

DR. FURNIVALL IN A UNIQUE CRIMINAL SOLUTION

THE "PLANT" AT NUMBER SEVENTY-SIX

BY DR. GEORGE F. BUTLER AND HERBERT ILSLEY

ON THE comparatively deserted side street it happened that, at 20 minutes past three in the afternoon, four persons, all strangers to one another, met in front of the house numbered 76. One of these individuals was a Russian rag-picker, another had the appearance of an Irish working woman, the third looked as if he might be an Italian barber, and the last, by his manner, cast of features and the melange of perfumes radiated by his clothing, could only be an American drug clerk. Precisely at the moment when these types of a cosmopolitan civilization were about to pass the house a pistol shot rang out from it, closely followed by a scream, which stopped suddenly before it was finished, as if it had been stifled. All four of the pedestrians halted, staring up at the window on the first floor. Then the Russian shifted his bag to the other shoulder, said: "Nitchevy" (it is nothing), and walked on puffing his cigarette; the Irish woman began to cry out and call upon the saints; the barber ran away to the police station, and the American, darting up the steps, rang the bell furiously.

There was a sound within of creaking boards and rustling, as if a number of women were hurriedly descending the stairs, and the young man expected the door to be opened at once, but the noises died away and the house became still. He shook the door, but it was of oak, well-built and solid, and he could make no impression on it. With only the slightest hesitation he put his elbow through the glass of the bay window at the side of the steps, reached in, unfastened the catch, pushed up the sash and crawled into the parlor. There the first object to meet his astonished eyes was an old woman fast asleep in a corner, her arm chair facing the old-fashioned doorbell which, at the end of its long coil of flat steel spring, was still jangling noisily with the energy his own arm had communicated to it. On a table at the woman's side lay an ear trumpet of exaggerated dimensions.

Excited and alarmed he threw her an impatient glance and then rushed out and up the stairs. On the first landing he heard moans, and through the open doorway of the front chamber saw the body of a man on the floor, blood flowing from a wound in the temple, while a large revolver lay across the threshold of the room. Except for one overturned chair and a rumpled couch-cover the apartment was in perfect order, its peaceful aspect and its luxurious furnishings forming an incongruous setting for the tragedy.

As the stranger sprang to assist the wounded man the deaf woman came hurrying up in pursuit of him. "Isn't there anybody but us in this house?" "No," she answered. "All my lodgers are men, who are away down town during the day—except Mr. Hines here, who is in and out at all times. He is wealthy and does no business."

Then he raised his voice: "You say Mr. Hines had one visitor—was it a man or a woman?" "A man—Mr. Wells-Clements, the young society millionaire of Commonwealth avenue." She was conspicuously proud to mention the fact of such an aristocratic caller at her house.

At that moment the doorbell rang. On opening the door Mrs. Rogers found the doctor standing there with two policemen and another individual, who proved to be a detective.

While the doctor began to work on the patient the officers listened to the story of the young man. He told in a few words what Mrs. Rogers had said and what little he personally knew of the matter, laying stress on the fact that he had certainly heard sounds in the hall as if at least two women with rustling skirts were hurrying up or down stairs, stepping several times on loose and creaking boards. Then the policemen separated to search the house, the young man left his card and returned to his business, while the detective occupied himself with an examination of the victim and his room.

"How bad is it?" he asked the doctor in a whisper. He was a short, heavy, clean-faced man, deliberate in speech and manner, Symonds by name.

"I can't tell yet. He is stunned, and there's a slight fracture of the skull. I haven't finished looking him over yet."

Symonds peered into the thin, young face a moment and then entering an inner room, which was evidently a study, began without compunctions to read the opened letters which he found on the desk. In one short note he found the following, dated the day before:

"Dear Hines: I'll see you tomorrow at three, or a little before. Can stay only a minute—engagements. So have it all ready.—C."

"That's Clements!" muttered the detective.

