A SCIENTIST'S CRIME.

Murder In the Laboratory of Harvard Medical College.

THE WEBSTER-PARKMAN TRAGEDY.

A Crime That Created Intense and Widespread Excitement In 1849 on Account of the High Social Standing of the Murderer and His Victim.

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Forty-six years ago and for nearly two centuries prior to that time, as indeed to this day, there are no names better known in New England than those of Parkman and Webster. Both families have added to the glory of our country's history through the statesmen, orators, lawyers and scientists they have given to the public.

The two members of these two great families in whom we are most interested are Professor Webster of Harvard university and Dr. George Parkman, each well known in his day—the one for his great wealth and the other for his intellectual qualifications.

There are men still living who can remember this celebrated case. Crimes equally atrocious were committed before and have been committed since, but the standing of these men makes this case one of the most remarkable in the history of crime.

On Nov. 23, 1849, Professor Webster was charged with the murder of Dr. Parkman on the following counts: 1. Charging Webster with the murder of Parkman with a knife. 2. The murdering of Parkman with a hammer. 3. The murder of Parkman by striking and beating with implements unknown. 4. Murdering Parkman by means unknown to the jurors.

In this trial the court sat 11 days, and 115 witnesses were examined. At that time, under the laws of Massachusetts, a prisoner could not testify, so that during the trial the lips of the accused were sealed.

In order that the readers of the later generation may the better understand this remarkable case it will be in order to give brief biographical sketches of the principals in this historic tragedy.

George Parkman was born in Boston in 1791. He graduated at Harvard in 1809 and three years afterward took a degree in medicine at the University of Aberdeen, in Scotland. A scholar by inclination, his large wealth gave him no incentive to practice his profession, and so he devoted his life to his library and the care of his property. He was a slender, delicate man, and although only 5 feet 10 inches in height looked much taller because of his narrow shoulders and hollow chest. His brother, the Rev. Francis Parkman, was for nearly a generation pastor of the well known New North church, in Boston, where Professor Webster and his family attended. These men were uncles to the famous American historian, Francis Parkman, who died in 1895.

John White Webster was born in Boston in 1793 and took his bachelor degree at Harvard in 1811 and his doctor's degree at the same university in 1815. He was a man of marked intelligence, scholarly inclinations and recognized ability. In 1824, when only 31 years of age, Webster was appointed lecturer on chemistry, mineralogy and geology at Harvard college. At the age of 32 he published a manual of chemistry, and to this important study he devoted the rest of his life. He belonged to many learned societies in the United States and Europe, and to all who knew him his high character and polished manners made him one of the most agreeable companions. Subsequently, when the great shadow fell upon his life, it was recalled by his friends that he was frequently irritable, and that when at all provoked had a most violent if not a dangerous temper.

For many years Professor Webster and Dr. Parkman were warm friends. Webster was married, and his family increased rapidly, and his compensation being small, as compared with his wants, he ran into debt. In 1842 Dr. Parkman loaned Webster $400, for which he took a note payable with interest in 15 months. That Parkman was a careful man of business is shown by the fact that he secured this note by a mortgage on Professor Webster's household furniture and collection of minerals. Up to 1847 Dr. Webster had been able to pay on this note but little more than $50 and the interest. At that time Dr. Parkman joined with some other friends in making another loan to Professor Webster for an additional $1,600, making the whole with interest, $2,432. This note was protected by a similar mortgage.

HE COULD HEAR SOMEBODY MOVING ABOUT.

Professor Webster with increasing responsibilities, although his habits were good, found as the time went on that he not only could not meet the principal, but had great difficulty in paying the interest on this increased obligation.

Dr. Parkman, forgetting their old friendship and thinking only of the money that was due him, now began to make frequent visits to Professor Webster's office, urging him to pay, and at last intimating that he was not being treated fairly.

At this time Professor Webster was lecturing every day to the chemistry class in Harvard college. On Nov. 20, 1849, Parkman called on Webster at the lecture room before the lecture was over. Waiting impatiently till the last of the students was gone, in the most violent manner he demanded that the professor should pay him. Webster, nervous and irritable, ordered Parkman from his office, and the latter refusing to go, a stormy interview followed.

It was noticed after this that Webster became morose and talked to himself in walking along the streets and in his own house. On Friday, Nov. 23, Webster called at Dr. Parkman's house and invited him to come to his lecture room at half past 1 that day. It seems that Dr. Parkman accepted this invitation, for he was never seen alive again.

That day Professor Webster lectured from 12 to 1 and was succeeded by the celebrated Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, who lectured from 1 till 2. A number of people who knew Dr. Parkman by sight claim that they saw him approach the medical college about 1 o'clock that day. The evidence of these people was not certain, and the person on whose statements the further movements of Dr. Parkman were based was the servant who gave him Professor Webster's message.

After Dr. Holmes had closed his lecture that day the janitor of the building started to put the various rooms in order. For the first time in his memory he found all the doors leading to Professor Webster's laboratory locked. He could hear somebody moving about inside and water running into the sink. At half past 5 o'clock Professor Webster was seen to come down from his lecture room. He went directly to his home at Cambridge, where he was a little before 6 o'clock, and took supper with his family. He escorted his two daughters to a house party near by, and then he and his wife went for a visit to Professor Treadwell's. There were a number of noted persons present, all of whom remembered afterward that Professor Webster's manner was quiet and natural, and that he entered with great heartiness into the conversation and entertainments of the evening.

"THAT IS WHERE I KEEP MY DANGEROUS ARTICLES."

