A TERRIBLE SUSPENSE

By EDWARD L. BISSELL

How persons whose daily work carries with it the safety of the lives of other persons ever became accustomed to it I don't know. I have been one of them, and I couldn't do it, though I confess I had an experience that took away all my confidence. Those I refer to are engineers' pilots and the like. I was a druggist. I was obliged to put up prescriptions all day and often at night. Most of them were harmless, but in some were ingredients calculated if given in large enough doses to kill. We had a system about the poisons, but I defy any system ever invented to work every time. Sooner or later something will go wrong with it.

I was putting up a poison one day for vermin killing purposes. I had an engagement to meet my wife at a railway station at a certain hour to go to the country with our little boy, who was ill and who we feared was slowly dying. It is such situations as this that will break through systems and cause accidents. I had just so many minutes to reach my train and put up two prescriptions, the one a poison, the other harmless. My mind was preoccupied. If I should not reach the station in time my wife with our sick child would be in great distress. I was thinking of her while I was doing my work and delivering the packages to the two different persons, who were waiting for them. This done, I seized my hat and ran for the station.

I barely reached it in time, and, having put my family aboard the train, sat down beside them, mopped my brow and my mind settled back to what I had been doing before I left the store. A horrible suspicion came to me. I doubted if I had not given the poison to the wrong person. Another suspicion followed on the heels of the first. Had I not neglected to paste the label marked "Poison" on the bottle?

My first impulse was to jump off the train, though it was moving at a rate of fifty miles an hour. This, of course, I controlled. I must remain for no one knew how long in suspense. I had intended to stay a week with my wife in the country before leaving her there, but I now resolved to return the next day. If the blow was to fall upon me I preferred that it should fall while I was at my post than when away. Besides, I hoped that work would help to relieve me of the burden on my mind.

Not being willing to give my wife an additional trouble, I refrained from confiding to her my horrible suspicion, but I told her that we were so busy at the store that I would be obliged to go back the next day. This in itself was a bitter disappointment to her, and when the time came for my departure my boy was so ill that I lost much of my worry on account of my suspected blunder in my worry about him.

Several days passed, and I heard nothing indicating that any one had taken poison, though I studied the newspapers regularly, seeking for what I feared to find. Then it occurred to me that the poison might have been taken, but the one who had swallowed it saved. The blunder might have been reported at the store; but, owing to my distressing situation, they might for a time withhold the facts.

A week passed. My boy was much better, and I returned to the city. On the way while scouring a newspaper as usual my eye fell on a heading, "Fatal Mistake of a Druggist." I could read no more. I covered my eyes with my hands and groaned. Thrice I tried to muster up courage to read my fate, but was unable to do so and at the end of my journey left the newspaper in the train. Time enough to know all that had happened when I go to the store.

When I went to the store there was no evidence of anything having happened. I didn't dare ask about the case of poisoning I had seen in the newspaper, for the druggist might not have been located, and there was no use in giving myself away. But I worried all the same.

The two customers to whom I had given the medicine were an old man and a young woman. The poison was intended for the man, the ordinary dose for the young woman. I believed I had given her the poison. Her features were firmly fixed on my mind, though I had never seen her before, she being not a regular but a casual customer. I did not suppose that she was getting the medicine for herself, for she was the picture of health.

One morning I heard the store door close, and, looking up, there was this woman coming straight for me. My imagination pictured her with an accusation of murder in her eye. My heart stopped beating. I stood waiting for the blow to fall. She stood before me on the other side of the counter. With an effort I controlled myself, though I am sure I was deadly pale.

"Did you sell me some medicine about two weeks ago?"

"Poison?" I gasped.

"Poison! No, medicine! I want you to give me some more of it—the same kind—I can't recall its name."

Oh, the happiness of that moment! The same afternoon I went to the country, and my little boy, quite restored, came running to meet me. Then I told my wife what a foolish worry I had been through.

Value of Foods.

