

THE OLD APPLE TREE.

To-day I crossed the meadows
That lay beyond the town,
And 'neath a gnarled old apple tree
To rest I laid me down.
Its branches stirred above me,
A breeze swept to and fro,
And high among the apple buds
The bees were humming slow.

A squirrel came to watch me,
A bird sang from the hill,
And all about the open fields
The sun lay warm and still.
I thought of how, in childhood,
Like a dream it seemed to me,
We two had told our childish love
Beneath that apple tree.

The apple buds seem much the same—
As pure and sweet and cold,
But time has changed the apple tree,
And it and I are old.

My life is like the apple tree,
Grown harsh and rough and strange,
But love is like the bursting buds—
They never seem to change.
—Waldron W. Anderson, in Good Literature.

THE STURGIS WAGER
A DELECTIVE STORY.

By EDGAR MORETTE.
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CHAPTER XXIII.—CONTINUED.

He stood for awhile irresolute, and had just made up his mind to risk all on a bold move, when suddenly Murdock's voice became more distinct, as if he were passing near the mouth-piece of the speaking-tube at the other end. "I shall be back directly."

He was going then. Agnes, if it were she, would remain alone for at least an instant; and in that instant lay possible salvation.

The reporter strained every nerve to catch some other word. None came. But presently he heard a door close. Murdock had left the room. Now or never was the chance to act. With all his might he blew repeatedly into the tube.

"Well?"

The question came in the sweet tones of a woman's voice.

"Mr. Sprague is in great danger. You alone can save his life, if you do at once as I say. Go to the door of the extension; press upward on the lower hinge; then turn the knob! Quick, before your father returns!"

Sturgis evoked the image of Murdock performing these operations before opening the door of the extension; and, with retrospective intuition, divined their purpose.

There was no answer. Sturgis waited for none. In a bound he was at his friend's side and was struggling to drag him toward the foot of the stairs. As he reached this point, the door opened and revealed Agnes Murdock, pale and frightened, on the landing at the top.

The first rush of gas caused her to start back; but in another instant she had caught sight of her lover's inanimate form and had rushed to his assistance.

Suddenly a shadow fell across the threshold of the open door. Sturgis looked up in quick apprehension.

It was Murdock.

He stood critically observing the scene, with all outward appearance of calmness.

Agnes had not seen him. She was making desperate efforts to raise Sprague's limp form; but felt herself succumbing to the effects of the gas.

"My darling! my poor darling!" she exclaimed and suddenly she staggered and lurched forward.

Sturgis made an instinctive effort to support her; but before he could reach her Murdock was at her side and had her in his arms. He bore her gently up the stairs and into his study. Then, for an instant, he seemed to hesitate. The reporter expected to see him close the door. Instinctively his hand reached back to his hip pocket for his revolver. But, in another moment, Murdock had returned to where he stood.

"Come!" he said.

At the same time he lifted the artist in his arms and carried him up the stairs. Sturgis followed unsteadily and reached the study, only to fall exhausted into a chair.

Having deposited his burden upon the floor, Murdock closed the door of the death chamber; turned a valve which was near his desk; opened the windows wide, and revolved a crank which projected from the wall near the door of the extension.

"He is shutting off the gas and opening the steel shutters of the skylight," thought Sturgis.

Then the chemist produced a flask and poured out a small quantity of brandy, which he forced his daughter to swallow.

As soon as she was sufficiently revived, she rushed to the side of her lover, whose head she gently raised to her lap. Murdock's eyes were fastened upon her. She met his calm questioning gaze.

"Yes, I love him," she said, simply. Then this strange man, without another word, gently pushed his daughter to one side and, throwing off his coat, stooped over the prostrate form of the man whose life he had tried to take, and industriously worked over him, in an attempt to restore the failing respiration.

Slowly and steadily he worked for what seemed an eternity to the anxious girl. At length he rose, calm and collected as usual, and drew on his coat again.

"He is out of danger now," he said; "you can do the rest yourself."

And he handed his daughter the brandy flask.

A faint tinge of color had returned to the artist's face; his breast heaved gently in an irregular respiration.

Sturgis, still unable to stir from the chair in which he had fallen, was vaguely conscious of Murdock's move-

ments. He saw the chemist open the safe which stood near his table and take from it numerous bundles of banknotes, which he carefully packed into a valise; he saw him take from the same safe a few richly bound notebooks, which he proceeded to do up in a neat bundle, securely tied and sealed.

