DR. FURNIVALL - DETECTIVE

Exploits of a physician in unraveling mysterious crime

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The Spirit Club

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THROUGH his colored spectacles Dr. Furnivall regarded the excited man before him calmly.

"Dr. Gerrish has already consulted me about your wife's remarkable case," he said, "so I know the salient points of it. But, of course, before seeing her I should be glad to learn its history from you as you suggest. But be brief, for——"

His companion put up his hand suddenly. A series of screams, laden with the mortal terror of a human being, burst upon them from somewhere above, seeming to fill to its farther reaches the lofty and splendid hall in which the two were standing. There was but one light visible among the shadows which, as it gleamed softly here and there on a marble statue, scintillated veilly on some gilded picture frame, or sullenly burned on a polished bit of ancient armor, served scarcely more than to exaggerate the somber gloom of the place and amplify in the imagination its already huge dimensions. In such vague, mysterious surroundings the screams, startling enough in themselves, were awesome, and with a cold shudder Mr. Harish hastily drew the doctor into one of the reception-rooms and switched on the lights.

"She has been that way at intervals for months," he whispered excitedly. He was a fresh looking man of 50, of light complexion and regular features, in whose face the dominant expressions were those of fine acumen and reserved force which we associate with the highly successful captain of industry. The gray eyes held the possibility of a merciless glitter in their uncompromising depths, the narrow brow seemed always just about to gather in a frown, the lips beneath the thin, bristly brown mustache were firm to rigidity, and the chin, square and solid, was relieved from an appearance of downright brutality only by a vertical cleft in the middle, resembling an overgrown dimple. Some slight suggestions of softness lay in that, and, of all his features, in that alone. But at this moment it was evident, despite his normal atmosphere of impassivity, that he maintained a fair degree of composure only by great effort of will, and as he spoke he sank heavily into a chair as if in urgent need of its support for his trembling body.

"It won't take two minutes to tell you what I wish to," he continued, in a low, hurried voice, "and it seems necessary to your understanding of the case. It is as a hypnotist only that you can be of service here. Medicine we have tried in vain. The trouble began one night last Summer. She had been ailing for some time, and we couldn't find out what the matter was, except that it was of a nervous nature, when on this night she startled me out of a sound sleep by screaming suddenly. I thought at first that it must be an attack of nightmare, and began to shake her; but she shrieked louder than ever. So I sprang up and turned on the lights. Then I saw that she was cowering down in bed, with staring eyes, screaming as you have just heard her doing and flinging her arms about over her head as I have seen boys fighting bees. When the light flashed up she threw me a terrified look and dived under the bedclothes, still fighting and shrieking. It was terrible, terrible! To be afraid of ME——"

"What explanation did she make—then or afterward? Any?"

"Only that she was frightened and felt a pain, as if a nail had been driven into her brain. When the doctor came he pronounced it a case of clavus hysterious—nothing so very serious, he said. But it has proved serious enough. Two or three nights out of every week since then she has had one of these spells. I have called in the most famous physicians. No use." He shook his head despondently. "Though all of them say the same things about the disease and prescribe much the same treatment, she doesn't improve. They do not reach the malady, whatever it is. It was Dr. Gerrish who told me of you and your hypnotic power, which he said was marvelous, and advised me to call on you. He said he was convinced that at bottom the trouble was mental rather than physical, and that if a cure were possible you were the man to work it."

"Does she talk with you freely about her case?"

"Ah, that is one of the incomprehensible mysteries!" he cried, rising excitedly and pacing a few steps rapidly back and forth. Then he stopped with his hand on the doctor's shoulder. "She won't talk about it with anybody," he whispered. "She altogether shuns the subject; will not listen to a word of it. It is the strangest thing in the world. The most that can be drawn from her is a 'no' or a 'yes' in answer to some insistent question put by the doctor who happens to be in attendance. But me—she seems afraid of me! She shrinks whenever I approach her. I—I can't understand it. Why, Dr. Furnivall, I love her. She is all I care for on earth. She has always looked to me for everything. Our married life has been ideal, but now—now——"

He broke off suddenly. In order to hide an emotion of which he was apparently ashamed he presented his back to the doctor, and, motioning over his shoulder for him to follow, mounted the wide staircase to the floor above, without another word.

