



CHAPTER XXXIV. THE CRIME OF THE BROKER'S OFFICE.

CHAPTER XXXIV. THE CRIME OF THE BROKER'S OFFICE. While I escaped through a rear exit. "After my escape, I tried in vain to learn what had become of Marion. "Before I knew that the money paid to Pratt and Weeks by my father was marked, I gave Marion a ten-dollar note from the money I had received from the men who betrayed me. "By Levi Kredge I had previously sent Marion a photograph of myself, taken while I was in disguise, so that she would know me when we met. "With this Reid Oakburn was silent. The mystery of Marion's connection with the supposed assassin, and as to how she came by the marked bank note which she had changed at the little shop where Faxton received it, was explained. "Who do you suspect is your father's murderer?" asked Faxton. "Levi Kredge!" answered Reid Oakburn in a tone of conviction. "Why so?" "Because he was flush of money after the murder, and it was not marked money he had. I think he robbed my father's little private safe, after killing the old gentleman. "The detective questioned Reid Oakburn further, but nothing worthy of record was elicited after that, and the interview was out short by the arrival of one of Faxton's agents, with a note from the villainous janitor, who requested him to come to his cell as soon as possible, as he had decided to make a confession. "Will he confess the murder? How will the mystery be explained?" wondered Faxton. He felt that the denouement was surely near at hand, and he hastened without the least delay to the Tombs, where Levi Kredge was confined. As soon as he was in Kredge's cell the janitor began: "I am going to make a clean breast of the job. I don't want to be put on trial for John Oakburn's murder. "You've come to your senses at last. "Yes; now listen. On the night of John Oakburn's death, I entered the office through the rear window where you found my tracks. I had found out that John Oakburn kept a large sum of money in his little safe, and having a duplicate key to it, I meant to rob it. I had entered the office, after forcing open the blinds and raising the window, and had robbed the safe and locked it up again just as I had found it after securing the money, nearly eighty thousand dollars, on my person, when suddenly John Oakburn entered the outer office. I had only time to hide behind a desk when he came into the interior office, and hastily unlocked his little private safe. I shall never forget the cry of agony he uttered when he discovered that the safe had been robbed. He reeled into the outer office and fell into a chair. The old man had paid the seventy-eight thousand dollars he drew from the bank that afternoon, and which belonged to Garrison, to save a scapegrace son of his from arrest. Pratt and Weeks had captured that son, and to them John Oakburn paid Garrison's money, intending to replace it with the money which was in his little safe. I remember the way the old man muttered as he sat there after he discovered the loss of his money. "I am ruined, I am an embezzler, I have appropriated my employer's money to my own use, I have betrayed a sacred trust. I have kept it a secret that I had saved a large sum of money, and that it was in my little safe. My story will not be credited. I will not live to suffer this awful disgrace, I whose one wish was to live an honest man, and dying leave a spotless reputation. I will die by my own hand. "It was like that he went on, I almost remember his exact words. Then he seized a pen and began to write, I watched him breathlessly, and bad as I am, I resolved to save his life, to prevent his committing suicide. When he had written for some time, he came to his safe again, and took out a pistol. He carried the weapon out into the outer office, and I heard him say: "I will kill myself in ten minutes. "I saw him sit down, pistol in hand, and watch the clock. The time was almost up, and was about to rush out and disarm him, when he threw down the pistol saying, "I am afraid. "I saw that he trembled from head to foot. After that he paced the room for a moment or so, but finally he picked up the pen and wrote a few lines. Then as if he had decided, he picked up the pistol again. "I cannot face the weapon. The sight of the pistol unnerves me. If I could not see, I might have the nerve to pull the trigger. Then he took up the pistol once more, opened a drawer and took out a ball of twine. Tying one end of the twine to the trigger of the pistol, after cocking it he placed the weapon in a bracket at the side of the door, where there had been a lamp; and with the cord in his hand walked back to the table. Before I could prevent it, and before I fully comprehended what he intended to do he pulled the string attached to the trigger, the weapon, which was an air pistol, was discharged without report, and Oakburn fell dead, shot through the back of the head. In his fall he overturned the table. I sprang forward and secured the paper which he had written, for I surmised it was a statement that he had committed suicide. Then I left the office as I had entered it, taking care to close the window and the blinds behind me. I had an idea that the outside's last written words might