The doctor came in at the moment with a sheet of paper in his hand which he passed to the detective, saying:

"This fell from his clothes somewhere just now. It has a strange look, considering the circumstances, and in case he shouldn't recover—"

"Is there any danger of that?" Symonds interrupted, quickly.

"There is no telling yet. You would better copy that, at all events. It may be nothing—still I would make sure of it."

Symonds looked at the paper and thought so too, most decidedly, for it was, or seemed to be, nothing less than a note in cypher. It ran:

"I ckecoco nefemf emefecocof con onckeff okkieueen onf cleclckf ceec c mkmeg lefek onfee onkfoecieeef cefocoeckf efcee emf ofcoeck cleclck efcof cece keoge onkf oncof lckff l mcoocion ceefon of cfieef."

There was neither address nor signature nor date, but the detective set himself at once to copying it out, for, as the doctor said, in the circumstances it had a queer look. When he had taken the characters down he returned the paper, at the same time suggesting a search of the patient's pockets for additional finds. And as the doctor gave him one glance and returned to the parlor, he left the bewildered Symonds reflecting that here was a man who was trying to impress him with the notion that he was altogether too good for his world.

The policeman who had examined the lower parts of the house returned saying that the rooms were all deserted, and appeared as if nobody had been in them for hours. The fire in the range was so low that the kitchen was like a barn, and the doors were wide open all the way out from the basement hall—four of them; and the gate itself, in the back fence which gave on a lane, though it was closed, had not one of its three bolts shot into place.

"You go out the back door," said the detective, "and see if you can find anybody that saw any woman, or anybody else, going in or out that gate. Whoever it was that done it must have slid in that way, and with all them winders over there somebody must have seen 'em."

"They might have gone out that way," returned the policeman, "but I don't see how they could go to work to get in. The back ways is kept bolted up tighter—all them gates along there in the lane—than the front ways is. And there's all them doors—four of 'em! And every one always locked up tighter'n a drum, I'll betcher."

"You go on and do as you're told. May be the maids left 'em open on purpose for somebody—how do we know? We got to go slow, a little at a time, and pick it up wherever we can. You go over there to them houses. It's a chance of getting wise to something, anyway, and we'll take it."

The officer started without more words, and the detective ascended toward the upper regions. He met the second policeman coming down, and his report of the condition of the top floors was a repetition of the other maids' regarding the lower ones. He said that the doors were open all the way up, a ladder led to the skylight, and that also was half-wide. "A bunch of yeggmen," he said, "might slide in from the roof and skate all over the premises unbeknownst with only deafy to buck against, and she asleep in the parlor!"

"Well, then, you go to the neighbors in this block and find out what you can," Symonds ordered. "It's likely enough they came in by the skylight and skipped out by the gate. That would account for the open doors down there—if the maids wan't in the game. I'll hang round here some and see how the boy pulls on. If he comes to it will save us a bunch of trouble."

The doctor entered noiselessly and closed the door.

"He's maingering," he said, in an undertone, nodding sidewise in the patient's direction. "If he will he can speak as well as you or I can."

"Why, that's funny, too!" Symonds exclaimed in a whisper.

"He probably has his reasons. He is hurt but very little and doubtless has been conscious some time, perhaps hearing all that has passed in his room. But we'll fix him. Just put your foot up here—sit down and rest your leg on this chair. There, I'll show you what I want you to do."

He held the foot firmly by the heel with one hand and with the other gave the toe a sudden, sharp twist inward.

"Ouch! Quit it!" cried Symonds. His face for once expressed something and it was not anything pleasant.

"That was very gentle," said the doctor. "It did not hurt really, only surprised you. That is what I wish you to do to my patient. Go in and, under the pretense of removing his shoe, give him that leg-twist—not too hard, but hard enough to make him

sit up and say something. Then we shall have him where we want him."

"Yes, I gesso," said Symonds, eyeing the doctor. He suspected malice on account of the proposition he had made to rifle Hines' pockets, and which had been so contemptuously refused. However, the doctor's face was straight and, muttering, the detective entered the parlor. The next instant a loud imprecation from the wounded man and a string of lurid adjectives following from the same source indicated that the detective might not feel above spite, whatever stand others might take.

