



MIDNIGHT TRAGEDY. THE CRIME OF THE BROKER'S OFFICE. BY H. MOTT.

CHAPTER I. At the time of the startling occurrence which I have to be recorded, the office of John O'Connell, a broker of New York, was situated in a rather unpretentious structure on Wall street. The broker rented the entire building, but he sublet the second and third stories, occupying only the first story for his own purposes. The building was very old and its interior arrangement was rather obsolete, but to enter the broker's office you first passed into a hall which extended through the building, and thence through a side door, from the hall, the inside of the street door a flight of stairs led upward. At the rear end of the passage a second flight, much more narrow than the first, also reached the second story, while at their foot a door opened upon an alley in the rear. At this door it chanced that the third story over the broker's office was unoccupied, but the second story was tenanted as it had been for many years by John O'Connell, the old cashier, who had been employed by Jason Garrison since he first began business in Wall street years ago. John O'Connell was a man sixty years of age and a widower, but he was not childless. His daughter, Marion, by name, remained to cheer and brighten his home with the sunlight of her presence, and the aged cashier's little family consisted of only a Miss F. and a son, and Judith Krodge, a female domestic of uncertain age, who was the sister of the broker's clerks. The second-floor flat was much too spacious for the needs of the cashier's family, and furnished apartments were consequently let to such of Mr. Garrison's clerks as desired them, provided always they were approved by the old cashier. On the night of the 2d of March, 1897, but one of John O'Connell's furnished apartments was occupied. The room was directly over the main office, and its tenant was Stuart Harland, one of the broker's clerks. The street door was a massive one, as was also the door of the office proper. At night both were always securely locked, and the keys of the office as well as the street door were always in the possession of John O'Connell, who was implicitly trusted by the broker in every way. For twenty years John O'Connell had been celebrated for his rigid integrity and envying, scrupulous honesty, and on the street, where one desired to vouch in the most positive terms for the character of another, he would say, "He is as honest as a gold John O'Connell." Perhaps no man more perfectly deserved the title which he had won, which was far more honorable than any patent of nobility—the title "an honest man." On day at noon a few days previous to the night of which we are about to write, what John O'Connell was alone in the office, having been detained by some important account, an incident occurred which will serve to illustrate the man's character perfectly. Mr. Pratt, of the firm of Pratt & Weeks, entered and approached the old cashier in a cunning way in order to sound him with a view to inducing him to become a director of one of those "penny banks" which were so numerous and originated every year, to induce themselves with the money of the unwary and collapse when such a consummation will result to the profit of the "promoters" without bringing themselves within the reach of the law. John O'Connell listened to the specious arguments of the smooth-tongued whiff of Wall street in passive silence, wholly unmoved by the temptation of sudden wealth held out to him as a glittering bait. When Pratt concluded, John O'Connell turned his back upon him, saying in a soothing tone: "No more of this. I value my honor, sir." "And yet you are a poor man," retorted Pratt with a covert sneer in his voice. "In gold, yes; but not in principle." "Your sentiments are quite romantic and poetical, but this is a practical age of money values." "True; but were I to listen to you I should become a poor in character as I am in pocket." "Our scheme would be a secret. No one would ever know it." "I should know it. No, sir, your scheme is villainous. Seek your confederate elsewhere!" "Such was the man the story of whose fate we place before our readers. It was the night of the 2d of March, 1897. Stuart Harland, the young clerk who occupied the apartment directly over the broker's office in John O'Connell's flat, had fallen asleep in his bed without removing his clothing. Suddenly he leaped up, wide awake, and exclaimed: "What! Have I overslept? and glancing at an alarm clock set to ring at one o'clock, he added, "The clock has not struck; it is now only twenty minutes of one." Stuart Harland rubbed his eyes and looked perplexed. "What awakened me? Certainly it was some unusual sound. I have a confused recollection of hearing a loud voice," he thought, and seated upon the side of the bed he listened for a moment. No sound broke the absolute quietude of the night within the dwelling. From without the sighing wind wafted to his ears the account of a great city which are never hushed to alleviate the living night. "Strange, this! Could I have been dreaming? Well, it matters not, I am awake in time; that is the important point," the young man reflected. Then he began to pace a few steps in a light traveling-bag, and as he did so

