

THE VIAL'S SECRET

BY E. F. STERNS.

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The hour had come when lower New York draws down the cover of its roll-top and bustles away toward the elevated road and uptown dinner.

In the laboratory, Gunnison, assistant chemist to that eminent analyst, Dr. Merrivether, had concluded the process of cleaning up for the night. He had slipped out of his apron and into his overcoat, and was about to switch off the lights, when Dr. Merrivether came from his tiny private office.

"All done, eh?"

Gunnison, red with veiled distrust the bottle in the doctor's hands.

"If there is anything you wish me to do," he began, perfunctorily.

"Not tonight! Let me see! You're going over to Jersey City in the morning, aren't you?"

"To report to those Graydon mining people—yes, sir."

"All right. Go straight over there from home. That will bring you back here to the laboratory."

"Easily, I should think."

"Well—that's time enough."

Merrivether placed the bottle on the table and seated himself upon the distilled water carboy.

"If I shall have left when you get back—Johnson's acid works over in Greenpoint, has managed to get into some sort of a middle again. Go to work on this stuff as soon as you come in. I want to report it tomorrow night."

Gunnison reached for the bottle and examined it.

"Bromide of Soda," he read.

"Brand Brothers, Manufacturing Pharmacists. What about it, doctor? Someone getting suspicious of Brand Brothers' preparations?"

"Not quite. It just came from the corner's office for analysis."

"The corner's office?" Gunnison opened his eyes.

"Nothing less. There's a thrilling mystery in that bottle. The label, as you see, informs us that it contains bromide of soda—a harmless sedative, of course. The last man who took a dose of it died within six hours!"

"And they think—"

"That the stuff's morphine instead of bromide, and that the old fellow was dosed to death with it?"

"Purposely?"

Merrivether shrugged his shoulders.

"That young scoundrel, Carney, who brought in the thing, spent a solid hour spinning the yarn to me. The late lamented was an old chap uptown. He'd been confined to his bed for months, I understand, but they hardly expected him to go off like this. He had all sorts of money and no relatives, save a niece—an orphan—who went to take care of him and his house, something like a year back."

"And they suspect the niece?"

"Carney does, and I imagine that he has implanted that belief pretty firmly in the coroner's office. It seems that about 8 o'clock this morning someone roused Carney out of bed, and he found the old man's butler on the steps, with a hurry call for medical aid. The family physician is out of town."

"Well, before long he was examining the poor old chap. None of the women had had sufficient strength to move him—he lay stretched on the floor, just as they had found him. He was just breathing and Carney went to work to revive him, but it was no go. The old man died within ten or fifteen minutes."

"And what led Carney to think that it was morphine poisoning?"

"He says that he knew it for morphine poisoning on the instant. To all appearances the old man had risen from bed and tried to cross the room, but he must have fallen and carried down the medicine table with him. Plates, glasses—everything—were smashed to bits, with the single exception of that bottle beside you. Carney caught one of the maids about it. She had been helping the niece with her nursing, and she recognized it at once. Here's where the clues begin to bristle, Gunnison."

"The maid told Carney that the family doctor—his name's Magruder—had been in during the evening. The old man had suffered considerable pain all day, and Magruder wished to leave some morphine for him. He asked for a bottle in which to dissolve some tablets, and, according to the maid, the niece gave him that one. Later on, while the maid was in the room, the sick man called his niece for something or other, and that prepossessing young woman very calmly gave him a tablespoonful of the stuff. Magruder had instructed her to administer it by half-teaspoonful doses."

"Do you—do you suppose a young girl

could commit a cold-blooded murder like that?"

"The old man was gain-racked and peevish and very frequently swore point blank at the girl. Maybe she's one of these hysterical mortals who go irresponsible after a prolonged strain, such as this nursing must have been. Then, too, the old fellow had filled all his money to her, and Carney says there's a stack of it. She may have needed some."

Gunnison was breathing rather heavily. Dr. Merrivether arose and glanced at his watch to leave the laboratory. The assistant chemist slid from his stool and started after him.

"Dr. Merrivether!"

"Eh?"

"What—what did you say the dead man's money was?"

"Golden—Philip Golden, I believe. He was a retired broker, or something of the sort—lived up on Madison avenue."