CHAPTER XXXV. At last the secret of John Oakburn's fate was revealed. The unfortunate man had not been murdered, but he had committed suicide. "In proof of the truth of what I have told, I'll show you the paper Oakburn wrote just before he shot himself. Will one of you gentlemen loan me a knife? I sewed the document up in the lining of my coat, so that I could not possibly lose it," said Kredge. Faxton gave him a pocket-knife, and ripping the lining of his coat, he drew forth a written paper and handed it to the detective, who read it. The contents of the paper read as follows: To my beloved daughter Marion and my respected employer, Jason Garrison; To save my only son from a cruel fate, I paid the money I drew from the bank today, \$78,000, to Pratt & Weeks, intending to replace it with the money which I have saved, and which I had locked up in my private safe. After thus appropriating the money that did not belong to me, I found my safe had been robbed, and all my money taken. I cannot live to face my disgrace. Let no man be accused of my murder. To the care of the good Lord I commend my daughter, whom I love, and it is my prayer that she may believe that I am unfortunate, not dishonored. (Signed) JOHN OAKBURN. That this letter had been written by John Oakburn there could be no doubt. "I was, indeed, on a false trail, but the fact that the shot which killed Oakburn was clearly fired from a distance caused every one to exclude the possibility of suicide from the case," said Faxton. The detective began to think the mystery of Marion's conduct was cleared up. "To shield her father's memory from dishonor and disgrace, the noble girl, who must have first discovered her father's theft when Stuart Harland saw her stealthily leaving the office, removed the pistol with which he killed himself, and destroyed every evidence that might point to suicide, so that the impression might be given that he had been murdered and robbed. She is a true heart. She was, indeed, inspired by a noble purpose," said Faxton. "You have stated the truth, I firmly believe," said Stanmore. "Yes, you have hit it at last. Marion Oakburn is as innocent as you are. As you say, she wanted to save her father's memory from dishonor," said Kredge. "But what about the money you stole? You haven't told us where to find that," said the detective. "I've spent about three thousand dollars of it, and the rest is hid. It's safe, you can bet on that. Don't fret about it. I mean to make a bargain with you," answered the scoundrel, with a cunning leer. "In what way?" "Promise me I'll be discharged and I'll give up the money." "We'll see about that," said Faxton. "Yes; Marion must be consulted," said Stanmore. "I reckon the girl will be glad to consent to let up on me when she knows of the money," said Kredge. "Now you understand my remarks which puzzled you heretofore, I take it," he replied. "Perfectly," replied Faxton, and accompanied by Stanmore he soon left the prison. After this, some days elapsed, and then to Stanmore's inexpressible joy, Marion's malady took a favorable turn. The physician declared the crisis passed, and he gave Stanmore the assurance that Marion would recover. As soon as she was sufficiently recovered to warrant it, Stanmore told Marion of the confession made by Pratt and Weeks, and by Levi Kredge, the janitor. "We understand the mystery of your conduct now. You meant that your father's memory should be shielded. When you knew that he appropriated Garrison's money and committed suicide, you determined that the world should believe he had been robbed and murdered," he said. "Yes, that is the explanation. But I must tell you all. On the night of my father's death, I became alarmed at his absence, and without disturbing any one, I descended to the office, thinking it possible he might be there. He sometimes worked in the office in the evening. When I entered the office, I found my father dead. On the floor beside him was a sheet of paper upon which he had written a few lines. I remember them well. They were as follows: "Heaven bear witness that I was in intention innocent, but I have appropriated the seventy-eight thousand dollars belonging to my employer, which I drew from the bank to-day, to my own use. I have decided I shall die by my own hand, but I cannot face the pistol. I shall place it in the bracket of the door and discharge it by means of a string attached to the trigger, while my back is turned. Farewell, Marion, my daughter," said Marion. "Ah, I understand. While Kredge secured the first message written by your father, when he had decided to commit suicide, he did not find the message which you have repeated," said Stanmore. "When I read my dead father's message, I resolved that he should not be branded as a thief, that his memory should be revered, that he should leave behind him the reputation he dearly prized, that of an honest man. "Then I remembered the pistol, secured the ball-tale letter, and stole from my trunk I went to Judith's room, and then we descended together to the office. What ensued you know. "The paper, upon which I depended to prove my innocence when I knew I was suspected as being concerned in my father's death, was his last message. I despaired, when I discovered I had lost it. "When, during the process of Stuart Harland's trial, I became convinced that he would be found guilty, I resolved to bail out, but Judith must have discovered my intentions, I think, for the night I made the resolution that on the follow-