door, and Marion O'Connell emerged from her sleeping-room, gliding forth stealthily. In her hand she carried the lamp as before, but the paper and the metal something from which the light had glided when Harland saw her was no longer in her possession. For a moment she stood motionless as a statue, while she noted how extremely beautiful she is. Marion O'Connell possessed a form above the average height of women, which might have been the idea of a French sculptor, and her rare beauty and levelness was unsurpassed. Here was the dark and radiant beauty of Egypt's queen, but Cleopatra did not rival her, and Marion's eyes sparkled with the light of a pure heart and a noble nature. But there was an expression of sadness upon her perfect features—a look of melancholy that was pitiful, and it led one to think that sorrow had entered her young life; that in the heart of the beautiful girl there was some blighting grief. And yet Marion was ever cheerful, as though sustained by sorrow's pale star.—hope. Marion O'Connell was twenty-four years of age, and her form in the full bloom and perfect development of a glorious womanhood. As she stood at the door of her bedroom listening, she detected no breath of the alarm, and so she glided about the passage to the back stairs noiselessly and as near the lower hall. There she passed directly to the office door, which she unlocked, and, removing the key, she proceeded to the street entrance. She discovered that the bolts were drawn, and that only the night-latch secured it. Marion's mind started at this, and she stood for a moment trembling slightly, but she was not to be deterred in her quest. As though in deep thought, if she was mentally debating some question, she arrived at a conclusion almost instantly, for with a hand that no longer trembled she unlocked the street door. Then leaving the entrance to the office unguarded by her, she stepped to the rear stairs, which she ascended. Half way up she caught the handle of a revolver in a cupboard and hurriedly secured it. She then descended the stairs to the hall above. She did not hear the sound of a key, and believing she was deceived by her imagination she continued up the stairs. Her eyes had penetrated the dark passage he passed upon the stairs she would have seen the dark face of Judith Krodge, the female domestic, peering down at her from the passage above. When she reached the landing Marion saw no one, but she did not return to her own apartment. On the contrary she went to the door of the sleeping-room occupied by Judith Krodge. Marion knocked, and a moment subsequently the woman who had not played the part of a spy, opened the door. "What is it, Miss Marion? You are not in a hurry, is it?" she said, in a surprised and polite tone. "No; I am not, but I cannot sleep. Father has not come home. I have vainly tried and for his footsteps on the stairs at night. What can keep him out so late? Oh, I fear some misfortune has befallen him." "Perhaps he has returned and entered the office as he sometimes does, after business hours. Do you not remember he once fell asleep here and remained almost all night before he awoke? Shall we go down and see?" "Yes, why did I not think of that before, I wonder, Judith." The woman's eyes glided intelligently, but she made no answer. She was accompanied Marion down the front stairs. They reached the office door and opened it. Marion entered first, lamp in hand, and Judith Krodge came also behind her. They had scarcely crossed the threshold when they recoiled, and Marion uttered a cry of horror. A terrible sight met their eyes. "My father has been murdered!" gasped Marion in an awful tone. CHAPTER II. Marion and her companion, Judith Krodge, saw John O'Connell prone upon the floor beside a small writing table which had been overturned. He had fallen face downward and blood had trickled down the side of his neck and formed a pool upon the white floor beside his head. For a moment Marion seemed about to faint and she clung to Judith Krodge dumb with horror, while her blood seemed turning to ice in her veins, and she experienced a painful contraction of the heart. Judith Krodge was more composed, but there was terror in the expression of the woman's hard, impassive features, and a tremor in her harsh, shrill voice, as she said: "This is murder and robbery, too, I think. See, the safe is open." As she spoke she pointed to a large safe in the side of the office, the door of which stood wide open to the outer world. With an effort which cost all the will power of which she was capable, Marion regained her strength and sprang to her father's side. With the lamp in her hand she knelt beside him and scanned his face. If there had been a hope in her mind that the vital principle was not yet extinct, it was crushed as she gazed upon her beloved parent's features, for she saw that he was indeed dead. "Poor father! Poor father!" wailed Marion in heart-broken tones, and bitter tears streamed down her cheeks as she fell upon the cold floor where the dread white shadow rested. Judith Krodge stood watching the bereaved girl, and there was a strange, reluctant expression in her venomous eyes. "They have killed my father to rob the safe," said Marion, presently, and the sound of her voice seemed to arouse Judith Krodge, who cried: "Yes; and we must not delay. The alarm will be given." "Run to the door and call the police. You may be heard; and call Mr. Harland," said Marion. "Yes, yes. To think that your father should be murdered here in his home and we could not help him," answered the woman. And, muttering to herself in an excited way, she ran to the street door and threw it open. "The next moment her shrill, harsh voice rang out upon the night. "Help! Help! Murder!" she shrieked. "It was a cry which, heard at the dead of night, might well startle and thrill the stoutest heart.