The door closed behind Merrivether. Gunnison gripped the table for support and choked back the sharp cry that had almost escaped him.

Editha Golden, the niece in the case, happened to be Gunnison's dearly beloved fiancée!

Shades were drawn at the Golden home. A silent maid escorted Gunnison to the library and there he waited, eyed at the unending stillness of the big house.

Very shortly the curtains parted and a slim girl entered, beautiful but haggard and pathetically weary of misadventure.

"It is all over," she said.

"Yes, little girl, it's all over."

Gunnison gathered her into his arms and for a little time she sobbed on his shoulder. Presently she allowed herself to be drawn down beside him on the couch.

"Bobby, dear, it's so good to have you here," she sighed.

"But why didn't you send for me during the day?"

"I—don't know, I—I think I was afraid."

"Aren't you Gunnison smiling with tender insolubility?"

"Yes, I wanted to see no one, not even you, Bobby. I—I was afraid, and—"

Her voice died away and the girl stared across the room at the fireplace.

"What is it, child?" Gunnison asked, quickly.

"Bobby!" Editha's eyes were wide with terror as she faced him suddenly. Her voice dropped to a whisper. "I never meant to tell a soul—never till the very day I died! But I can't—I can't help it. I can't bear it alone any longer. All day I have felt somehow that the servants know."

"Knew what?"

"That doctor last night, too—he said nothing, but when he left he stared at me so strangely. He must have seen it—he must have found it out. He'd be sure to know—a doctor would know at once—wouldn't he?"

She clutched his hands and he felt that she was trembling violently.

"Bobby! I—I killed Uncle Philip!"

"Editha!" Gunnison's heart seemed to cease beating.

"I did! I know it! I killed him!" she moaned, clinging to him like a frightened child.

"Hush! You don't know what you're saying, Editha. Some of this infernal pack of servants will hear you, and—"

"Oh, I'll be quiet," Editha hurried on, the words tumbling forth excitedly. "But I must tell you Bobby. I must—'I'll go and get some morphine tablets from his hyper-dermic case and asked me for a bottle to dissolve them. I gave him one of those bromide bottles—poor Uncle Philip needed so much of the stuff to quiet him that we have empty bottles all over the house. There was a half-empty bottle of bromide on the table, too, and after he had fixed the morphine, Dr. Magruder handed it to me and cautioned me to label it at once, before I confused it with the bromide. Then he hurried away, for he had barely time to make his train."

"Yes!" Gunnison forced from dry lips.

"I put the morphine bottle at the edge of the table and apart from the others, and went to my desk in the next room to write the label. Oh, Bobby, I was up all the night before!" she pleaded suddenly.

"Go on, Editha."

"I suppose it was simply criminal, but I was so utterly fagged that while I was writing my head began to nod and when I had finished I fell fast asleep at the

BENNETT'S

Out-of-Town Visitors

Are hospitably invited to make themselves AT HOME at the biggest of Nebraska's big stores—BENNETT'S. It's the second biggest thing in Omaha. We will allow the Auditorium the first place for size, but BENNETT'S—(though second in size), is FIRST in your money saving instincts. Now, isn't it?

Sensational Hammock Sale

The largest, best selected and most substantial assortment of Hammocks that you'll find in Omaha—every imaginable design in wool or warp or color. We purchased an immense quantity—got a rock-bottom price—we share the advantages with you—hammocks of all descriptions with pillows and valances, up from 68c. Every Hammock sold will carry \$5.00 worth of Green Trading Stamps with it. SPORTING GOODS DEPT.—MAIN FLOOR.

GROCERY
Money saved on all your Grocery purchases, and stamps with everything.

