

casual explanation of Dr. Anna, uttered at least two years ago, had left not an echo. A drop in his eggs or coffee might be too little; more, and he might detect the foreign quantity.

She removed the cork and sniffed. It was odourless, but was it tasteless?

Obviously there was no immediate way of ascertaining save by experiment on Mr. Balfame. And even if it were tasteless, it might cook his blood, congest his face, burst his veins — she recalled snatches of Dr. Anna's dissertations upon "interesting cases." On the other hand, one drop might make him violently ill; the suspicions of any doctor might be aroused.

She must walk warily. Murder was one of the fine arts. Those that cultivated it and failed followed the victim or spent the rest of their lives within prison walls. Thousands, it was estimated, walked the earth unsuspected, unapprehensive, serene and content — contemptuous of failures and bunglers, as are the masters in any art. Mrs. Balfame was proudly aware that her rôle in life was success.

There was nothing to do but wait. She must have another cosy evening with her scientific friend and draw her on to talk of the poison. Ah! that made another precaution imperative.

She went to the cupboard in the bathroom, rinsed a small bottle, transferred the precious colorless fluid, re-filled the vial with water and returned it to her bag. To-morrow or next day she would slip into Dr. Anna's house and restore it to its hiding place. The poison she secreted on the top shelf of the bathroom cupboard.

Reluctantly, for she was a prompt and methodical woman, she resigned herself to the prospect of David