A well meaning meal containing the proper combination of foods is not difficult to prepare. The essential ingredient, a repairing material, is protein, found abundantly in meat, eggs, cheese and nuts. The starches and sugars, technically known as carbohydrates, are required also, together with fats for fuel for effort. These two fuel furnishing foods can be used alternately, thus securing a variation. Scientists who have given the question of food values special attention report that a diet of protein, fat and carbohydrates alone would cause starvation more quickly than if all food were withheld. There is the necessity of introducing some mineral salts that yield iron, calcium, magnesium, phosphorus and potassium.

A supply of iron is obtained from raisins, whole wheat, dried beans, prunes and meats or the yolks of eggs. Calcium is contributed by milk, dried peas and beans, celery and citrus fruits. In meat, peas, beans, milk and prunes there is magnesium. Phosphorus forms a quality in meat, milk, egg yolks, whole wheat, dried peas and beans. Potassium is furnished in potatoes parsnips, cabbage, turnips and apples —Leslie's.

The Baron's Order.

A worthy Welsh baronet, a member of one of the parliaments of William IV., was asked by one of his constituents who chanced to be in town at the time for an order of admission into the house. With his characteristic disposition to oblige, Sir —— immediately complied with the request and wrote an order in the usual terms and addressed it thus: "To the Door Keeper of the House of Kommons." The person for whom it was intended discovered the errors in the spelling after he had gone ten or twelve yards from the worthy baronet and, turning back and running up to him, said: "Oh, Sir ——, there is a slight mistake in your order. Two letters have been transposed. You have spelled 'keeper' with a 'e' instead of a 'k' and 'commons' with a 'k' instead of a 'c.' "That's all right," was the answer "The doorkeeper will see to it. He is sure to know which is which."

A Legend of the Forgetmenot.

The blue bloom of the forgetmenot was christened on the banks of the beautiful Danube. There is a legend that two lovers once walked there The girl admired some flowers, blue as her eyes, that grew upon an islet in the stream— The boy promised that she should have them, sprang into the river and swam to the island. Returning with the blooms, he had nearly reached the shore when the chill of the water and the strength of the current overcame him With eyes fixed on the white face of his beloved, he flung the blooms at her feet, cried "Forget me not!" and was swept away beneath the icy waters to his doom. The legend says the girl, in memory of him, wore forgetmenots in her hair until she, too, died of a broken heart. Henry IV. of England in his exile translated the forgetmenot to his friends to mean "Remember me."—Boston Post.

A Natural Query.

In the office window of a certain street railway company there is a sign which reads:

MOTORMEN AND CONDUCTORS EMPLOYED ONLY ON MONDAYS AND THURSDAYS.

A typical Irishman from the old sod happened along, and the sign struck his eye. Pausing, he slowly spelled out the words, while an expression of bewilderment overspread his face.

"Only worruk Moonday an' We'nsday, is ut?" he was overheard to mutter to himself. "Thin phwat th' divil do th' byes do all th' rist av th' wake?" —Lippincott's.

Split Infinitives.

During an examination in grammar and composition an inspector was questioning the highest class of the school, and he presently said:

"What is meant by the saying, 'You should not split the infinitive?'"

One determined looking boy, rather than give no answer at all, hazarded the reply:

"It means that you should not try to divide space."—Exchange.

A Jocular Convict.

"We're starting a circulating library for the use of the inmates," said the prison missionary. "Is there any particular book you'd like to make use of?"

"Why, yes," replied the convict. "If I could only use it right I'd like to have a railway guide"—London Tit-Bits.

Tactful Toast.

At the close of the wedding breakfast a gentleman noted for his lack of tact arose, causing keen anxiety to the bridegroom, who knew his failing.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he cried genially, "I propose the health of the bridegroom. May he see many days like this."—Ladies' Home Journal.

Too Envious.

"I have read three novels by your cousin, Amanda, and in not one of them do the lovers marry Now, that is peculiar!"

"Oh, not at all! She is much too envious to give others such happiness!" —Fliegende Blatter.

A New Time Table.

"When does this ferry run, Uncle?" asked the would-be passenger.

"Dis ferry, Marse," said the old man, "she runs at quarter arter, half arter, quarter to and at."—Lippincott's.

A slip of the tongue is worse than that of the foot.—Spanish Proverb.