15c worth Green Trading Stamps with three pils of Uncle Phillips Biscuits. 15c

CHEESE
Hand Cheese, each 15c
Nuechotel Cheese, each 15c
Royal Luncheon Cheese, jar 15c

20c worth Green Trading Stamps with each pound of New York Cream Cheese. 20c

COFFEES
Comes daily from best dairies. Rio Coffee, pound 25c
Maracajio Coffee, pound 25c

25c worth Green Trading Stamps with each pound of package Bennett's Coffee. 25c

BUTTER
Comes in daily from best dairies. Fresh Country Butter, pound 12c
Bennett's Capital Creamery, lb. 12c

CANDY DEPT.
50c worth Green Trading Stamps with each 5c pack of Lemon Drops. 50c

50c worth Green Trading Stamps and "Tibi" a Manila cigar, 25 in box. 1.20

Meats Meats

Fresh Dressed 9c
Fresh Dressed Roosters, head and feet off 74c
Gunnis Spring Lamb, hind quarters each 85c
Fore quarters 50c
Choice Young Mutton, Legs, 11c
Mutton Chops, pound 10c
Pork Butts, pound 64c
No. 1 Sugar Cured regular Hams, Rex or Winchester brand 11c
Morrill's Iowa Pride Cal Hams 10c
Best Boneless or Cottage Hams, pound 10c

Lard Lard

15 pounds Leaf Lard for 1.00
3-lb. pails of Silver Leaf or Rex brand 25c
5-lb. pails of Silver Leaf or Rex brand 45c
10-lb. pails of Silver Leaf or Rex brand 88c
3-lb. pails of Compound Lard 22c

Everybody's Shoe Place

Men's Tan Vici Kid Lace Shoes—Regent—\$2.00 at 1.93
Men's Black Vici Kid Lace Shoes—worth \$3.00—1.93
Ladies' Patent Colt Oxfords, Goodyear welt—worth \$1.50 at 1.93
Ladies' Vici Kid, gore front Princess—worth \$2.50—1.69
Children's Shoes and Slippers—worth \$1.50—98c

DOUBLE GREEN TRADING STAMPS WITH ANY OF THE ABOVE ITEMS SATURDAY UNTIL NOON.

All 50c Sheet Music, Saturday Only at 25c
And \$2.00 in Green Trading Stamps.

Kaufman's Orchestra—"Next" to Innes and His Band—Saturday in a Special Program, 7:30 to 10:00 P. M.

OMAHA, June 10.—Yesterday's temperature: Maximum, 78, minimum, 62. Saturday we look for the weather to be cooler with showers.

Manufacturers' Sale of Ladies' Neckwear Saturday

Saturday we will place on sale 1,000 sample pieces of ladies' neckwear bought from one of the largest manufacturers. This immense purchase are his samples, bought by us for cash at less than one-fourth what they cost to make. They consist of Tab Collars, Turnovers, Handsome Yokes, Collars and Ties to match, Bertha effects, Crush Linen and Soft Collars in Linen, Silk and Cotton and many other new styles. The values in this lot run from 1.25 to \$4.50—go on sale Saturday as cheap as 15 cents and run to, each.

Extra Special!
Be sure to attend the great cotton goods sale new going on—one hundred pieces very fine Embroideries, worth 29 cents yard—Saturday—yard 15c

VACATION NOVELS
Books by popular authors, popular subjects—a huge assortment of good books handsomely bound in cloth—what you want we have. A sensation for Saturday 11c
At the Book Stalls—Main Floor.

WALL PAPER
GREAT CLEARANCE SALE IN WALL PAPER ALL THIS WEEK. ALL SPRING GOODS AT ONE-HALF OF ACTUAL VALUE. THIRD FLOOR.

Special Sale of Fine Japanese and China Mattings
Extra heavy, long straw, jointless China Matting—regular \$20 and \$30 values—on sale Saturday. 18c at per yard.
JAPANESE COTTON WARP MATTINGS in fancy carpet patterns, small stripes and check—matting worth up to 45c yard—go on sale Saturday. 20c
1 1/2 yards samples of Velvets, Axminsters, Body Brussels, Wilton Velvets and Royal Wilton Carpets—worth up to \$3 per yard—on sale Saturday. 1.24
And \$2.00 in Green Trading Stamps.
Furniture Dept.—3d Floor.

