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The Call



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MRS. BOTKIN, CHARGED WITH MURDER, ASKS FOR JUSTICE

SHE SEEKS TO PROVE AN ALIBI

McVey Brings the Growsome Instruments of the Assassin's Work.

The Local Police Authorities Begin the Actual Investigation.

Legal Proceedings Are Suspended for a Week—The Accused Woman Outlines Her Plan of Defense for the First Time.

The tragic story of murder in which Mrs. Cordelia Botkin is now the central figure of interest reached yesterday a dramatic climax. B. J. McVey of the State detectives of Delaware reached the city and brought with him the deadly evidence that may lead some one to the gallows. The local authorities began their investigation and started on the trail. Mrs. Botkin was formally charged with murder and aroused to the terror of her situation she broke the silence that has sealed her lips. She appealed to The Call as a medium through which to proclaim her innocence and to demand an impartial trial from the people of the State.

In the events of the day Mrs. Botkin's defense of herself was immeasurably the most important. The woman explains her motive in maintaining silence under the terrible stress of accusation. She declared that the humiliation and terror that she suffered when charged with an awful crime made her fear the consequences of speaking. She was emphatically denied. Unjustly accused of a horrible crime she asks the right of an impartial trial. The woman's statement made shortly after she was charged with murder is unusually dramatic. When the officers of the prison asked Mrs. Botkin for her age and nativity to be entered as items in the charge of murder she refused to give the information. She seemed to fear that even the slightest facts in her career would be twisted to her disadvantage, but upon the assurance of her attorneys she did as she was asked.

A few minutes before B. J. McVey, a detective from Delaware, had reached police headquarters. He came clothed in an atmosphere of mystery and was armed with the evidence that a crime had been committed. Beyond that he had nothing except the information that the people of Dover and the State were generally excited to a great pitch of indignation over the terrible crime committed in their midst. Detective McVey says the people of Delaware will have no peace until the poisoner is brought to justice. He came armed with two warrants, each charging Mrs. Botkin with murder. Both complaints were sworn to by John B. Pennington before Peter L. Cooper, a Justice of the County of Kent, Delaware. These warrants will not be served, as copies of them are included in the application for extradition which left Delaware yesterday and will arrive in this city before the end of the week.

Detective McVey brought with him the box of poisoned candy that carried death to Mrs. Dunning and Mrs. Deane. In the shadow of the crime of which this box of candy had been the instrument it looked growsome. Chief Lees handled it gingerly, lifting the cover and with cautious touch of a penknife inspection, slowly and deliberately made, had the uncanny aspect of a post-mortem examination of the murderer's victim. The chief lifted a small handkerchief from the table and spread out the folds of dainty lace. In one corner was the dealer's price mark—a small square, maulaged bit of paper with the figures 25 marked upon it. There are countless thousands of such handkerchiefs in the stores and in the examination of Mrs. Botkin's effects a similar one has not been found.

Then the death package itself was

"I AM INNOCENT BEFORE GOD!"

Mrs. Cordelia Botkin Declares She Had Nothing to Do With the Poisoning of Mrs. Dunning and Mrs. Deane.

Asks What Should Be Granted to Every Accused Person, a Suspension of Opinion Until She Can Be Heard in Court.

Editor Call: I believe the time has arrived when it is proper for me to speak, and I take this method of requesting you to publish in your columns the following statement:

Up to the present time I have maintained silence by the advice of my husband, who told me when this awful suspicion was first brought upon me that in my hysterical and terrified condition talking could do me no good, and that anything I might say would undoubtedly be distorted and misrepresented and perhaps used to my disadvantage by the sensational reporters. Since I have obtained legal counsel I have been told that this advice was good. Therefore it has been through no desire to keep from the public information of my defense in this matter that I have remained silent under the most trying circumstances, but because in the humiliation and terror of being arrested on suspicion of having committed an awful crime, I felt that it was not safe for me to speak.

Now, however, my friends, to whom I have given a history of my life for years past, advise me that I ought to at least publicly assert my innocence. To those who know me and know that I am incapable of committing any such crime as has been laid at my door, I need say nothing. They will not believe a word against me. To strangers, who may think the newspaper reporters have made out a case against me, I only ask what should be granted to every accused person—a suspension of opinion until I can be heard in court.

I am a woman and almost defenseless. I am prostrated with grief and humiliation. I am filled with horror at the position in which I am placed. Is it unreasonable under these circumstances to ask those who do not know me to await the hearing? If given an opportunity I shall prove my innocence, for I am innocent before God.