BUDGET OF FUN.

HUMOROUS SKETCHES FROM VARIOUS SOURCES.

Hell Break You-Cared For-Up-right in One Thing-The Passing of Love-Served Him Right, Etc. He may be a bit, you may chatter. But you can't take the doctor Who sends you the bill. -Chicago Record. CATED FOR. "There are 100 poets in Indiana." "Yes; and they are establishing new reformatories all over the State, too." -Chicago Record. EIGHT IN ONE THING. Our cashier's delinquency was a great surprise to us. "Why?" "He wrote such a beautiful vertical hand." WANTED SOMETHING NEW. "Did you accept that poem entitled 'Winter's Snow?'" "No; what we particularly wish to encourage this year is snow in summer." -Chicago Record. THE TOUCH OF NATURE. Mrs. Jenkins—"This book on natural history says that seals sometimes shed tears just like men." "Jenkins—"Yes, just like men who have to pay for seal skin jackets." A MYSTERY. "While Miss Pitt was away George took her parrot." "Anything happen?" "I don't know; she keeps the parrot rot down cellar, and the engagement is off." -Lilo. PROFITABLE FEATHERY. Tod—"How did that English nobleman manage to borrow the money from Chollet?" "Ned—"On being introduced he asked him if he wasn't born on the other side." -Judge. THE PASSING OF LOVE. "I'm afraid he does not love me any more." "Why, what change have you found?" "None. His pockets are empty of love." -Cincinnati Enquirer. THE REASON. "Too bad about young Baldy being struck by lightning, wasn't it? I suppose it was because death loves a shining mark." "No; because nature abhors a vacuum." -New York Journal. SERVED HIM RIGHT. Sapsmith (endeavoring to be very, very funny)—"Miss O'Day, I—tee-hee—think I will give you a—aw—goose for a birthday present." "Miss O'Day (suddenly)—"Oh, Mr. Sapsmith, this is so—so sudden." PREVENTIVE OF FAILURES. "There are six necessities, you know, for a happy marriage." "What are they?" "First, a good husband." "And the others?" "The other five are money." -La Caricature. THE SUPERLATIVE. Herbert—"My pa is richer in your pa." "Freddie—"No, he ain't." "Herbert—"My pa owns three houses on this block." "Freddie—"Um; but my pa owns the mortgage on 'em." HIS FADS. "Last year Mr. Giggams used to be always smuggling home to wife books he had bought without his wife's knowledge." "Doesn't he do so yet?" "No; now he smuggles in expensive attachments for his wheel." -Chicago Record. HONOR DU COMBAT. "My man can't meet yours to-morrow," said the ambassador of one pugilist to the envoy extraordinary of another. "What's the trouble?" "He has sprained his—" "Ankle?" "No; he has sprained his tongue." A SAD ENDING. "Have you read the 'Story of the Baptist Youth and the Presbyterian Maiden' that has just come out?" "No. It can't unspool, and I make it a point not to read tragedies." "Can't unspool? Why, it ends with the marriage of the youth and the maiden." "I know it does." -Chicago Tribunes. HE ADVERTISED FOR PAIR. Wife—"Be sure to advertise for Fido in the morning newspapers." Next day the wife read as follows in the newspaper: "Ten Shillings Reward.—Lost, a mangy lap dog, with one eye and no tail. Too fat to walk. Responds to the name of Fido. Smells like a mooker-hound. If returned stuffed, thirty shillings reward." -Tit-Bits. ON BOTH SIDES. He was looking for work, and had been holding the manager. "My motto," he said proudly, "is printed on the outside of your door. It is 'push'." "That's very good indeed, though somewhat old," remarked the manager, "provided you've got what's printed inside your door."

FACTS ABOUT FARMING.