This done, the chemist put on his hat and coat, and was preparing to pass out into the hallway, when a knock sounded upon the door.

Murdock opened slightly—enough to show himself, without revealing the presence of the other occupants of the room.

It was one of the housemaids. "Plaze, sur," said the girl, in a frightened voice, "the policeman says he can't wait no longer; he must see yer right away."

"Are they in the parlor?"

"Only the policeman, sur; the other man said he would wait outside."

Murdock took a minute for reflection. "Wait in the hall until I call you," he said, at last. "If the policeman becomes impatient, tell him I shall not be long; that I am engaged on most important business."

No sooner had the girl gone than Murdock, seizing the valise and the package, opened the door of the extension. His eyes rested for awhile upon his daughter, who, still absorbed in the tender care of her inanimate lover, was oblivious of all else. There was in them an unusual expression—almost a tender light; but the impassive face was otherwise emotionless.

The chemist seemed to hesitate for a brief instant whether to speak; then, passing out into the extension, he softly closed the door behind him.

Sturgis alone, weak and powerless, had seen him go.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CHECKMATE!

The two detectives, after leaving Sprague and Sturgis in the cellar of the Manhattan Chemical company, proceeded to search the premises from basement to roof. Then, somewhat discomfited, they returned to the cellar, and were surprised to find that the reporter and his friend had disappeared.

After questioning the man whom they had left on watch on the outside, and ascertaining that neither Sprague nor Sturgis had yet left the house, the detectives called loudly to the missing men, and receiving no reply, at last became alarmed and sent word of the mysterious disappearance to headquarters. The chief's answer came at once:

"Remain on watch where you are. We shall investigate from the other side."

One of the detectives thereupon went up to the roof of the building, whence he could keep watch upon the back yards, while his companion remained in the front hall.

They had been waiting thus for some time, when the latter thought he heard footsteps in the direction of the private office. He was on the alert in an instant.

The door was cautiously opened and a man stepped out into the hallway. He carried a valise and a package. He blinked like a man coming suddenly from the darkness into the daylight.

"Who are you?" asked the detective, brusquely.

The man looked in the direction of the voice, and, as his eyes became accustomed to the light, returned the detective's surprised stare with a calm and searching look.

"Checkmate!" he muttered quietly to himself at last.

Then, without seeming haste, he passed back into the private office, before the astonished detective could make any attempt to stop him.

Recovering himself quickly, the detective followed the sounds of the retreating footsteps to the cellar stairs. Then, fearful of an ambush, he fired his revolver as a signal to his companion on the roof; and, after striking a match, he cautiously descended, reaching the cellar just in time to see Murdock disappear into the underground passage.

He rushed to the spot; and, unable to find the door, he pounded with all his might upon the shelves, causing the bottles to dance and rattle.

"Come now," he shouted, "the game's up! You may as well be reasonable. You can't possibly escape, for you're surrounded."

No answer came from within.

The man tried his powerful strength upon the door without any perceptible effect.

When the second detective arrived upon the scene he found the first one removing the bottles from the shelves by the light of a match held in his left hand.

"Get a light and an ax, Jim. There's a secret door here which we'll have to break in; I can't find any way of opening it."

A few minutes later, the detectives, after dealing upon the shelves some telling blows with an ax, called upon Murdock to surrender.

Receiving no answer to their summons, the men stood irresolute for a few seconds. Then, with grim determination, they attacked the door; raining the blows upon it fast and furiously, and filling the air with a shower of splinters.

At length a final stroke sent the weakened hinges from their fastenings, and the men rushed through the underground passage into the murderer's laboratory.

A hasty, startled glance told them that Murdock was not there.

They started for the stairs and were met by a policeman who was just entering Murdock's office.

"Have you got him?" asked the detectives in chorus.

"No," replied the policeman, surprised; "Mr. Sturgis says he went down here about 20 minutes ago."

"We chased him in from the other end not ten minutes ago."

The policeman hurried down the stairs.

Murdock's valise and package stood conspicuous upon the long pine box. But of Murdock there was no sign.

"Gone!" exclaimed one of the detectives, deeply mortified at the thought that his quarry had slipped through his fingers. "Gone! How? Where? He cannot have escaped. He cannot—What is it, Mr. Sturgis?"

He had suddenly caught sight of the reporter, half way up the stairs.