I have told Chief of Police Lees everything. I have accounted for every moment of my life for months past. I have told one of my attorneys, Senator McGowan, the whole story of my life. He believes me innocent and says I need have no fear that harm will come to me. I thank heaven that at least one strong and resolute man is prepared to defend me with all his talent, influence and power. The newspapers, which should always espouse the cause of the innocent, and the authorities of this city, who should ever sustain the weak and defenseless, seem leagued against me.

I do not know the wife of John P. Dunning and have no feeling against her. I am not and never was in love with Mr. Dunning. I befriended him when he was in trouble, and that is all. My son was very fond of him and both of us believe that he is a true gentleman and that none of the things he is reported to have told the Delaware officers against me are true.

I am incapable of committing any such crime as this. My relations with Mr. Dunning were only those of a friend. I never wrote him love letters, nor has he written me such letters. Chief Lees has all my letters, including those written by my husband for a year past, and they contain nothing which shows me in any other than a proper light.

What more can I say? I deny everything. Can it be possible that I am to be convicted by the newspapers of a crime of which I am innocent, simply because I was so unfortunate as to enjoy the acquaintance of John P. Dunning and to help him in his financial troubles?

What possible motive could I have for poisoning his wife? He has told me that she was a lovely woman and that he thought more of her than he could tell. I respected him for that. I was not responsible for his troubles. I only did for him what other friends did for him while he resided in San Francisco. I aided him in my weak and humble way to retrieve his fortunes.

I have said all this, not because I expect to be believed, for I know that every hand is raised against a helpless woman in my position, but because I can no longer restrain my emotions. In due time I know I shall come out of this ordeal unscathed. I am confident that a just God will not permit an innocent woman to suffer and I have faith in Him.

I have read about innocent persons having been convicted upon circumstantial evidence which afterward turned out to be misleading and untrue, and the thought that I may become a victim of such a thing fills me with horror and dismay. But I shall try to bear up and meet manfully whatever fate shall have in store for me, conscious in my heart that I am innocent and that the truth will in the end vindicate me.

Will you please publish this? You have given columns to my persecutors. Please give me a word in reply.

Cordelia Botkin

Stockton suspected it might be. Written in duplicate on the wrapper is the address, "Mrs. John P. Dunning, Dover, Delaware," the name of the State being misspelled. There are five canceled stamps, four 6-cent stamps and one 2-cent stamp. Across the latter is plainly seen the postmark of San Francisco. When the box was opened the alluring note of death was seen. "With love to yourself and baby. Mrs. C." It read. It may be the scrap of evidence by which the poisoner will be brought to the scaffold. The poisoned candy shows plainly the devilish work of the assassin. A casual observer might say that the surface of the chocolate creams had been broken in the long journey across the continent in the mail. A closer examination shows that the candies had been drawn out to receive the poison within, and had then, by a slight pressure, been contracted to their original size. In the operation the outer surface had been broken. The box is still almost full of candy, showing that the unfortunate victims of the assassin had partaken but sparingly of the deadly sweetmeats.



Detective McVey brought also the bundle of anonymous threatening letters that Mrs. Dunning had received. These were carefully examined and will be used for purposes of comparison. In all the evidence brought across the continent by the detective there is not a single letter signed by Mrs. Botkin or known to have been written by her. With the examination of the anonymous letters the Eastern detective exhausted his contribution to the case.

Chief Lees lost no time in having made a photographic copy of every scrap of evidence that he had received. This task engaged the attention of the Chief, the Eastern detective and an expert the entire afternoon. Specimens of Mrs. Botkin's known handwriting were also photographed and will be compared with the handwriting received yesterday from Dover. As soon as possible photographic enlargements of all the specimens will be made and then the actual work of investigation will begin. Notwithstanding the fact that Mrs. Botkin has been charged with murder the vital evidence against her, if any exists, must yet be obtained.

One of the witnesses who believed that he possessed information of the greatest moment has become of greater value to the defense than he is to the prosecution. This witness who has carried consternation to Chief of Police Lees is J. E. Fennessee, who insists that at quarter to 6 o'clock on the afternoon of August 4 he saw a woman deposit a box in the mail at the ferry postal station. Fennessee is positive that he observed the incident. He is quite as sure of the day and the hour. He noticed what he believed to be the woman's uneasiness and he is convinced that the box resembled that of a

WILL FIGHT FOR MRS. BOTKIN.