Clothing Event Extraordinary

Five hundred Young Men's Suits, \$10.00, \$12.50 and \$15.00 values, placed on sale Saturday morning at \$5

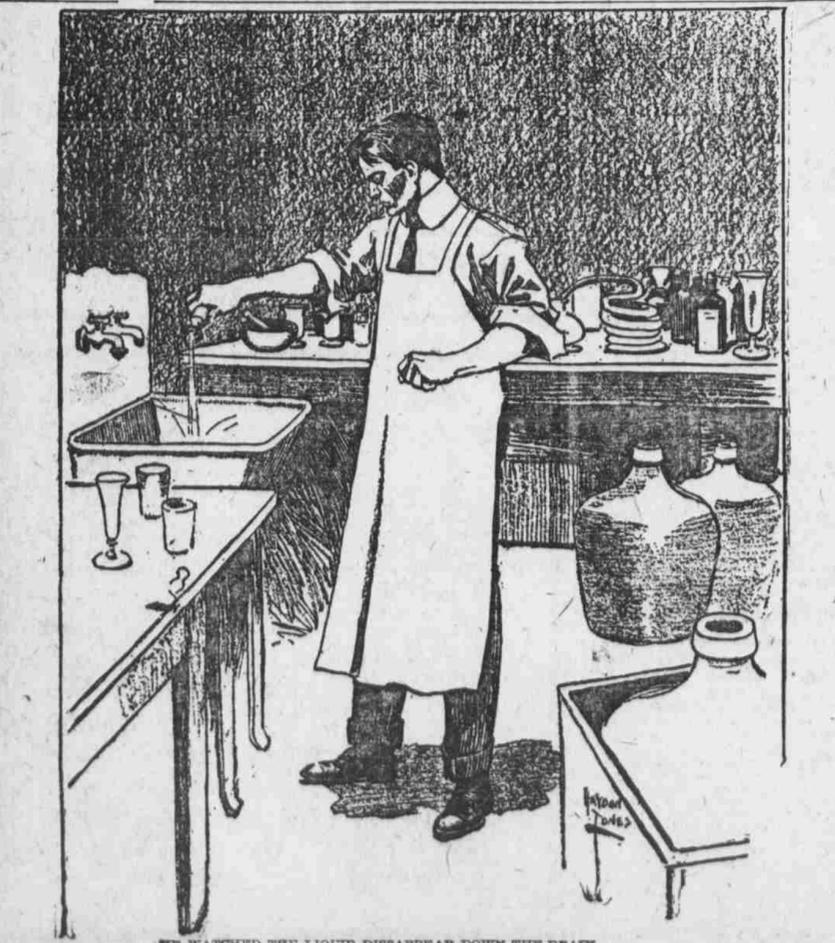
Enormous arrivals of new goods, coupled with the liveness of the spring season and undesirable weather, compel us to make this extraordinary offer. Come early Saturday morning and secure the cream of these splendid bargains.

\$15.00 Fancy Chevots— sizes 11 to 20, also \$4, \$5 and \$6— \$5	\$15.00 Scotch Tweeds—highly stylish patterns, best of tailoring—all sizes— \$5	\$15.00 Plain Black and Fancy Worsted—all sizes— \$5	\$12.50 Cashmere and Melton—desirable patterns, latest style—all sizes— \$5
\$12.50 Fancy Chevots—large assortment of patterns—all sizes— \$5	\$10.00 Black and blue Serges and Worsted all sizes, \$4, \$5, \$6— \$5	\$10.00 Black Worsted—square cut or round crown sacks—all sizes— \$5	\$10.00 Fancy Worsted, all styles and large range of patterns—all sizes— \$5

Hat Specials for Saturday Sale
500 young men's Panama Hats, in the rough, worth \$1.00, \$1.25, \$1.50, \$2.00, \$2.50, \$3.00, \$4.00, \$5.00, \$6.00, \$7.00, \$8.00, \$9.00, \$10.00, \$12.00, \$15.00, \$20.00, \$25.00, \$30.00, \$40.00, \$50.00, \$60.00, \$70.00, \$80.00, \$90.00, \$100.00. 5c

Boys' Pajamas 85c
Worth up to \$1.25; sizes 4 to 16.

SHIRTS
Another Big Shirt Purchase.
\$1.00 values go at 69c
Big odd and end lot of Neckwear, sold as high as \$1.00, go at 9c



HE WATCHED THE LIQUID DISAPPEAR DOWN THE DRAIN.

desk. I must have been there more than an hour before uncle called me. I was sleepy and completely confused for a while. Ellen was in the room—the second waitress, you know—and she had been trying to quiet him, but he insisted on having me give him a dose of the bromide. He was so impatient and overwrought that I hurried over to the medicine table, picked up the bottle and poured out a tablespoonful. He took it, and then—

"And then?"

