

Theatrical Fraternal

THE CADET GIRL.

Local show goes over visit Poll's this evening are pretty sure to see in "The Cadet Girl" the most splendid presentation of musical comedy ever given on the local stage.

THROUGH THE BREAKERS.

Owen Davis's beautiful melodrama, "Through the Breakers," will be given its final presentation at the Jacques this evening.

LULU GLASER.

Pretty Lulu Glaser will undoubtedly prove a popular attraction when she appears to-morrow evening at Poll's in her new opera, "Sweet Anne Page."

She is undoubtedly the most magnetic of all the operatic comedienne, having that indispensable quality of drawing an audience into close harmony with herself that is one of the most desirable gifts of a theatrical artist.

THE BOWERY AFTER DARK.

The attractive melodrama, "The Bowery After Dark," will be the attraction at the Jacques on Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

THE CRACKER JACKS.

Bobby Manchester's noted Cracker Jacks will be at Poll's Friday and Saturday, giving a special matinee on Saturday.

MEETINGS TO-NIGHT.

Winona lodge, D. of R. Eureka chapter, R. A. M. Toantik tribe, I. O. R. M. Court Fruitful Vine, F. of A. Mattatuck lodge, N. E. O. P. Court Fruitful Vine, O. U. F. M. Excelsior council, O. U. F. M. Court Richard Wagner, F. of A. Waterbury Company, No. 20, U. R. K. P.

COMING EVENTS.

St Michael's hall, Waterville, November 17-St Michael's church fair, 18 Leavenworth hall, Wednesday, November 21-Women's club lecture course, Mrs. Perry, "Thackeray," at the Poll's, Thursday, November 22-18 Leavenworth hall, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, November 22-24-Boston after school assembly hall, Monday, November 26-Concert of the Waterville girls' club, benefit of the girls' club, at the girls' club, Tuesday, November 27.

THE STURGIS WAGER A DETECTIVE STORY.

By EDGAR MORETTE. Copyright, 1899, by Frederick A. Stokes Co.

"I beg to suggest," remarked Dunlap, "that the shots heard by the policeman and his prisoner were not fired from the inside of the bank."

"It appears quite likely," admitted Murdock, "but they must at any rate have been fired in close proximity to the bank, since the witnesses agree that they appeared to come from inside. In that case, whence were they fired? By whom? And why? On the whole, my little puzzle does not seem to me so ill chosen. What is your own opinion, Mr. Sturgis?"

"I quite agree with you that the problem is probably not so simple as it seemed at first," said Sturgis. "Very well. Then doubtless you are willing to undertake the task of supplying whatever data may be required to complete the chain of evidence against Quinan?"

"By no means," replied Sturgis, decidedly. "Indeed? Ah! well, of course, if Mr. Sturgis wishes to withdraw his bet—" "I do not wish to withdraw my bet," said Sturgis; "I will agree to solve your problem within 30 days or to forfeit my stakes; but I cannot undertake to prove the truth or falsity of any personal knowledge of the matter as yet, and therefore no theory."

"Quite so," observed Murdock, ironically. "I had forgotten your scientific methods. Of course, it may turn out that it was the policeman who stole the satchel from Shorty Duff."

"Perhaps," answered Sturgis, imperceptibly. "Well, gentlemen," said he, "I accept Mr. Sturgis's conditions. If you are willing," he continued, turning to the reporter, "you must will hold the stakes and decide the wager."

"I, for one, agree with Sprague," said Dr. Thurston. "I am disappointed in the problem. I have seen Sturgis unravel some extremely puzzling tangles in my day; and each case would not be hard to find. Why, no longer ago than this evening, on our way here, we stumbled upon a most peculiar case—oh—oh—please pass the cognac, Sprague. I wish I had some like it in my cellar; it is worth its weight in gold."

Dr. Thurston had met Sturgis's steady gaze and had understood that, for some reason or other, the reporter did not wish him to relate their adventure of the afternoon.

