

# The Mystery of the Boule Cabinet

By BURTON E. STEVENSON  
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(Continued from First Page.)

"It was Rogers. He's almost hysterical. We'll get the story as soon as he quiets down."  
Some one called him from the door, and he turned away, leaving me staring blankly at nothing. So there had been a woman in Vantine's life! Per-



"Look here!" he cried again.

haps that was why he had never married. What ugly skeleton was to be dragged from its closet?

But if a woman killed Vantine, the same woman also killed D'Aurelle, where was her hiding place? From what ambush did she strike?

I glanced about the room as a tremor of horror seized me. I arose, shaking, from the chair and groped my way toward the door. Godfrey heard me coming, swung around and, with one glance at my face, came to me and caught me by the arms.

He led me into the hall, and a second glass of brandy gave me back something of my self control. I was ashamed of my weakness, but when I glanced at Godfrey I saw how white his face was.

"Better take a drink yourself," I said. I heard the decanter rattle on the glass.  
"I don't know when I have been so shaken," he said, setting the glass down empty. "It was so gawson—so unexpected—and then Rogers carrying on like a madman. Ah, here's the doctor," he added, as the front door opened and Parks showed a man in.

I knew Dr. Hughes, of course, returned his nod and followed him and Godfrey into the room. I heard Godfrey telling him all he knew, while Hughes listened with incredulous face.

"But it's absurd, you know," he protested, when Godfrey had finished.

"Things like this don't happen here in New York. In Florence, perhaps, in the middle ages; but not here in the twentieth century!"

"I can scarcely believe my own senses," Godfrey agreed. "But I saw the Frenchman lying here this afternoon; and now here's Vantine."  
Hughes turned back to the body again, and looked long and earnestly at the injured man.

"What sort of instrument made this wound, would you say, Mr. Godfrey?" he questioned at last.

"A sharp instrument with two prongs. My theory is that the prongs are hollow, like a hypodermic needle, and leave a drop or two of poison at the bottom of the wound. You see, a vein has been cut."

"Yes," Hughes assented. "It would scarcely be possible to pierce the hand here without striking a vein. One of the prongs would be sure to do it."  
"That's the reason there are two of them, I fancy."

"But you are, of course, aware that no poison exists which would act so quickly?" Hughes inquired.

Godfrey looked at him strangely. "You yourself mentioned Florence a moment ago," he said. "You meant, I suppose, that such a poison did at one time exist there?"

"Something of the sort, perhaps," agreed Hughes.

"Well, the poison that existed in Florence five centuries ago exists here today. There's the proof of it," and Godfrey pointed to the body.

"But what sort of devilish instrument is it?" cried Hughes, his nerves giving way for an instant, his voice mounting shrilly. "Above all, who wields it?" Then he shook himself together.

"There is something supernatural about it, something I can't understand. How does it happen that each of the victims is struck on the right hand? Why not on the left hand? Why the hand at all?"

Godfrey answered with a despairing shrug. "That is what we've got to find out," he said.

"We shall have to call in the police," suggested Hughes. "Maybe they can solve it."

Godfrey smiled, a little skeptical smile, quickly suppressed.

"At least they will have to be given the chance," he agreed. "Shall I attend to it?"

"Yes," said Hughes, "and you would better do it right away. The sooner they get here the better."

"Very well," assented Godfrey, and left the room.

Hughes sat down heavily on the couch near the window and mopped his face again with a shaking hand.

That was a trying half hour. Hughes sat on the couch, breathing heavily, staring at the floor. As for me, I was thinking of my dead friend. I remembered Philip Vantine as I had always known him—a kindly, witty, Christian gentleman. That such a man should be killed like this, struck down by a mysterious assassin, armed with a poisoned weapon!

A woman! But why should she have chosen Philip Vantine of all men for her victim—Philip Vantine, who had never injured any woman? And then I paused, for I realized that I knew nothing of Vantine except what he had chosen to tell me. Parks would know. And then I shrank from the thought. Must we probe that secret? Must we compel a man to betray his master?

The door opened and Godfrey came in. This time he was not alone. Simmonds and Goldberger followed him, and their faces showed that they were as shaken and nonplused as I. There was a third man with them whom I did not know, but I soon found out that it was Freylinghansen, the coroner's physician.

Instead of getting to work, Goldberger walked up and down, pulling impatiently at his mustache and glancing at his watch now and then. He seemed to be waiting for some one, but not until twenty minutes later did I suspect who it was. Then the door opened again to admit a short, heavy set man, with florid face, stubby black

mustache and little, close set eyes, preternaturally bright.

"This is Mr. Lester, Commissioner Grady," said Goldberger, and I realized that the chief of the detective bureau had come up from headquarters to take personal charge of the case. "Mr. Lester is Mr. Vantine's attorney," the coroner added, in explanation.

"Glad to know you, Mr. Lester," said Grady shortly.