An Arrest

By JAMES B. BARSTOW

Mrs. Burrage (Mlle. de Fou and Signorina Tarantola, with a number of other aliases) was the most accomplished swindler I ever had anything to do with in all my term of service on the police force. She must have belonged to a well to do family or had a talent for languages, for she could pose as a native of any civilized land.

One day my chief told me that he had reliable information of this accomplished confidence lady; that she was living in apartments and he wished me to go and arrest her. "Go in plain clothes," he said, "and keep your wits about you. She is very slippery and will elude you if you give her the slightest opportunity."

I started out with the intention of being thoroughly on my guard. I knew that bathhouses are apt to be convenient for those who wish to light out suddenly and took with me sufficient force to watch from every direction. Having stationed a man in front, in rear and on the roof of the adjoining building, I rang the bell at Mrs. Burrage's door. The summons was answered by a maid dressed in uniform—a black dress, apron and cap. She held a silver salver in her hand for a card.

But I was not there for a call, nor did it suit my purpose to send in my name. I brushed past the maid and passed through the living room to a bedroom, where I found a lady in dishabille.

"What are you doing here?" she asked, betraying a foreign accent.

"I have come, madam, to ask you to make a call upon the inspector."

"The inspector! What does this mean?"

"That you are under arrest."

She pretended for awhile to be bewildered at the idea of being arrested, but when she found I would listen to her no longer she agreed to accompany me without urging if I would permit her to put on a costume suitable to the street. After examining the outlets and seeing no possible way of her making an escape I consented. The room was at the end of the suit, on the fourth floor, and no fire escape within reach. There was no possibility of her getting out except through the living room. So I retreated to that apartment, but insisted that the door between the two rooms should be sufficiently ajar for me to hear, though not to see.

There was but one door opening from the suit to the hall, and at this door I had stationed a man with orders to let no one pass. On one side of the flat passageway was the living room, on the other the dining room and kitchen. But what interested me was the bedroom in which I had the prisoner cornered. I could not for my life see how she could escape me.

Mrs. Burrage, or whatever her name was, took her time about dressing. I listened for every move, and she made enough of them for me to know by the sound that she was still there. This was gratifying, for, though I saw no way for her to escape me, I would have felt uneasy at any lengthy silence. When a quarter of an hour had passed and she did not appear I asked her if she was not ready. She replied that she had no one to hook the back of her dress. I told her that I had often performed that service for my wife and if she would come into the living room I would accommodate her. She said she would prefer that I come in to her. Resolved not to grant anything she proposed, I told her to come out to me, which she did with evident reluctance.

I hooked her dress for her, and when she went back to her bedroom to put on her coat and hat I flung the door wide open, so that she could complete her toilet under my observation. She was so slow about it that I finally told her that I would give her five minutes by my watch to finish. She got into her wraps within the time and said that she was ready to accompany me. But she must ask me to go through the rooms with her—if I would not permit her to go alone—to see that they were in order for locking up. I consented, and we passed through the other bedrooms and finally entered the dining room. My prisoner passed through it to a pantry between it and the kitchen and, opening a door, looked down a lift used for sending up supplies. Thinking she would attempt to escape through it, I caught her skirt.

She turned toward me and smiled.

"You may take me to the inspector if you choose," she said, "but I am not the person you are after. I am the maid. My mistress you passed at the door. She got word of a visit by the police and immediately changed clothes with me. When you came to me she made up for a man, went down on this lift to one of the apartments below and has doubtless passed out through the main entrance. I have been delaying you in order to give her the needed time. Here," pointing to the servant's room, "are her maid's clothes."

I did not take her to the inspector. I went back to him myself and got laughed at.

Some years later I went to arrest the same woman and succeeded. I asked her how she got wind of her intended arrest, and she told me that she happened at the time to be looking out of a window down on the street and saw me posting my men. She had just time to change costumes with the maid.

The Ruling Passion.

It is an evident fact that the body when it has long been a slave to evil passions finds it next to impossible to break its chains. The mind may passionately desire righteous living, but the abused nervous system, fallen into iron habits, refuses the soul's behest.