The doctor entered quickly at the sound of the voice.

"Ah, this is good," he cried. "I was sure you would come around in a few minutes. But you mustn't excite yourself. Drink this and then you will be able to tell us who assaulted you."

For a moment Hines looked as if he would like to charge the assault to the detective, who stood woodenly repeating that he had only meant to do the invalid a kindness by removing his left shoe. But he swallowed the medicine presently and, passing the glass back, said:

"The man who shot me was Charlie Mains."

The doctor examined him keenly as he made the statement, and the detective thought, "He's lying. What for?" And then he asked:

"Tell us how it happened?"

"I scarcely know myself," Hines answered. He paused to consider, and both men knew by the expression of the eyes that they were about to hear an invention and not the truth, at all events not the whole truth. "Charlie wished me to lend him some money, he finally went on, 'and I couldn't, because I had none. He wrote to me several times about it. One of his notes is in there'—pointing towards the inner room. "Would you mind getting the bunch of letters on my desk?" He looked at the detective. "I'll show you."

Symonds knew that the note referred to was the one in his own pocket. The signature "C." then, was not that of Clements, but—stood for "Charlie." While he hastened into the study and brought out the letters, placing the one wanted among them, he was thinking, "How bally easy it is to raise a false hunch! I'd have crossed my throat that 'C.' meant 'Clements.'"

Hines selected the note from the pile and read it aloud, and then held it up for them to see.

"There's the date on the envelope," he said, "and there's the 'C.' for 'Charlie.' The appointment was for today, and he kept it. I could not raise the money, and he said I could if I wished, but wouldn't. He had words and he struck me. Then he grabbed my revolver from the table and let me have it. I didn't know anything after that."

The detective watched him with all his eyes. Why did he think it necessary to go into details, fortifying the story with proofs? The natural way would be for him to make the charge, leaving the details and proofs until they were called for. And then if the story were true, where did Clements come in? The lodging mistress, who knew him, had admitted him to the house at two minutes of three, scarcely 20 minutes before the shooting. Was Clements the guilty one, and was the victim trying to screen him? If so, why? And why should he accuse Mains falsely? Moreover, what about those hurrying women heard by the young man in the hall the very moment after the shooting?

Hines probably felt that the detective was skeptical, for after gazing from him to the physician, neither of whom spoke a word in comment, a fact that must have struck him as queer, to say the least, in the circumstances, he drew another paper from his pocket, saying, as if to cap the climax of proof:

"This is the note in which he mentions what he wants—ten thousand."

"Ten thousand!" Symonds exclaimed. Then he whistled softly.

"Yes. You see how cautious he was about it—it is in cipher."

He held it toward them and they saw that it was the one the detective had copied.

"What does it say?" asked Symonds.

He put it to his near-sighted eyes and read slowly:

"I shall come Monday at three, bringing a receipt for \$10,000, which I shall expect to find ready. Send me your door key and have the way clear. I must not be seen."

"Ah, that's how he got in!" Symonds exclaimed. "But," he added, "why didn't he want to be seen?"

"The patient waved his hand.

"Ask me an easier one—he's a queer case," he answered. And he added the afterthought, "perhaps he had this very thing in mind then," touching with his finger the bandage around his head.

"Just give us the key to that three cipher, Mr. Hines," said the detective, in a matter-of-fact tone, as if such a

contingency as refusal were the last thought in his mind. It was in cases of this nature that his remarkable stolidity of face stood him in such good stead.

Mr. Hines hesitated the merest trifle.

"I fancy it would not be violating a confidence now," he said. "It is the cost-mark used by my father when he was in business, and Charlie and I made a cipher out of it just for the fun of the thing, corresponding by means of it at times since we were boys together. We were school chums, you know."