"And now, I guess, we're ready to begin," went on the coroner.

"Not quite," said Grady grimly. "We'll excuse all reporters first," and he looked across at Godfrey, his face darkening.

I felt my own face flushing and started to protest, but Godfrey silenced me with a little gesture.

"It's all right, Lester," he said. "Mr. Grady is quite within his rights. I'll withdraw until he sends for me."

"You'll have a long wait, then," retorted Grady, with a sarcastic laugh.

"The longer I wait the worse it will be for you, Mr. Grady," said Godfrey quietly, opening the door and closing it behind him.

"All right, Goldberger," said Grady, and sat down to watch the proceedings.

A very few minutes sufficed for Hughes and Freylinghansen and I to tell all we knew of this tragedy and of the one which had preceded it.

"You've got a list of the servants here, of course, Simmonds?" Grady said when he had finished the story.

"Yes, sir," and Simmonds handed it to him.

"How?" said Grady as he glanced over it. "Five of 'em. Know anything about 'em?"

"They've all been with Mr. Vantine a long time, sir," replied Simmonds. "So far as I've been able to judge they're all right."

"Which one of 'em found Vantine's body?"

"Parks, I think," I said. "It was he who called me."

"Better have him in," said Grady, and doubled up the list and slipped it into his pocket.

Parks came in looking decidedly shakily, but answered Grady's questions clearly and concisely.

"Mr. Vantine had dinner at home, sir," he said. "It was served, I think,

at 7 o'clock. He must have finished a little after 7:30. I didn't see him, for I was straightening things around up in his room and putting his clothes away. But he told Rogers—"

"Never mind what he told Rogers," broke in Grady. "Just tell us what you know."

"Very well, sir," said Parks submissively. "It must have been halfpast 8 when I heard Rogers yelling for me. I thought the house was on fire and I came down in a hurry. Rogers was standing out there in the hall looking like he'd seen a ghost. He kind of gasped and pointed to this room, and I looked in and saw Mr. Vantine lying there. Then I telephoned for Mr. Lester, and that's all I know."

"Very well," said Grady; "that's all for the present. Send Rogers in."

Rogers' face as he entered the room gave me a kind of shock, for it was that of a man on the verge of hysteria. He was a man of about fifty, with iron gray hair and a smooth shaven face, ordinarily ruddy with health. But now his face was livid, his cheeks lined and shrunken, his eyes bloodshot and staring.

"Get him a chair," said Grady, and Simmonds brought one forward and remained standing beside it. "Now, my man," Grady continued, "you'll have to brace up. What's the matter with you, anyhow? Didn't you ever see a dead man before?"

"It ain't that," gasped Rogers. "It ain't that. It was that woman done it. I knowed she was up to some crooked work when I let her in."

(CONTINUED.)

## WROTE THREATS TO THE PRESIDENT

Newark, N. J., Feb. 20.—George A. Bernhardt, a cook, was arrested today in West Orange, a suburb, charged with writing threatening letters to President Wilson. The postoffice inspectors traced to Bernhardt letters signed "God's Son" which have been mailed to the president for three

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months past from Newark and neighboring towns. The writer complained of hard times and threatened death to the president and destruction to the city of Washington. The police say Bernhardt escaped three years ago from an insane asylum near Philadelphia. He was held in default of \$1,000 bail to await action by the federal court.

Dollar Day this time will be the biggest and best ever.

WILL NOT BE PRESENT AT OPENING OF CANAL

New York, Feb. 20.—Col. George W. Goethals, builder of the Panama canal, may not be present when the new

waterway is opened to commerce. He said himself he hoped he wouldn't be there.

Col. Goethals arrived from Panama late yesterday and after a few hours, here, took a late train for Washington, where he is to discuss with administration officials the reorganization of the government of the canal zone.

It was while talking of the formal opening of the canal that Col. Goethals remarked that he had hoped he would not be present at that function.

"It will be a great show," he said, "but I hope I won't be there. Now, there is nothing significant in that. You know I don't like celebrations and never did. When they have this celebration I think I shall go away for a little trip until it is over."

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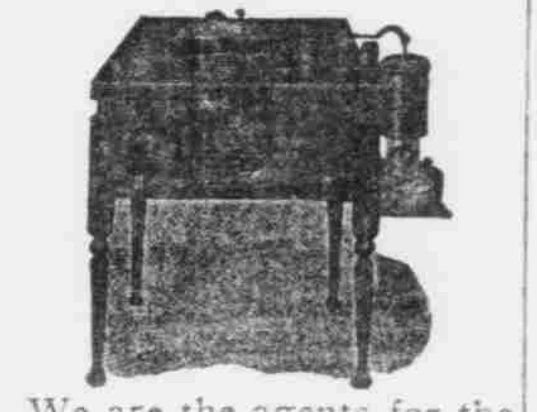
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