Canon Gore wrote that he was once present at the deathbed of a pickpocket, a man who professed himself to be sincerely penitent and who believed in the forgiveness of sins.

He had said goodby to this world, and the clergyman sat by his side waiting for his last moment to come. Suddenly the sinking man exclaimed in a hoarse and painful whisper:

"Look out for your watch."

They were his last words. He had died in their utterance, and the clergyman's watch was found in his lifeless hand. He had not been able to resist the nearness of an article that could be stolen. His enfeebled will could not prevent the muscles from falling into their old habits, but his mind (his soul, shall we say?) protested to the last.—London Standard.

Too Slow.

A rather diffident young man met a pretty girl last winter in Bermuda. He danced with her, he wheeled with her to a hotel for strawberries and cream, and he bathed with her in the pretty blue pool with its lining of azure tiles.

But he didn't propose. Was he too bashful? The girl one afternoon in a tea garden offered to read his future, and, holding his big brown hand in her slim white one, she murmured as her finger moved delicately across his palm:

"This line indicates that before you lies—happiness."

She paused, with downcast eyes. But nothing followed. The young man sat beside her, grinning sheepishly. Her lip curled in disdain, and she added in a clear, cold voice:

"But this line indicates that you'll never overtake that future. You're too slow."—New York Tribune.

Nelson and Red Tape.

When Nelson returned to England after he lost his eye he went to receive a year's pay as smart money, but could not obtain payment because he had neglected to bring a certificate from a surgeon that the sight was actually destroyed. A little irritated that this form should be insisted on, because though the fact was not apparent, he thought it was sufficiently notorious, he procured a certificate at the same time for the loss of his arm, saying they might as well doubt one as the other. * * * On his return to the office the clerk, finding it was only the annual pay of a captain, observed he thought it had been more. "Oh," replied Nelson, "this is only for an eye In a few days I shall come for an arm, and in a little longer, God knows, most probably for a leg."

Preaching and Practice.

In Gladstone Lady Dorothy Nevill found a conversationalist after her own heart. She sang his praises many times in her reminiscences, and once she told this anecdote of his methods of self protection at public gatherings:

"I remember his talking about the safety of the times and how public men could now go unguarded everywhere, while he was sitting at a dinner table with two detectives provided by Scotland Yard in order to watch over him standing in the room, while another was upstairs ready to mix with the guests at the party which was afterward to be given. The Grand Old Man's two guardians at the dinner were dressed as footmen, one standing immediately behind his chair, while the other took up a position directly opposite on the other side of the table."

Enough Said.

The teacher in charge of one of the grades in a grammar school wrote on the board a number of words ending in the syllable "tion." After explaining the meaning of each to the class she told them to use the words in sentences. Her pupils wrote busily for a few moments, and then one of them astonished her with the following:

"Father's hair is a recollection, mother's is an acquisition, auntie's is a compilation, sister's is an aggregation brother's is a conflagration, while baby's is a mere premonition."—Magazine of Fun.

The Penalty of Politeness.

"I noticed, dear," said Mr. Markham to his wife, "you didn't say 'thank you' to the man who gave you his seat in the street car this evening."

"No," replied Mrs. Markham; "you see, I once stopped to say thank you and by the time I had done so I found that another woman had the seat"—New York Post.

Presence of Mind.

Show Girl (bursting into manager's office)—Quick! There's a fire behind the scenes. The gang are rushing about like mad and screaming their heads off. Looks like a panic. What will we do? Manager—Do? Ring up the curtain, of course, and let the audience think it is the opening chorus.—Puck

Noble Boy.

"You ate all your own cake and Mabel's, too, Tommie?" said the mother.

"Yes'm," replied Tommie.

"You'll be sick, child!"

"Well, mother, you see if anybody was going to be sick I didn't want it to be Mabel."—Yonkers Statesman.

Very Different.

"Before I was married a twenty dollar bill looked like a two spot."

"And now?"

"Now, by George, a one looks like a miracle."—Boston Transcript.

Successful and Lucky.