The Delaware Authorities Will Make a Hard Struggle to Take the Accused Prisoner East for Trial.

DOVER, Del., Aug. 29.—"Mrs. Botkin will be fought for," Attorney General White said today. "I have no doubt that the requisition will be granted and Mrs. Botkin will be surrendered for trial in this State. While we are not demanding a surrender as a constitutional right, because she was not actually in the State where and when she is alleged to have committed the crime, nor has she been in the State since, she is not, therefore, a fugitive in the sense contemplated by the constitution, yet we do demand the surrender upon the ground of State comity. We propose to place before the Governor of California sufficient evidence in the way of affidavits of witnesses of this State and by oral testimony in California to convince him of her guilt."

with Acting District Attorney Hosmer and Postal Inspector Irwin. The legal phases of the case were again reviewed and Inspector Irwin was asked to assist in every way in determining beyond question the exact time when the box of candy was mailed.

As expected, Mrs. Botkin did not appear yesterday either in the Police Court or in the Superior Court. The habeas corpus proceedings before Judge Cook were postponed until next Tuesday morning to give time for the arrival of the papers demanding extradition. For the same reason the trial before Judge Joachimsen was continued until Wednesday morning. For a week at least the legal battle will be suspended, but in another field Mrs. Botkin will be fighting for her life. Her whole career is under

made to hold the defendant for trial in this State. The complaint is drawn under the provision of section 27 of the Penal Code.

An attempt was also made yesterday to correct the errors made when Mrs. Botkin was arrested. The statute providing for the extradition of persons accused of crime says that the magistrate who issues the order for arrest shall specify in the document a reasonable time which the defendant may be held pending the arrival of the requisition from the State asking for the surrender of the fugitive from justice. Judge Joachimsen's warrant did not contain this specification, but on the contrary was an ordinary warrant directing that "said Cordelia Botkin be produced in his court forthwith." Mrs. Botkin has not appeared in Judge Joachimsen's court, although the police contend that she is in the jurisdiction of the Police Court. If the attorneys for Mrs. Botkin so desired they could demand and secure the immediate release of the prisoner because the proceedings so far have been decidedly irregular.

FORMALLY CHARGED WITH THE CRIME

Mrs. Botkin Booked on the Prison Register on Two Counts for Murder.

At 10 o'clock yesterday morning two formal charges of murder were entered in the big book at the Central police station against the name of Mrs. Cordelia Botkin. The prisoner was not present at the desk when Sergeant Martin wrote this first formal charge against her.

Now was she present before Police Judge Joachimsen when the hearing of the case against her was called, and the great crowd of morbid idlers that had gathered to see the Botkin woman on her first public appearance since her arrest disappointedly drifted from the chambers.

When the habeas corpus proceedings were called at 10 o'clock by Judge Carroll Cook, Attorney George A. Knight asked for a continuance of the case until September 6. As the basis for his request Mr. Knight alleged courtesy and an anxiety that the prosecution should have ample time in which to perfect its fight for extradition. Chief Lees acquiesced in the request of the defense and Judge Cook granted the continuance. Later Judge Joachimsen continued the preliminary hearing to the morning of Wednesday, September 7, upon the further request of Mr. Knight.

With love to yourself and baby Mrs. C.

The Loving Letter That Accompanied Death.

box of candy that dealers sell for fifty cents.

All of this is vital testimony in the case either for or against Mrs. Botkin. The attorneys for the defense can prove beyond dispute that at 4 o'clock on the afternoon of August 4 the accused woman took the boat from this city on her way to St. Helena. The woman who acted so strangely therefore at the ferry could not have been Mrs. Botkin. In consequence of this Fennessee's testimony may be of the greatest value to the accused woman not only in establishing an alibi, but in throwing a mysterious element into the case.

Before Detective McVey arrived yesterday Chief Lees was in consultation

police scrutiny. Her every movement in association with Dunning is under investigation, and the events of the first days of this month are being studied with the grim purpose to determine whether the end shall be life or death for the accused woman.

MAY BE TRIED IN THIS STATE

Mrs. Botkin's Attorneys Are Convinced That the Prisoner Will Not Be Extradited.

Anticipating the defeat of the attempt to extradite Mrs. Botkin, Chief Lees has already had a complaint prepared charging her with murder and an effort will



The Fight for the Life of Mrs. Botkin Is On.