Only one person appeared to notice the abrupt termination of his story. This was Murdock, who had looked up at the speaker with mild curiosity, and who had also intercepted the reporter's warning glance at his friend. He observed Dr. Thurston narrowly for a full minute, appeared to enjoy his clumsy effort to cover his retreat, and then quietly sipped his coffee.

CHAPTER IV. THE BANK PRESIDENT.

Sprague's dinner party was over, and among the first to take their leave, shortly after midnight, were Dunlap, Sturgis and Dr. Thurston.

The reporter did not often spend an evening in worldly dissipation. He was a man of action, a hard worker and an enthusiastic student. Almost all of the time which was not actually spent in the pursuit of his profession, was devoted to study in many widely different fields of art and science.

For Sturgis's ideal of his profession was high; he held that almost every form of knowledge was essential to success in his line of work. It was seldom, therefore, that he allowed himself to spend a precious evening in social intercourse, unless as a more or less direct means to some end. He had made an exception in favor of Sprague's dinner, and his meeting with Dunlap, whom he had not previously known, had been entirely accidental.

Dunlap was, however, a man whom Sturgis needed to see in the course of his study of the Knickerbocker bank mystery, and he had not lost the opportunity which chance had placed in his way. After obtaining an introduction to the bank president, the reporter had sought an occasion to speak with him in private; and, as this did not present itself during the course of the evening, he had timed his departure so that it should coincide with that of Dunlap. Dr. Thurston had followed his friend's lead.

"Are you going down to the bank this evening, Mr. Dunlap?" asked Sturgis, as the trio faced the bleak wind. "I? No. Why should I?" inquired the banker, in apparent surprise.

"I see no particular reason why you should," replied the reporter. "If to-day were a banking day, there would be no time to lose. But since it is New Year's day, there is little, if any, chance of the trail being disturbed; and it will be much easier to find it in broad daylight than by the gaslight. Our friends of the central office are usually pretty clever in discovering at least the more evident clues in a case of this sort, even when they have not the ability to correctly interpret them. And since they have completely failed in their search to-night, we must anticipate a more than ordinarily difficult puzzle."

"Why, Mr. Sturgis," said Dunlap, somewhat anxiously. "You talk as though you really believed that some mysterious crime has been committed at the bank."

"I do not know enough about the case as yet to advance any positive belief in the matter," said Sturgis; "but if we assume as correct the circumstances related in the article which Dr. Murdock read to us this evening, they certainly present an extraordinary aspect."

look farther into the matter yourself. I beg you will at least authorize me to make a survey of the field by daylight in the morning."

Dunlap looked anything but pleased as the reporter spoke these words. He thought before replying. "Frankly, Mr. Sturgis," he said, at length, with studied courtesy, "I will not conceal the fact that what you ask places me in a rather awkward position. You are a friend of my friend Sprague, and my personal intercourse with you this evening has been pleasant enough to make me hope that, in the future, I may be so fortunate as to include you in my own circle of acquaintances. Therefore, on personal grounds, it would give me great pleasure to grant your request. But, on the other hand, you are a journalist and I am a banker; and it is with banks as with nations—happy that which has no history. Capital is proverbially timid, you know."

"I see," said Sturgis; "you fear that the reputation of the Knickerbocker bank may suffer if the mystery of the pistol shots is solved."

"No, no, my dear sir; not at all, not at all. You quite misunderstood me," replied the banker, with just a shade of warmth. "It is not a question of the bank's credit, exactly, since there has been neither robbery nor defalcation; but depositors do not like to see the name of their bank mentioned in the newspapers; they take fright at once. Depositors are most unreasonable beings, Mr. Sturgis; they are liable to become panic-stricken on the most insignificant provocation; and then they run amuck like mad sheep. The Knickerbocker bank does not fear any run that might ever be made upon it. Its credit stands on too secure a foundation for that. But nevertheless a run on a bank is expensive, Mr. Sturgis, very expensive."