It seemed to the detective that the man was playing for time. A hunted, sincere gleam flickered in his eyes, and the voice and manner suggested a man who, frightened at the near approach of a calamity, is weakly and confusedly trying to think up a way of escape.

"Well?" said Symonds, all the more insistent by reason of this fearful attitude. He produced a pencil, wet it in his mouth, put the point against a page of his notebook and looked expectant. Then Hines said in a faint voice:

"The cost-mark is 'come fluking.' The 'g' is a repeater."

"Yes," Symonds wrote it down.

"Now, how do you work it when you write a letter?"

It was evident to both the doctor and the detective that only a pressing need to conciliate them and avoid all appearance of hesitancy prevented the young fellow from taking a high air upon this question, refusing to answer it and ordering them, or at least the detective, from the room. As it was, he attempted to conceal his anger under a pretense of careful thought. And presently he said:

"I can illustrate. Suppose you wish to write the word 'shall.' The first letter of that word, 's' is the nineteenth letter of the alphabet; the second is 'h,' the eighth of the alphabet; the third is 'a,' the first of the alphabet; the last two are 'l,' the twelfth of the alphabet. So that if you put 'shall' in these figures you have '19-8-1-12-12.' Now see what letters in the cost-mark stand for these figures. They are 'ckecoco,' which means 'shall.' There you have the key to the simple cipher."

He threw his hand out carelessly, as if to drop the note on the table and have done with the matter, but an open bottle of ink stood in the way, with a penholder protruding from its neck, and his fingers struck and knocked it to the floor. The paper fell with it, and, reaching quickly to recover it, he succeeded only in pressing it into the great blot of ink that lay thick on the rich carpet. There he let it remain, with an exclamation against his clumsiness, but the detective hastily rescued it. Then he saw that the characters were hopelessly blurred. It would be impossible to make them out with any certainty.

The expression of relief that flashed into Hines' face when he realized this amused Symonds, seeing that a true copy of the note, the key to which he now possessed, lay sprawled over half a page of the notebook he held in his hand above that very key. Soon he would work out a solution of it himself. He was not satisfied with the one given, and this desperate and successful attempt to render the characters illegible convinced him beyond all doubt that the interpretation had been a false one, if for no other reason than that he must have one that would be true.

"Well, it's gone up," he said. "But no matter. You've read it to us, and that's enough. Give me this here Charlie Mains' address and I'll get a warrant for him."

But when he had written down the street and number he did not hurry away for the warrant. Instead, he slipped into the study and, with paper and pencil, set to work on the cryptogram. After many blunders and erasures, for he was no scribe, he finally made the following arrangement of the alphabet and cost-mark:

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17
r s t u v w x y z
18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26
c o m e fl u k i n g

The first letter of the cipher, "1," was then easily seen to be the ninth of the cost-mark; therefore it stood for the ninth letter of the alphabet, which also was "i." Working on this principle, he at length had the translation before him. It read, with proper punctuation and capitals:

"I shall come on Monday at three, bringing the papers and a check for ten thousand dollars. Send me your pass key and have the way clear. I must not be seen."

"Aha!" he exclaimed, jumping up exultantly, "whoever it was that came brought ten thousand, and didn't come for it! What does that mean?"

As if to answer his question, the officer who had been detailed to investigate the back way tiptoed in, saying:

"There was two swell petticoats skipped out the gate in a hurry. I got four witnesses that seen 'em. It was 3:20, on the tick, and that sizes up silek with the gun-play, don't it?"

"Not the maids?" Symonds asked quickly.

"No, my parties know them all right. These was strangers, and swell down to the ground. They beat it for a record up the lane and slid into a cab they had over on Worcester street."

Symonds scratched his head.