Mr. Wilson Barrett, in "Some Studies in Stage Craft," says he was nearly spoiled his character with Sir Henry Irving as the result of his one success. Mr. Barrett, in his opinion, was to succeed for his own sake, and at the expense of his art. He was told that in the part of Jacques Duval he must "subdue the mannerisms and be one of the people." He did so.

I reached at it, hit the table and gave them my regular "conventional" drawing room imitation of the great man himself. Jerking my small and waving my hands in the air, I shouted, "Hi—hi—or—or—landlord—or—or—why the devil—or—or—don't you bring—or—some—or—or—refreshment—or—for—myself—and—or—or—or—." I never got any further. Fifty people on the stage collapsed, some with fear, others with laughter. Never had such a thing been known within the sacred walls of the Lyceum. The late Henry Loveday, the stage manager, turned pale with fright. The great chief glared at me for a moment with eyes dilated and then gave me a peck, saying, "Stupid fellow!" He practically pushed me off the stage.

Enduring it Calmly.

In "The Fourth Generation," her volume of reminiscences of English social and literary life during the last century, Mrs. Janet Ross adds the name of Nassau W. Senior, the English economist, to the already long list of persons who consider music "a horrid noise that stops conversation."

Once at Bowood, Lord Lansdowne's place, Tom Moore had been prevailed upon to sing. All the party drew near to the piano save Mr. Senior, who sat at a small table and began to write with a quill pen on Lord Lansdowne's very ribbed paper. He was compiling an article on statistics or something of the sort.

Moore began, but he was so much worried by the persistent scratch, scratch, that he stopped to see who was making the odious noise.

Senior raised his head. "Oh, you don't disturb me, I assure you," he said blandly. "Pray, go on. I rather like it."

Insolence of Wealth.

A Southern negro put up a sign on his place, "For Sale." He was ridiculed and changed it to "Sell" and finally tried a third time, his sign reading "Sell." It had not been up an hour when an old colored man came along and queried:

"Does yo' mean dat dis place am for Sally? What yo' gwine to gi' de place to Sally for?"

"Am you findin' fault wid dat sign?" asked the other.

"Well, I dean' quite cotch on to de spellin'."

"You dean', eh? Has you got eleven hundred dollahs to pay cash down for dis place?"

"No, sah."

"Den yo' pass on an' shet up! Maybe I dean' spell jest de same as you do, but I'm got prospects of handling eleven hundred dollahs while you po' boff knees out to de wedder. Go 'long ole man; yo' too sly on jography."

Weather Reduced to Prose.

The weather was quite a poetical and poetic thing. It came up in the night with a boom and a bang through the trees. It was a sort of mystic thing that asked no questions, but just swung a scepter. It was grand in "red sky in the morning, sailors take warning." It was a wholesome lesson to proud man that he always had a master, and it made us more interest toward nature and the Creator. There was such a difference in receiving our weather direct from heaven and receiving it by wire direct from Washington.—New York Mail.

Sounded Funny.

An individual of considerable importance, by name Tootle, once attended a reception, accompanied by his wife. The announcement was made, "Mr Tootle!"

"And Mrs. Tootle," was suggested sotto voce in corrective tones.

"And Mrs. Tootle, too!" resounded like the blast of a horn through the room, to the evident amusement of the large assembly.—London Answers

Weighing the Baby.

"How many stamps will this baby take by parcel post?"

"It weighs fourteen pounds," announced the clerk. "The number of stamps required depends on where you want it to go."

"I don't want it to go anywhere, thank you. I just wanted to ascertain its weight."—Kansas City Journal.

Definition of Drunkenness.

The following definition of being drunk has been given by a laborer in a Melbourne police court, writes our Sydney correspondent:

"I go on drinking till I think I'm drunk. Then I drink more till I believe I am sober. Then I am sure that I am drunk."—London Mail.

Very Often the Case.

"All the average man wants is fair play," remarked the wise guy.

"Yes, but the trouble is he also wants to act as umpire," added the simple mug.—Philadelphia Record.

Good Excuse.

Housekeeper—Why do you charge so much for your ice?

Iceman—Well, mam, the water was high where we cut it.—Boston Transcript.

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A Continental Story of 1813

By ARTHUR [illegible]

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