"Editha shuddered.

"I went into my room and fell asleep across the bed. I think that it was a little past 3 when the crash aroused me. Uncle had left his bed and fallen and overturned the medicine table. Everything on it was broken."

"Everything?"

"I think so. We sent William for a physician and he brought Dr. Carney—a young man. He said that nothing could be done. Oh, Bobby, think of it! I must have seized that morphine bottle in my excitement instead of the bromide—and I killed poor uncle! I never realized what had happened until I found the label on my desk this morning!"

Gunnison, during the narrative had regained some degree of composure. Palpably, she knew nothing of Carney's grave scheme or of the unbroken bottle. It's turned to the girl with what, under the circumstances passed for a confident smile.

"Editha, haven't you excited yourself a great deal about nothing? I don't believe you ever confused those two bottles."

"But if I didn't—if I gave him the bromide—why did he die?"

"That might have happened any other night, little girl. Magruder has always said that, you know. His heart was weak. When's Magruder coming back?"

"Tomorrow night."

"Then you may be quite sure that he'll explode that foolish notion of yours, Editha. He'll tell you that a bad heart was responsible."

"I hope so. But—oh, if I only knew!" cried the girl.

The Graydon mining matter could not be postponed, so Gunnison did not reach the laboratory, with its fateful bottle, until 11 p. m. the next day.

Merrivether had left. The office boy was holding the place in the laboratory and closed the door behind him.

On the table, as he had left it the previous evening, stood the bottle. He snatched it up angrily, and raised his arm as if to dash the thing to bits.

That would settle either the bottle and morphine or it held bromide of soda—death or life. Which? Neither he nor any other mortal could tell without analysis. Gunnison had resolved never to learn.

But suddenly a new aspect of the case flashed over him. Suppose that he did shatter the thing. Might not the very act later jump up as a transparent, damning trick? Gunnison caught his breath. Instantly

or otherwise, the bottle must not break. He replaced it upon the table with the utmost care.

For an hour he paced the floor, trembling at times in a agony of indecision. He dared not destroy the stuff. Dare he analyze it?

The chemist uncorked the bottle with a firm hand, selected a clean test tube and poured out a little of the liquid, water-white and enigmatic. He reached for one of the reagent vials on the shelf—and paused again.

Suppose that it should prove to be morphine. What then? The news would be transmitted through Carney to the coroner. An inquest would certainly be held. Carney would give his testimony. Ellen, the maid, might positively identify the bottle and swear that her mistress had given it of its contents to Golden. They would call it murder. Then they would look for a motive—and find it in Golden's will!

Almost with loathing Gunnison sprang away from the table and the bottle.

The afternoon grew and waned. Gunnison tramped on and on, on headless of the passing hours, wrestling with his problem; now maddened with the uncertainty, now cursing himself for not undertaking the analysis.

The closing of a door caught his ear. In an instant his brain had cleared. The emergency was upon him. Merrivether had returned. And, on the spur of the moment, quite a simple solution of the difficulty appeared to Gunnison.

He glided across the laboratory, uncorked the bottle once more, quickly inverted it over the sink and watched the liquid disappear down the drain. He hurried back to his desk, drew forth a notebook and hurriedly set down a spurious record of the analysis. He produced a report blank, the report for the coroner, and that a bottle submitted for analysis by one Dr. Carney had been found to contain a solution of bromide of soda, free from adulterants.

The chemist mopped the perspiration from his forehead, bathed his burning face and, picking up the report, walked to the door of Merrivether's office.

The doctor was at his own desk, writing away under the incandescent bulb.

"I'm through with that stuff from the coroner's office," Gunnison said, rather hoarsely.

"Eh? Merrivether whirled about in his chair.

"That bromide of soda bottle."

"Fahaw! Have you been working on that, Gunnison?"

"Yes, I—"

"I meant to tell you—rather, to leave a note for you, about that," said Merrivether. "I went at it myself this morning—made an analysis out of sheer curiosity."

The report crumpled suddenly in Gunnison's hand. Merrivether had analyzed it—yes, and reported it as well!

"What—what did you find?" the assistant chemist managed to ask.

