

until we have heard a proper medical report," I replied. "When does the post mortem take place?"

"This afternoon."

"Very well. I can't do any good here until that is over. I shall go straight back to town now, and have this cigar examined by an expert, and return here tonight, when you can tell me what the doctor says."

My visit to town was not very successful. The cigar expert pronounced the half smoked specimen, which I asked him to examine, to be one of a very fine brand of Havanas, and he mentioned the name, but there's no need to repeat it now. On making a second and closer examination, however, he said he was mistaken. It was an imitation, and he pointed out a number of trifling differences in the rolling and wrapping which nobody but an expert would observe.

"You must be able to see," he said, "it's a beautiful cigar; quite as good as if it were a first class brand. Only it's not any brand at all. It was made privately; there's nothing exactly like it on the market."

The next point was to ascertain if it had been doctored in any way. With that object I called on a certain celebrated specialist to get his opinion. On hearing an outline of the case he became most interested.

"I don't believe it's possible," he said, "for a cigar to be manipulated that a person smoking it would drop dead. But we'll make a careful examination and see what we can find."

Then we cut it open, and every bit of it was put under a strong glass. But after parts of it had been submitted to various tests no trace of poisonous matter could be discovered.

I returned to Basinstoke at about 6:30, arriving half an hour before dinner. The feeling in my mind was that, though there was some reason, perhaps, to suspect Harry Kincaid of the crime, there was not a particle of evidence in the true sense of the word.

I told Edward Kincaid and his father the result of my journey, and then had a consultation with the doctor, who had been asked to remain for dinner. His decision was that Mr. Clavell had died from complete stoppage of the brain, but there was literally nothing to show what caused it, and there had been nothing in Mr. Clavell's habits and mode of life at all likely to produce mental paralysis.

Further conversation was stopped by the necessity of dressing for dinner. As we went through the hall we met Mr. Harry.

"Harry, I'm taking charge of the doctor. Would you mind Mr. Somers washing his hands in your room?" said Edward.

"Not at all," drawled his cousin.

"I hope you won't mind," said Edward to me. "Everything is, of course, in a beastly muddle, and," he added, when we were alone, "you will have a chance of looking around."

This was exactly what I wanted. I went hastily around the room, but found, to my disappointment, that everything was carefully locked. Suddenly my eye caught sight of his dinner jacket, which was hanging up behind the door. I remembered being told that our friend from South America only smoked cigars after dinner while in England, and it struck me he might have left his case in his pocket.

A search in the pocket proved I was right, and the next moment I had in my hand an elegant little silver case containing seven cigars. I tumbled them out on the toilet table and examined them. As far as I could make out, they were exactly like the one I had taken up to town. Suddenly a hand was on the door.

"Would you mind my coming in?" said a voice. "I just want to change my jacket."

He spoke with his usual drawl, but I

thought there was just a shade of anxiety in his voice.

"Certainly," I said, putting the cigars back and keeping up a running fire of talk all the time.

"You are not going to dress, are you?" I said.

"Oh, no, but I hate these frock coats—a dinner jacket is more comfortable." I was washing my hands, and I stood in front of the mirror so that I could watch him. I noticed that as soon as he had changed his coat he opened his cigar case and, as well as I could judge from the expression on his face, counted the cigars.

I began to feel profoundly interested, and determined to watch Mr. Harry and his cigars close'y. Dinner was a rather dull affair. There were no ladies present, and everybody was naturally depressed by the awful occurrence of the previous night. As soon as the dessert was put on, we began to smoke, and I was on the lookout for the appearance of the silver case.

It was soon produced, and offered to his right hand neighbor, who, however, declined it, preferring to smoke a cigarette. A little satirical smile flickered across Harry Kincaid's face. He selected one for himself and lighted it. The conversation became general, and a little brighter. The wine was passed round the table hospitably, and all began to look as if they were prepared to meet the troubles of this world with a cheerful resignation.

Suddenly Harry Kincaid gave a loud groan and staggered to his feet.

"Good heavens! I— Help! Brandy!"

Before anyone could move, he snatched his cigar case out of his pocket and hurled it across the room toward the fire. It struck a glass apergue in the centre of the table and broke it. Then he fell to the ground struggling madly, with the most horrible expression of fear and malice on his face I ever saw. In his fall he seized the table cloth and dragged nearly everything off the table. We all sprang to our feet, and the doctor rushed to his side. But it was too late. He was dead.

I cannot describe the horror of the scene. It didn't last more than a minute, and we stared at one another aghast. The same thought was in every one's mind. He had died in just the same way that Mr. Cavell had died the night before, only, being a younger man, the struggle has been more intense.

I at once picked up the cigar case, which was lying on the hearthrug, and in the presence of every one turned out the contents. I noticed that one of the six cigars was about an eighth of an inch shorter than the rest. I cut it open down the center. In the middle there was a little blue substance, about the size of a pea. Then we opened the other five. They were ordinary cigars.

It was easy to see what had happened. In putting the cigars back into his case I must have rearranged them, and the villain had incautiously smoked one which he had prepared for some one else. I took the lump of blue poison to the specialist whom I had consulted in the morning.

After some weeks I had this letter from him:

"My Dear Mr. Somers: I have carefully examined the blue substance which you submitted to me some little time ago, and have also shown it to the most eminent chemist of my acquaintance. We are bound to confess we can tell you nothing about it. It contains drugs which are quite unknown to modern science, and I can only think that Harry Kincaid had picked up some fiendish skill from the South Americans which is very happily quite unknown in Europe. It is a most unfortunate thing that he fell into his own trap, as I feel quite sure that otherwise it would have been impossible to bring him to justice.

"Believe me to be be yours faithfully,
"GIBBS DALTON."

—Tid-Bits.

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