"The bank's affairs being in so satisfactory a condition," observed the reporter, "it seems to me that what ever harm publicity is likely to do has already been done. The imaginations of your depositors are now at work sapping the foundation of the Knickerbocker bank. If the truth cannot injure its credit, it can only strengthen it; and to withhold the truth under the circumstances is to invite suspicion."

Dunlap did not appear to like the turn the conversation was taking. He walked along in silence for a few minutes, irresolute. At length he seemed to make up his mind. "Perhaps you are right after all, Mr. Sturgis. At any rate we have nothing to conceal from the public. If you will be at the bank to-morrow morning at nine o'clock, I shall be pleased to meet you there."

Sturgis nodded his acquiescence. "Well, gentlemen, here is my street," continued the banker. "Good evening, good evening."

"Whither are you bound now, Thurston?" asked the reporter, as the friends resumed their walk. "Home and to bed like a sensible fellow," replied the physician. "Don't you do anything of the sort. Come along with me to my rooms. I must arrange the data so far collected in the two interesting cases that I have taken up to-day; and in the cab mystery, at least, you can probably be of assistance to me, if you will."

Very well, old man; lead on. I am curious to know what theories you have adopted in these two cases."

"Theories!" replied Sturgis; "I never adopt theories. I simply ascertain facts and arrange them in their proper sequence, as far as possible. When this arrangement is successfully accomplished, the history of the crime is practically completed. Detection of crime is an exact science. Here, as in all other sciences, the imagination has an important part to play, but that part consists in coordinating and interpreting facts. The solid foundation of facts must invariably come first."

CHAPTER V. A FOUNDATION OF FACTS.

When the two men were comfortably settled in the reporter's study, Sturgis produced pipes, tobacco and writing materials. "There, now," said he, as he prepared to write, "I begin with what I shall call the Cab Mystery. The data in this case are already plentiful and curious. I shall read you a few, and you can interrupt for suggestions and criticisms, as the points occur to you. In the first place, the dead man is about fifty years old, and was employed in some commercial house or financial institution, probably bookkeeper, at a fairly good salary."

"Hold on there, Sturgis," laughed Thurston. "I thought you were going to write, 'I begin with what I shall call the Cab Mystery. The data in this case are already plentiful and curious. I shall read you a few, and you can interrupt for suggestions and criticisms, as the points occur to you. In the first place, the dead man is about fifty years old, and was employed in some commercial house or financial institution, probably bookkeeper, at a fairly good salary.'"

"No, I searched every inch of space in which it might have fallen. I had been there I should have found it, for the spot was brilliantly lighted by an electric light, as you remember."

"The physician pondered in silence for a few minutes. "With all due respect for the accuracy of your observations, and for the rigorous logic of your inductions, Sturgis," he asserted at last with decision, "I am positive that the man died seated, for his limbs stiffened in the position."

"Yes," granted Sturgis, "and for that matter, I grant you that he breathed his last in the cab; for in his death struggles he clutched in his left hand the cushion of the cab window, a piece of which remained in his dying grasp. I merely said that he was not shot in the cab."

"Then how did he get there?" asked the reporter. "Your question is premature, my dear fellow," replied Sturgis, smiling; "it must remain unanswered for the present. All we have established as yet is that he did get there. And that being the case, he must have been assisted; for, wounded as he was, he could not, I take it, have climbed into the cab by himself."

"Certainly not," agreed Thurston. "I proceed with the arrangement of my data."

"Secondly: the man in the cab died of a wound caused by a bullet fired at very close quarters. Indeed, the weapon must have been held either against the victim's body, or, at any rate, very near to it; for the coat is badly burned by the powder."

"On these points at least," assented Dr. Thurston, "I can agree with you. The bullet probably penetrated the upper lobe of the left lung."