"Eh—yah!" Merrivether yawned and stretched, and to Gunnison the operation consumed hours. "Why—ah—there was nothing under the sun in that bottle but a dilute solution of bromide of soda. Merrivether turned back to his desk and hunted for a cigar, as he talked. "I tell you, Gunnison—nothing personal in this, of course—if there is one thing worse than a young chemist, it's a young doctor. This Carney chap must have a head full of dime novel romance that he's trying to fit into everyday life. Positively, from what he himself told me yesterday—eh?"

Merrivether realized with considerable astonishment that he was alone in the office.

Below, in the street, Gunnison was pushing frantically through the crowd. An echo of the night before flamed in his ears—"But if I only knew!" And he recalled the toes and the ribs and ignored the anathemas of the populace, in the speed of his transit; for she could know—

CHINAMAN IS A POTATO KING

Wing Ching of Los Angeles Made Twenty Thousand on Spud Crop This Season.

A bland, gray-pigmented old Chinaman on Apollonia street, Los Angeles, has become the potato king of California. Some of the so-called white ranchmen who claim there is no money in farming may take an unfriendly interest in the fact that shrewd old Wing Ching will clean up about \$20,000 out of his spud crop alone this season. His success is due to brains. He's canny and wise. No one knows exactly how many ranches Wing Ching has in his own name, and how many more in southern California he virtually owns by the mortgage that are plastered thereon; a good many, at any rate.

Old Wing is, in fact, a sort of private bank all to himself. His immense business interests he manages from a funny, dingy little store in the smallest part of Chinatown. He is looked upon with awe there as a bloated bondholder. He is, in fact, the most progressive Chinaman in the quarter. When the Chinaman goes broke, they go to Wing Ching; he has a mortgage on everything in "Little China."

To see old Wing Ching, such a bland, suave, honey-worded old chap, you never would pick him to be the man who first had the nerve to defy the dreaded high-binder societies and practically put them out of business. They used to live on black mail levied on rich Chinese merchants, who paid the tribute to keep from being hatched. At last they went to old Wing Ching and told him he must pay tribute, too.

He told them to go to thunder—or whatever the Chinese phrase is. He had them hatched him if they dared. And he went unhatched. Seeing there was really nothing but a growl to the fellows, other merchants followed his example, and the high-binder profession has ceased to yield a living in Chinatown.

Wing Ching always acts as treasurer for the Chinese when they contribute to Fiesta funds and to their own festivities. How he keeps the accounts of all these things goodness only knows. In his store there are four or five Chinese constantly making turkey tracks over strips of paper, and are presumably his bookkeepers. One is a polite, fat younger brother.

Like most of the other vegetable farmers, he has a high standing among the white business men. His various farm enterprises have been the financial salvation of several of the early day families here, whose estates had fallen into decay. At least one old Spanish estate has been turned from a waste strip of land into a fertile garden of rich earth by the hard working Chinaman.

Wing Ching and other Chinamen are said to be ideal tenants. The white landlord never loses track of rent day. The Chinaman is there every time in the early morning with the cash. Overdue rent is a thing unheard of among those who rent to them. This is not all. In many cases, in fact, it is almost the custom—the Chinamen pay the taxes on the land as well as the rent, and pay promptly—Los Angeles Times.

Experiences in Tipping.
Two energetic, hardworking little business women had finished their meager luncheon at a restaurant. They were figuring out the amount of their checks, and decided that they owed \$9 and 25 cents, respectively.

"Are you going to give a tip?" the little one asked.

"I'm tempted not to," returned the other.

"The nerve and impudence of these horrid men waiters are becoming unbearable."

"I shall never, never tip again," said the little one, firmly. "Yesterday I was not hungry and my check came to 30 cents. I put down an extra nickel. At first Mister Waiter seemed not to notice it, but as I was about to leave the table he snatched it impudently! Do you want this carfare lit, I don't! I suppose he thought I would not take it back, but I did."

"It was on Monday, I think, that I had my experience," said the other woman. "I asked the waiter to bring me small change for you to get a tip," and I called out."

"Is that small enough for you?" he sneered.

"Yes, it's small enough for me, I snapped back. But it isn't small enough for you to get a tip," and I called out."

New York Tribune.

See Want Ads bring the best returns.