Weak and ill, Sturgis, with one hand, clung unsteadily, with one hand, to the railing; while, with the other, he pointed toward the lead-lined vat, whose dark viscous contents were bubbling like boiling oil.

A pungent vapor rose in dense clouds from the surface of the liquid. Through it the fascinated gaze of the horrified men vaguely discerned a nameless thing, tossed in weird and grotesque contortions in a seething vortex.

Murdock had escaped the justice of men.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE MURDER SYNDICATE.

"See here, Sturgis, this won't do. I forbade you to do a stroke of work to-day, or even to leave your bed; and here you are scribbling away just as though nothing had happened. I tell you when a man has the narrow squeak you have, there has been a tremendous strain upon his heart, and it is positively dangerous—"

"Don't scold, old man; I have never in my life been better than I feel to-day. And, besides, this work could not be postponed—"

"Oh, pshaw! That is what nine out of every ten patients say to their physician. They are modestly convinced that the world must needs come to a standstill if they cannot accomplish their tiny mite of work."

Dr. Thurston, who had assumed his frown of professional severity, proceeded to feel the reporter's pulse.

"Well, you are in luck; better than you deserve. Almost any other man would have been laid up for a week by the experience you have been through."

THE END.

Frightened by a Poodle.

Perhaps Burns' famous line might be made to read: "A dog's a dog for a' that." But of all dogs, thoroughbred or mongrel, a shaggy poodle would seem to be about the poorest kind of dog for defense. Yet a missionary, whose experience has been among the savages and cannibals of Africa, says that his little poodle, Sally, was one of his best protectors, says Youth's Companion.

One of her exploits consisted in putting to flight a band of hostile natives. The missionary was traveling some distance in advance of his caravan, accompanied only by his boy-servant and Sally. When he came to the top of a hill, a large body of Burungi warriors in full war-paint were suddenly seen racing toward them. Calling Sally to him, the missionary whispered in her ear something about "going for them." Then was witnessed the scene of a small, shaggy dog with a very big bark, tail in the air, charging at a company of armed men. "It was a great sight," says the traveler, "worth going to Africa for," to see those warlike men running for their lives, with little Sally at their heels, barking as if she knew, brave little dog, that she was making a big bluff, and it all depended on the noise she could make.

HE BORE HER GENTLY UP THE STAIRS.

And here you have the face to recover without the assistance of the medical profession, and in spite of your insolent disregard of my express orders to leave work alone for the present. Now, there is Sprague—"

"Ah, what of Sprague?" asked the reporter, anxiously.

"Sprague has had a close call. But he is safe now. If tender and intelligent nursing count for anything, he will probably be up in a day or two."

"Miss Murdock—"

"Yes. She has a professional nurse to help her; but she has insisted on taking charge of the case herself. And an excellent nurse she is, too, and a charming girl into the bargain—and what is more, a noble woman."

"Does she know of her father's death?"

"I broke the news as gently as possible. She took it much more calmly than I supposed she would. There evidently was but little sympathy between her and her father."

"On her side, at any rate."

"Yes. Her first act on learning of her father's crimes was to send for a lawyer. She refuses to touch a cent of his money, and has instructed her attorney to make such restitutions as may be possible and to turn the rest to charitable institutions. This leaves her almost penniless; for the property she held in her own right from her mother's estate amounts to very little. Fortunately, Sprague is rich enough for both. What are you doing there, if I may ask?"

Dr. Thurston pointed to a bundle which lay upon the table.

"That is Murdock's autobiography—a legacy to me. The package was found near his valise in the death chamber. He had addressed it to me at the last minute."

"Did it help you in your account of the Knickerbocker bank case for the Tempest?"

"A little; but naturally, Murdock's account of that crime was not complete. The entire journal, however, is of absorbing interest. It is a pity that it cannot be published."

"Why cannot it be published?"

"It would be dangerous to the welfare of society. Murdock was an extraordinary genius in his line; there is marvelous originality and ingenuity in his work. His crimes, numbered by the hundred, were all of capital importance in their results; all deep-laid and skillfully executed. It is hardly likely that such another consummate artist in crime will exhibit once a century. To publish the details of his schemes would be to put a formidable weapon in the hands of the vulgar herd of ordinary criminals, who lack the imagination of this brilliant villain."

"Had Lived Too High."

"This is our last boot-leg!" whimpered the cook, as he served breakfast.

"What?" cried the arctic explorer, paling. "It is scarcely the middle of August and the lecture season can't possibly open until after election this year!"