ing day I would come forward with my testimony and save Stuart Harland. I was abducted while unconscious from some anesthetic which had been administered when I slept, and when I awoke I found myself a prisoner in the house of the old woman called Mother Kitts. When, after Reid's escape, I was dragged back to the prison-room from which he had liberated me, I secreted my father's last message, which was concealed in my bosom, in a hole in the wall of the fire-place. Next morning, after a troubled sleep, I looked for the paper and it was gone. Thus Marion explained, and, further, she confirmed Reid's statement that he had deceived her as to his real character. Now that she knew him she despised him, and a fierce desire that he should be punished for having indirectly been the cause of her beloved father's death. The lovers conversed tenderly for some time, and at last Stuart left the bedside of the fair invalid, and sought Paxton the detective, and together they proceeded to the house of Mother Kitts. The fire-place in the room where Marion had been imprisoned was demolished, and there where it had slipped down behind a brick from the aperture, in which Marion had concealed it, John Oakburn's message was discovered. Everything was clear now. Of course the terrible letter which Paxton had received from Judith Kredge purporting to be the confession of the murder made by Marion was a forgery, and that it was such Judith Kredge subsequently acknowledged. Stanmore now revealed himself in proper personality as Donald Wayburn, and since he had the proof that he was an honest man, his friends of other days welcomed him home again. Marion would not consent that the man whose deed had driven her father to suicide should be allowed to go unpunished in consideration of his returning the money he had stolen, and Kredge was sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. Reid Oakburn died of consumption, from which he had long suffered while he was held a prisoner awaiting the action of the Denver authorities. Judith Kredge was obliged to return the money which she had extorted from Marion, and she left New York. Pratt and Weeks also disappeared. Of course Stuart Harland's innocence was proclaimed, and soon after he and Edna Garrison were married. Marion entirely recovered and within a year she became the beloved wife of him whom we have known as Richard Stanmore. Jason Garrison was once more prosperous, thanks to Stanmore's assistance, but he never forgot the terrible lesson taught him by the brigands of Wall street, and to Sanborn's heirs he paid the amount of the forged check. Faxton declared that he would find the money stolen by Kredge, and at last, after encountering many perils, he succeeded in accomplishing his purpose, and Marion's fortune was restored to her. The detective received the reward Stanmore had promised him, and he is to-day the most successful detective in America. True and perfect happiness was the future lot of Marion and her husband, and though her conduct had made her father's fate a great detective mystery, Marion's friends honored the purpose which had actuated her. [THE END.] For two or three years eminent architects have claimed that the definitive type of commercial architecture had been found in what is known as the "Chicago system," namely, a rigid framework of steel forming the pillars, floor joists, and partitions, supporting the roof and upholding the structure without aid from the exterior walls, which are a mere veneer of brick, stone, or terra cotta. Now, however, comes Gen. Sooy Smith, himself an engineer of the highest scientific attainments, and declares that the steel or iron framework must be discarded and solid stone pillars substituted if absolute safety against fire is sought. It is evident that the adoption of Gen. Smith's suggestion would greatly decrease the available area in a building, as the size of the columns necessary to support a given weight will be greater in stone than if they are made of metal. And as owners seek the maximum amount of income-producing space it is likely that the "Chicago system" will be adhered to despite this scientific criticism of its qualities as a fireproof type of construction. Business methods have at last been applied to the work of raising money for the Grant monument in New York. Had this been done seven years ago the monument would now be finished, and a pride to New York instead of a disgrace. That city gave as freely to the fund for the relief of Johnstown as any other in the country. There was method in the management of that fund. There were committees to solicit subscriptions from all departments of trade, and a large amount of money was raised in a very short time. The same method is to be applied to the Grant monument subscription, and, if it be thorough, the different committees ought to raise the money necessary to complete the monument in a few weeks. JONES of Birmingham promises to exhibit at the World's Fair a scale made of mahogany and aluminum. It will be gold-mounted and otherwise got up without regard to expense, and anybody who knows Jones knows that he is able to pay the freight on it.