"Here's a mess," he grunted. "There's Clements, and there's Mains, and here's two females, vary one of the parties connected with any of the others, seems like, and all of 'em Johnny-on-the-spot at the same time, about, old deafy knowing nothing of any of 'em but Clements, and Hines lying right and left on the whole

business. It's a stage break all round. It gets me. Why is Hines handing out that dope? Who is these here women? How does it size up that Clements has been here, according to deafy, Hines never opening his head about him, while at the same time Mains has been here, according to Hines, deafy never letting on, and both of 'em mum on the swell petticoats? Somebody made up the cipher asking for the door-key, and s'posing he got it, that would account for him; but then what about all the others—how did they see in? Who could be bringing Hines' ten thousand? If only I had some way of opening that Willie boy's mouth—"

He got as far as this in his soliloquy when he stopped, stared a moment into vacancy, and then, bringing one hand down upon the other with a smack of the palms, grabbed the telephone receiver that stood on the desk and soon was in conversation with Dr. Furnivall.

"We got him now, all right," he said jubilantly a moment later to the policeman. "Dr. Furnivall is on the way here. He won't be ten minutes. He thinks the man is dying—and so he is, for all I know," he added virtuously, palliating his mendacity to the doctor. "You go down and let him in, Usher, so he won't ring."

The policeman, who never before had seen Dr. Furnivall, was greatly disappointed, as well as surprised, by his appearance when he arrived. From his reputation as an adept in occultism he had expected to see, he scarcely knew what—a person wild-eyed and long-haired, at least, with an uncanny personality, like the performers of the levitation act on museum stages, or the "professors" of hypnotism who put sly-faced youths through funny stunts before the rural audiences. And he did not look for much from this unostentatious, ordinary appearing gentleman with the full beard, thick, colored spectacles and quiet suit of black.

But if he was disappointed with the doctor's appearance he was more so with his methods, for, after Detective Symonds had told him the story, indicating what he should like to find out, and Dr. Furnivall approached the patient with his questions, he made no more use of mystery, of passes and poses and hand-washings in the air than any man would do in ordinary conversation. He simply stood before the recumbent subject and, removing his colored spectacles, said, looking the young fellow in the eye:

"Mr. Hines, who shot you?"

The policeman scarcely could repress a sniff of contempt at this mild procedure, and when Hines answered, as he had to the detective, "Charlie Mains," and then went on with this story just as he had told it before, the blue-coated shoulders rose in a shrug. The thing was a farce, and he was about to consult the detective with his eyes to see how he took it when he noticed a change in the speaker's countenance that riveted his attention. In the full flow of his words he stopped, his eyes fixed on the doctor's a look of surprise sprang into his face, and this was succeeded almost at once by a hesitant, appealing expression, which gave way to a matter-of-fact content, changing slowly to earnestness, and finally settling into a look of deep abstraction. Then he resumed, in a voice without inflection, as if a machine were speaking:

"I shot myself!"

The policeman and detective uttered an exclamation, but Dr. Furnivall motioned for silence.

"Go on," he said to Hines. "Why did you do it? Tell me the whole story."

The monotonous voice proceeded at once, the eyes glazed, as it were, to Dr. Furnivall's, but seeing only the pago of memory within.

"I wanted some money, and as my father would allow me only a trifle of two hundred a month I asked my sister for it. She has enough in her own right, but father forbade her giving me any, because I don't just please him in everything, and she didn't dare to disobey him. But I scared her into promising at last, and she wrote to me, in a cipher that we had played with as children, asking for my key and saying she would bring me ten thousand—half what I wanted. She came, with a girl friend, and in trying to frighten her into making the check larger I snatched up my revolver. I was angry and desperate, and I don't know whether I meant to threaten her or make her believe I would commit suicide. But somehow the revolver went off, the bullet striking me in the head, and they screamed and ran."

He stopped speaking. Symonds was disgusted.

"All this fine plant runs into a measly little accident to a measly little Willie-boy!" he grunted. "Well, anyway, he ain't said why he laid the hunch on Mains—mebbe there's something there we can get on him."

Dr. Furnivall put the question.

"Mains was cutting me out with a girl," was the answer. "The thought came to me while I was lying there that I could accuse him. I had Clements' note, who was coming for some books I was to lend him, and I could say it was from Mains. I didn't know how badly I was injured, but if I died it would be murder, and if I lived the charge would hurt him, anyway. The girls wouldn't dare to say anything, for fear of father."