Some one had blundered.

It was with a heavy heart, indeed, that the explorer called a messenger boy and sent word out to the rescuing party that they might come and rescue him any time now.—Detroit Journal.

Oh, Love, Sweet Love!

"You have not kissed me," she pouted, "for 15 minutes!"

"I know it," he said. "I have a very sensitive tooth, which is liable to ache if I do."

"What do you mean, sir?"

"Why, you are so sweet, you know!"

—N. Y. World.

JAPS ARE POPULAR.

Washington Society Is Pleased with the Mikado's Legation.

Mme. Takahira, Wife of the New Minister, Is Well Liked—She Is a Beauty, Even from an Occidental Point of View.

The Japanese legation is one of the most popular and best administered of the legations at Washington, yet it is one of the youngest. The first minister from Japan visited this government only 40 years ago, and it is scarcely 30 years since the famous embassy with Mr. Iwakura at its head arrived. This embassy had as its object the making of treaties with the United States and other civilized powers, and started out to make a tour of the world, but so impressed was Ambassador Iwakura with the advantages to be gained from a long residence at the American capital that he remained in Washington for six months. In that time he gave 80 official dinners and a banquet for 1,600 people which rivaled in elegance anything ever seen in America, and picturesque tales are still told of his princely entertaining. Diplomatic intercourse between the United States and Japan was established by Mr. Iwakura's visit, and since then it has never been interrupted. Japan has sent to this country the flower of her statesmen, and no nation with which the United States has diplomatic relations has been represented by men of higher intelligence or greater capacity. Good taste and conservatism have invariably marked the administration of the Japanese legation, and that it will hold the high place it has attained under the new minister is not to be doubted, for Mr. Takahira comes to us with a ripe experience, having already served here as consul general and represented his government as minister to China and at several of the European capitals.

The new minister is accompanied by his wife. Mme. Takahira comes of a noble family, and was educated at one of the best schools for women in Japan, established and conducted

after western models. She was married to Mr. Takahira in 1887, shortly after her education was finished, and since then has been with him upon all of his diplomatic missions. This, therefore, is not Mme. Takahira's first visit to the United States, since her husband served as consul general in New York in 1891. From this position Mr. Takahira was promoted to the ministership at The Hague, whither Mme. Takahira accompanied him, and later on she went with him to Rome and to Vienna, at both of which capitals he represented his government. These prolonged visits in foreign countries have enabled Mme. Takahira to become acquainted with their languages and their people, and the experience she has had at the European courts will be of advantage to her even in this republican stronghold.

Mme. Takahira, says the New York Tribune, is a fine looking woman, even from the occidental point of view, which differs so materially regarding the beauty of women from that of the orient. Her complexion has the tinge and softness for which Japanese women are famous, her eyes are large and expressive, and her wealth of glossy black hair is worn in the prevailing style, brushed back from a pretty brow. But the most attractive feature Mme. Takahira possesses is the vivacious expression and the quick responsiveness one notes in her face when she is conversing.

Not since the days of Mr. Yoshida have the women of the Japanese legation retained their native costume, which is rapidly going out of fashion in Japan among the higher classes, and, like her predecessors, the wife of the new minister has adopted European dress; but, unlike many of her sisters, her clothes are in exquisite taste and her jewels are beautiful. It is doubtful, indeed, if any woman in the diplomatic corps possesses more gorgeous gems. Mme. Takahira has three children, who are in Japan, and will not at present join their parents.

Domestics in Australia.

The relations existing between mistress and maid in Australia are aptly illustrated in a recent issue of a Queensland paper, in which a girl advertises for a situation as care-taker of a laundry or dairy. She can cook and understands house-keeping, and adds: "None but a respectable mistress, who wishes to leave her servant in uninterrupted discharge of her duties, need apply."

Paternal Law in Japan.

Japan has passed a bill to prohibit lads under 20 years of age from smoking.

Deafness Cannot Be Cured by local applications, as they cannot reach the diseased portion of the ear. There is only one way to cure deafness, and that is by constitutional remedies. Deafness is caused by an inflamed condition of the mucous lining of the Eustachian Tube. When this tube gets inflamed you have a rumbling sound or imperfect hearing, and when it is entirely closed deafness is the result, and unless the inflammation can be taken out and this tube restored to its normal condition, hearing will be destroyed forever; nine cases out of ten are caused by catarrh, which is nothing but an inflamed condition of the mucous surfaces.

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