A \$2,000,000 COUNTRY HOUSE. Mansion of 200 Rooms Overlooking the Hudson. Of all the beautiful country establishments of the wealthy along the Hudson, none can rival the magnificent colonial palace of Mrs. Elliot Shepard, at Scarborough-on-the-Hudson, which has just been finished and fully furnished. The mansion, which contains in the neighborhood of 200 rooms, is built of light pressed-Italian brick and terra cotta. It is situated on high ground, from which the scene is uninterrupted on all sides for miles around. The view of the Hudson and Palisades is unsurpassed. The entrance to the Shepard estate from the public highway are through two artistic gateways formed of carved stone and iron brought from France. On either side of the beautiful drives and embowered walks are fine lawns laid out with huge flower beds and shaded from the sun's glare by many choice American and foreign trees. Massive retaining granite walls encircle the estate, which without the beautiful residence would be an ideal park. The main entrance is recessed and enriched by a portico supported by Corinthian columns, extending in height two stories, surmounted by an entablature and an attic story, the recess forming a dark background, against which the Corinthian columns are beautifully shown. The great verandas, which nearly surround the house, and the beautiful terraces will recall the old Italian villas and gardens. The entrance hall is undoubtedly the chef d'oeuvre of the whole house. This hall and the stairway hall are of Italian marble and hung with rare Gobelin and Italian tapestries. Beautiful staircases, with easy landings, rise to the second floor. The balusters on the stairways were brought from France. All the principal rooms of the house, which are on the first floor, are so arranged that they can be opened into one mammoth room, which can be utilized for any purpose. The living and reception rooms are on the southwest side of the great hall. The latter room is both elegant and handsome. It is finished in Spanish cedar, and the walls are beautifully frescoed with Italian leather. The great fireplace and mantelpiece were imported from an Italian chateau. Golden wall coverings and silken tapestries of the same hue make a rich frame in the salon for the beautiful bric-a-brac, which Mrs. Shepard collected while in Venice and the Holy Land. In the salon there is a mantelpiece over 200 years old. Mrs. Shepard's apartments are on the second floor, as well as all other sleeping apartments. Her rooms are models of beauty. The pale tints of the canoes which adorn the ceilings are in sharp contrast to the beautiful colors of the silk embroideries, which cover like tapestries nearly one-half of the room. On the third floor the guests' chambers are situated. These are finished in white and gold, with private dressing-rooms and baths. Here also are situated the billiard-room, with woodwork of a dark, rich color; the floor and the ceilings are of mosaic. The mansion is lighted by electricity, there being 1,250 lights in the house. The total cost of the house and laying-out of the garden is said to have been \$2,000,000. Struggles With Adversity. The French painter, Bastien Lepage, who died recently, was pursued by unmerciful disaster through his youth in his efforts to study art, says an exchange. His mother worked in the fields to keep that sickly boy at school. At fifteen he went to Paris alone, starved for seven years, painted without success, but still painted. He had just finished a picture to send to the salon when Paris was besieged; and he rushed, with his comrades, to the trenches. On the first day a shell fell into his studio and destroyed his picture and another shell fell at his feet, wounding him. He was carried home, and lay ill and idle for two years. Then he returned to Paris and, reduced to absolute want, painted cheap fans in order to earn a living. One day a manufacturer of some patent medicine ordered a picture from him to illustrate its virtues. Lepage, who was sincere, gave his best work to the advertisement. He painted a landscape in the April sunlight; the leaves of tender green quivered in the breeze; a group of beautiful girls gathered round the fountain from which the elixir of youth sprang in a bubbling stream. Lepage believed there was real merit in it. "Let me offer it to the salon," he said to his patron. The manufacturer was delighted. "But first paint a rainbow arching over the fountain," he said, "with the name of my medicine upon it." Lepage refused. "Then I will not pay you a sou for the picture!" The price of his picture meant bread for months, and the painter had long needed bread. The chance of admission to the salon was small. He hesitated. Then he sketched his luncheon and carried the canvas to the salon. It was admitted. Its great success insured Lepage a place in public recognition, and his later works a place among the greatest living artists.