"No. Your hypothesis is untenable. A clerk behind a counter occasionally, it is true, leans upon his forearms. But incessant contact with the counter leaves across the front of his trousers an unmistakable line of wear, at a level varying according to the height of the individual. This line was not present in the case of the man in the cab. On the other hand, his waistcoat is frayed at the level of the fourth button from the top. Therefore I maintain that he was in the habit of working at a desk. Now the trousers, although not new, are not baggy at the knees, though free from the seams which would suggest the effect of pressing or of a trouser stretcher. Conclusion, the desk is a high one; for the man stood at his work. Most men who work standing at high desks are bookkeepers of one kind or another. Therefore, as I said before, this man was probably a bookkeeper. Now, as to his salary; I do not pretend to know the exact amount of it, of course. But when a man, who was evidently not a duke, has his clothes made to order, of imported material, and when his linen, his hat and his shoes are of good quality, it is fair to infer that the man's income was comfortable."

"I proceed with the arrangement of my data."

"Secondly: the man in the cab died of a wound caused by a bullet fired at very close quarters. Indeed, the weapon must have been held either against the victim's body, or, at any rate, very near to it; for the coat is badly burned by the powder."

"On these points at least," assented Dr. Thurston, "I can agree with you. The bullet probably penetrated the upper lobe of the left lung."

"Yes," added Sturgis, "and it passed out at the back, far below where it went in."

"What makes you think it passed out? The wound in the back may have been caused by another bullet fired from the rear."

"That hypothesis might be tenable were it not for this."

With these words the reporter pulled out his watch, opened the case, and with the blade of a penknife took from the surface of the crystal a minute object, which he handed to the physician. "Look at it," said he, pushing over a magnifying glass.

Dr. Thurston examined the object carefully. "A splinter of bone," he said, at last. "Yes, I found it on the surface of the wound in the back. How did it get there?"

"You are right," admitted the physician; "it must have come from within, chipped from a rib and carried out by the bullet which entered from the front."

"I think there can be no doubt as to that. Now, the bullet does not seem to have been deflected in its course by its contact with the rib, for, as far as I have been able to judge by probing the two wounds with my pencil, their direction is the same. This is important and brings me to a point three, which is illustrated by these diagrams, drawn to scale from the measurements I took this afternoon."

As he said these words, the reporter handed to his friend a sheet of paper upon which he had drawn some geometrical figures.

"The first of these diagrams shows the angle which the course of the bullet made with a horizontal plane; the second represents the inclination from right to left. The former of these angles is the same. This is important from forty-five degrees. The inclination from right to left shows that the shot was fired from the right side of the dead man. Now then, one of two things: Either it was fired by the man himself, the weapon being held in his right hand; or else it was fired by an assassin who stood close to the victim's right side. The first of these hypotheses, considered by itself, is admissible; but it involves the assumption of an extremely awkward and unusual position of the assailant's hand while firing. On the other hand, the dead man is tall—six feet one inch—and to fire down, at an angle of sixty degrees, upon a man of his height, his assailant would have to be a colossus, or else to stand upon a chair or in some equally elevated position, unless the victim happened to be seated when the shot was fired."

"Happened to be seated!" exclaimed Thurston, astounded, "why, of course he was seated, since he was in the cab."

"That brings up point four, which is not the least puzzling of this interesting case," said Sturgis, impressively; "the shooting was not done in the cab."

"Not done in the cab!" "No; otherwise the bullet would have remained in the cushions; and it was not there."

"It might have fallen out into the street at the time of the collision," suggested Thurston.

"No; I searched every inch of space in which it might have fallen. I had been there I should have found it, for the spot was brilliantly lighted by an electric light, as you remember."

"The physician pondered in silence for a few minutes. "With all due respect for the accuracy of your observations, and for the rigorous logic of your inductions, Sturgis," he asserted at last with decision, "I am positive that the man died seated, for his limbs stiffened in the position."

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LULU GLASER



"HOLD ON THERE, STURGIS."