As Dr. Parkman did not return to his home Friday evening his family were alarmed. On Saturday a search was begun. That day the janitor of the medical college, Littlefield, was puzzled by finding some doors locked that he had left unlocked and some unlocked that he had bolted. While he was wondering about this Professor Webster arrived and told the janitor to light a fire in the laboratory stove, and that he would not need him for the rest of the day.

In the meantime the Boston police were searching for Dr. Parkman, and a description of his person was published in all the afternoon papers. That evening Professor Webster reached home at the usual hour, and on this occasion he brought with him a copy of Milton's "Penseroso," from which he read to his family after supper.

The next day, Sunday, Professor Webster went to Boston, and met Mr. Blake, a nephew of Dr. Parkman, with whom he sympathized on the disappearance of his uncle, and described what was said in his last interview with him.

On Monday, Nov. 26, public excitement had reached a feverish pitch, and not only Boston, but all New England and the country where news could reach were stirred over the story of the missing man. It was generally supposed that he had disappeared because of some sudden aberration of mind, and a reward of $3,000 was offered for information that would lead to his discovery. This continued for several days, during which time it was noticed, because it was unusual, that Professor Webster remained much alone in his laboratory, keeping the doors locked, but in the meantime he had admitted as visitors the brother and nephew of the missing man.

Nov. 27 was Thanksgiving day, and in the morning, with his customary forethought, Professor Webster gave Littlefield, the janitor, an order for a turkey.

At 10 o'clock that night the police, aided by the janitor, made a search of that part of the college devoted to the medical school. They knocked at Professor Webster's room, and to their surprise found him in. They were admitted. The officer in charge told Professor Webster, whom he did not suspect, that their orders were to search the medical school thoroughly. The professor said he would be glad to help him, but asked that they overturn nothing which would interfere with his lectures of the following day.

The officers were about to enter a small room when Professor Webster, with a smile, said:

"You can go in, but that is where I keep my dangerous articles, and I warn you."

They then went down to the laboratory, and as they neared Professor Webster's private closet the officer in charge asked what it was. Before the professor could explain the janitor had told the purpose of the apartment and had produced the key. The door was opened, and one of the officers noticed a tea chest standing on the floor. No comments were made, and the officers departed, while Professor Webster went home and that evening played whist with his family.

On the morning of Nov. 28 Professor Webster came earlier than usual to his rooms at the college, and the janitor could hear that he seemed to be very busy inside, while, on trying the doors, he found them to be locked. The janitor, who seems to have been a shrewd, observing man, discovered, by feeling the walls, that the furnace fires in the laboratory were hotter than he could see any reason for.

Finding he could not get into Professor Webster's rooms through the ordinary avenues, the janitor, waiting till Webster had gone, succeeded in making an entrance through an outside window. Although he did not suspect the professor of any connection with the disappearance of Dr. Parkman, he at once began a thorough examination on his own account. His attention was attracted by a number of blood stained splotches on the floor of the laboratory. Yet these impressed him so little that he went to a dancing party that night.

Littlefield went home, but not to sleep. His mind troubled him. He had read the sensational stories in the Boston papers, and he was impressed with the idea that a murder had been committed in that part of the college of which he had charge.

Littlefield, who never for an instant suspected Professor Webster, talked with him about the missing man, whom he now believed to be murdered. Webster laughed down his fears, assuring him that Dr. Parkman would soon turn up all right.

There were no lectures on Saturday aft-

MONEY NO OBJECT.

When It Allowed Telling Henry Clay the Sort of Partner He Was.

"One of my boyhood recollections," said General Wade Hampton, "refers to Henry Clay. He was a frequent visitor at my father's house in South Carolina. Both Clay and my father were ardent whist players, and nothing was more to their minds than the collection of a brace of gentlemen equally addicted to whist, and then the quartet would play for hours. While the name of whist might serve to imply a game where silence reigned, my father and Clay didn't play whist that way. They exulted audibly over a success, and did not hesitate when they were playing as partners to violently point out mistakes the other had made and attributed defeat to the other's ignorance and utter lack of natural intelligence. Indeed, on occasions particularly trying, they were even known to apply hard names to one another. This they did in no slanderous spirit, but to brighten up and sharpen the wits of the other to the improvements of his play. As they were sitting down to a game as partners one evening Clay remarked:

"'It's a great outrage the way we talk to each other, and my idea now, at the outset, is for each of us to put up $20, to belong to the one who is first called hard names by the other. If you assail me, the money is mine; if I forget myself, you take it.'

"My father readily agreed. He felt in a mild, agreeable mood. He was confident he would never again be a prey to the slightest impulse to speak harshly to his dear friend Clay. And, besides, it was his recollection that Clay was the man who raged and did the loud talking. So my father cheerfully placed the $20 on top of Clay's. He thought it would be a good lesson to the blue grass orator to lose it. As they proceeded with the game Clay made some excessively thick headed and ill advised plays. He led the wrong cards; he trumped the wrong tricks; he did everything idiotic in whist that he well could. My father's blood began to boil. As he and Clay lost game after game his wrath ran higher and higher. Still he bit his lip and suffered in silence. It went on for hours, until Clay made some play of crowning imbecility which lost him and my father the eleventh game. Flesh and blood could stand no more. My father sternly pushed the $40 over to Clay.

"'Why,' said Clay, opening his gray eyes with a look of innocence and amazement, 'why do you do that? You haven't said a word.'

"'No,' retorted my father, 'but I'm going to tell you, sir, that you are the most abject idiot, the most boundless imbecile that ever dealt a hand at whist. Yes, sir; I repeat it, you are the —— fool I ever met in my life.'"—Chicago Times-Herald.