PROFIT IN YOUNG ANIMALS. It is mighty poor stock that will not pay a profit while it is young. The cost of keeping is smaller then, and its growth from the same feed is greatest. An old farmer who always grew hogs said that the market never got too low for him to make some profit. All he did as the price went down was to kill the pigs or sell them alive while still young. "It is curious," he used to say, "how many farmers towards spring want to buy young pigs. They will often pay nearly as much as the same animal will be worth after keeping all summer, especially if the price of pork declines, as it is apt to, between the spring and fall. HOW TO RAISE EARLY POTATOES. Take medium sized tubers and put them in shallow boxes filled with sphagnum moss, if obtainable, if not, pine sawdust, or common garden soil; place the potatoes seed end up and close together; scatter between them the moss, or soil, leaving only the tip of the potato exposed. As a rule, the leading sprout starts. Place the box in a hotbed or behind a stove. In fact, any warm place, about a month before it is time to plant outdoors. At the proper season, take the tubers carefully from the box, so as not to injure the roots, and plant in finely prepared soil; set the tubers four inches below the surface. Should there appear any sprouts except the leading one, remove them as one is quite sufficient. Plant the same distance apart as though the potatoes were fresh set. At least two weeks will be gained by this method. BERRY BULLETIN. In preparing ground for the garden, writes M. A. Thayer in the American Cultivator, carefully consider the condition of the soil and the needs of the plant. Fertility is plant food and the soil must contain nitrogen, potash, phosphate, humus and moisture in liberal quantities to fully supply the needs of the plant. Good barnyard manure, working into the soil, and wood ashes applied as top dressing will supply these needs. Not only must the soil contain these food elements, but they must be thoroughly mixed and incorporated in the soil, to become available as plant food. Therefore let the ground be heavily manured and every square inch for a foot in depth well pulverized. The surface should be smooth and even, and if soil is very loose and light roll the ground to make it firm and compact. Moisture is the chief element in both plant and fruit, and is hardest to supply at the time and in the manner needed. A deep, rich, pulverized soil retains spring and summer rain, and acts as a reservoir for this surplus moisture, until required by the plant forming new roots, leaves and fruits. Compaction is the law of the soil. Feed and cultivate if you would have large products. A plant is a huge feeder and a hard drinker. Every little fine rootlet is a constant sucker, everlastingly taking even the best-prepared soil for its sustenance, while in poorly prepared soil it literally starves to death. It has an animal nature, requiring food and drink as we do. It is almost human in its appreciation of good care or neglect. Treat plants and animals humanely, and they will amaze you. A fruit plant with roots exposed to sun and wind will die as soon as a fish out of water. When received keep cool and moist until set in the ground. In setting trim ends of roots and broken parts, spread roots out in their natural position, and press firm, moist dirt firmly about them. With strawberries have the dirt just even with crown of plant. No roots exposed and no dirt over top of plant. The produce of every plant should be worth a dollar. In setting it out, be as careful as you would in saving dollars. Cultivate, hoe or rake around plants immediately after setting, and every few days thereafter throughout the season. A SUCCESS. "Isn't it difficult to soil your wares on the street corners?" "Not when I've got a crowd about me." "How do you get the crowd?" "I've got one of those safemover's signs reading: 'Danger! Keep off!'" -Puck.

THE CHATHAM RECORD.

There is a growing demand for the seamless boat, which seems to be able to stand any amount of rough work. This boat is pressed out of an ingot of steel and shaped by hydraulic power, and it fulfills all the requirements of an ordinary boat in a remarkably ingenious manner. It is claimed for these boats that they will last twice as long as wooden ones, that there is less danger of their capsizing, and that they are less liable to be affected by changes of climate. The method by which the seamless boat is constructed is a larger application of the method which has long been used in this country for manufacturing cooking utensils and other articles of small dimensions. [TO BE CONTINUED.] Seamless Boats. There is a growing demand for the seamless boat, which seems to be able to stand any amount of rough work. This boat is pressed out of an ingot of steel and shaped by hydraulic power, and it fulfills all the requirements of an ordinary boat in a remarkably ingenious manner. It is claimed for these boats that they will last twice as long as wooden ones, that there is less danger of their capsizing, and that they are less liable to be affected by changes of climate. The method by which the seamless boat is constructed is a larger application of the method which has long been used in this country for manufacturing cooking utensils and other articles of small dimensions.