The two physicians looked down into the degenerate face, then at each other, and with one impulse turned and left the room. On the stairs they heard a sudden bowl of pain from the chamber. The first doctor smiled. The resourceful Symonds, celebrating the young man's escape from any very serious charge, was evidently attempting to do him a second kindness by removing the other shoe.

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A SURE SIGN.

When It Appears Act at Once.

Trouble with the kidney secretions is a certain sign that your kidneys are deranged and that you should use Doan's Kidney Pills. They cure all irregularities and annoyances, remove backache and side pains and restore the kidneys to health. Charles Cole, 204 N. Buckeye St., Iola, Kans., says: "The kidney secretions were irregular, scanty and painful and contained sediment. My back was stiff and lame and my limbs swelled. I grew weak and discouraged. Doan's Kidney Pills removed these troubles entirely. I have been well for two years."



Remember the name—Doan's. Sold by all dealers. 50 cents a box. Foster-Milburn Co., Buffalo, N. Y.

A LONG WAY BACK.



George—There's Miss Passay. She claims she's never been kissed.

Harry—Why, I've kissed her myself, years ago. She means not since she can remember.

And the Old Man Grinned.

"Duke," said the heiress, eagerly, "did you see father?"

"Yes."

"Well?"

"We talked about the weather."

"What? Lose your nerve again? Why don't you brace up and talk like a man?—a subject of a king on whose domain the sun never sets!"

"Can't," moaned the duke. "All the time I was in your father's office he kept grinning at a big painting."

"What painting?"

"The battle of Bunker Hill."

Crop Growing on Small Scale.

A small holder in East Lexham is making an interesting experiment in barley growing, upon his land to test the possibility of raising corn on a small scale. In 1927 he sowed 78 specially selected grains of barley, which yielded 400 ears. The resulting kernels he sowed in 1928 and harvested in 14 weeks, with the result that he got a bushel of threshed barley, which he has sown this year, his object being to show what can be done in cereal cultivation from very small beginnings.—London Standard.

But Not In.

Evelyn—I saw you in bathing this morning, George. It's funny you didn't see me.

George—I didn't expect to.

Evelyn—I was sure you saw me at one time. I was standing close by you on the beach.

George—Oh, yes. I saw you in your bathing suit.

A Hot Prescription.

"I want you to prescribe for me, doctor," said the sallow-complexioned man. "I have cold feet; what would you suggest?"

"A ton of coal, promptly replied the witty physician. "Five dollars, please."

THE NEW WOMAN

Made Over by Quitting Coffee.

Coffee probably wrecks a greater percentage of Southerners than of Northern people for Southerners use it more freely.

The work it does is distressing enough in some instances; as an illustration, a woman of Richmond, Va., writes:

"I was a coffee drinker for years and for about six years my health was completely shattered. I suffered fearfully with headache and nervousness, also palpitation of the heart and loss of appetite.

"My sight gradually began to fail and finally I lost the sight of one eye altogether. The eye was operated upon and the sight partially restored, then I became totally blind in the other eye.

"My doctor used to urge me to give up coffee, but I was willful and continued to drink it until finally in a case of severe illness the doctor insisted that I must give up the coffee, so I began using Postum, and in a month I felt like a new creature.

"I steadily gained in health and strength. About a month ago I began using Grape-Nuts food and the effect has been wonderful. I really feel like a new woman and have gained about 25 pounds.

"I am quite an elderly lady and before using Postum and Grape-Nuts I could not walk a square without exceeding fatigue, now I walk ten or twelve without feeling it. Formerly in reading I could remember but little but now my memory holds fast what I read.

Several friends who have seen the remarkable effects of Postum and Grape-Nuts on me have urged that I give the facts to the public for the sake of suffering humanity, so, although I dislike publicity, you can publish this letter if you like."

Read The Road to Wellville, in pkgs. "There's a Reason."

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.