced:

Paris, July 19th, 1900. The panorama picture of the Mariposa Grove is admitted by all including photographers, to be the most wonderful photographic reproduction that has ever been made. It is a masterpiece of art, representing the greatest Fruit-Growing Association of France, to the number of fifty-two, the only one of its kind in the world. It is the property of the Republic. They came here to get an illustration of the industrial and climatic conditions under which our fruit grows. I explained to them fully the prolific character of our climate, and by pictures and illustrations showed them the progress and a full crop every year; that our danger was from over-bearing; that in no instance did we miss two crops in any one year from any cause. You will scarcely understand the intense interest of this interview until it is explained that this Fruit-Growing Association practices fruit culture in France in extra-hazardous and cultivating under glass (I forego French designations). The out-door cultivation of fruit in France is extra-hazardous and is fast being superseded by the artificial means of wall and glass.

The gentlemen who were here yesterday explained that the most profitable cultivation of fruit in France is in the form of success were in the hands of the cultivator. I have used this argument many times for the purpose of the policy of irrigation. I have said that when the moisture can be controlled, both with reference to moisture and drainage, civilized culture will have been achieved; that at the point only it becomes an art; but where natural conditions are depended upon and are not under the control of man, the cultivation of fruit is the dignity of an art. Its main factors are at the hazard of chance.

When I explained, however, the conditions under which fruit was grown in California, it became apparent both to myself and my audience that the natural conditions in California are as nearly perfect as those of any other fruit-growing country possible to be, and that at all events there are economies with us which will be the fruit of the world. You may accept this conclusion as demonstrated by our exhibit and observation of the fruit markets of the world. The orchard of the world, for reasons which will be more easily made apparent in a personal interview. The reason for the foregoing narration will now present. We have exhausted the interest of the exhibit in showing the fruits, the pineapples, the dates, the peaches, the grapes, the pears, the apples, the vegetables in all their varieties, etc.

A CONGRESSMAN.



Ex-Congressman A. T. Goodwyn, from Alabama, writes the following letter: "The Peruna Medicine Co., Goodwyn, O.; Gentlemen—'I have now used two bottles of Peruna, and am a well man to-day. I could feel the good effects of your medicine before I had used it a week, after suffering with catarrh for over a year.' Respectfully, A. T. Goodwyn.

Catarrh in its various forms is rapidly becoming a national curse. An undoubted remedy has been discovered by Dr. Hartman. This remedy has been thoroughly tested during the past forty years. Prominent men have come to know of its virtues and are making public utterances on the subject. To save the country we must save the people. To save the people we must protect them from disease. The disease that is at once the most prevalent and stubborn of cure is catarrh. Pulver men of all parties recognize in Peruna a national catarrh remedy of unequalled merit. Send to Dr. Hartman, Columbus, Ohio, for a free book on catarrh.

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