The doctor found the sickroom, a large and magnificently appointed chamber, blazing in his splendor of a cluster of electric lights which depended from the ceiling in the center. In answer to his questioning look, Mr. Harish whispered:

"She insists on that. The least sign of darkness frightens her, even although she tries to keep her head under the bed clothes, as you see now. It is strange. She must have either full sunshine or those lights. I don't dare to go in with you. I'll wait out here."

A trained nurse and a helper were in the room, whom the doctor, after a few words with them, motioned to leave him alone with the patient. Then, removing his glasses, he advanced to the sumptuous bed, in which he could see the outlines of a human form beneath the coverings, which rose and fell slightly with the spasmodic breathing of the sufferer. The screams had ceased, and the only sound to be heard was the melodious ticking of a small gold-cased clock on the mantel.

"Mrs. Harish!" he said, touching the counterpane where it was drawn smoothly over the bowed head.

She sprang up with a low cry. He caught the gleam of a white, pretty face, with lines of weakness around the mouth, a pair of blue eyes, the normal expression of which must be extreme mildness, but which were now fixed on him in a glare of fright, and a tangle of blonde hair. Then she turned frantically and sought to crawl farther down into the bed, but he put out his hand quickly, gently restraining her.

"They can't hurt you any more," he said.

"Who? What do you mean? What do you know about them?"

Her voice was quavering and high, and, flashing a swift, scared look at him, she tore at his supporting arm with her hands. "Let me alone! Oh, let me alone, or I shall die!" she gasped.

"I know all about them. I have met and overcome them more than once before this, and can do as much for you now." He held her as gently as he might, but firmly, and began moving around so that he could gaze into her eyes. "I am here to help you," he continued, when he had accomplished this. "You are suffering persecution; a persecution, too, that is easily stopped. I will stop it for you. Look at me, Mrs. Harish! Do you know me?"

His gaze held her. The staring eyes grew less wild, a momentary wonder crept into them, then their natural mildness reasserted itself, and finally this mildness was replaced by a rapt fixity of introspection. With a sigh of relief she put her hand into his, saying:

"You are a physician, I suppose. No, I don't know you. But I feel better. Thank you."

He withdrew his arm, and, still holding her eyes steadily, arranged the pillows so that she could recline comfortably, facing him as he sat at the bedside.

"Now, Mrs. Harish," he said, "carry your mind back to the night on which you were first seized with these attacks. Why did you scream?"

"The room was full of spirits who were beating me with clubs," she answered, without emotion.

"Are you what is called a spiritualist?"

"No; but my husband is, and he wishes me to believe, too; and these spirits, I have always thought, beat me for my obstinacy."

"Did anybody ever tell you that they would do so?"

"No; but I have heard of such things. Nobody knows anything about their coming to me. I have never dared tell even my husband. I have endured everything since Mr. Jellipherson died. For a long time I was horribly tormented, and at last, when he himself came to me in the dead of night at the head of a host of frightful shapes, all of them armed with clubs just like his, I could not stand it any longer. I think I lost my mind—"

"One moment. Who is Mr. Jellipherson? Begin at the beginning and tell me all about it."

"Mr. Jellipherson was my husband's friend—a spiritualist. He had an uncanny look and a harsh, rasping voice that made me shiver with fear whenever I heard it. I could not bear him, and used to hide from him when he came here, as he often did. He brought mediums, who got messages from the spirit world, and that frightened me. I could not endure to think of being surrounded by an army of invisible shapes who were watching me, influencing me, knowing all my most secret and sacred thoughts. I cannot tell you how the fancy of such things preyed on my mind. It was maddening even to hear them talked about. But I loved my husband, and, knowing that he believed, and most earnestly wished to continue doing so, would not pain him by confiding my trouble to him. It might estrange us; and, besides, something—the spirits, I thought—prevented me from speaking of them to anybody. So I hid my fright and pretended that I had no objections to the meetings; that I found them merely amusing.

"But Mr. Jellipherson saw my antipathy and resented it, not openly, but in various covert ways. Once he had a toy club made of some rare wood, inlaid with jewels, and gave it to Mr. Harish for a watch charm, telling him it should typify his spiritual attitude. It was no use, he said, looking at me, to try to talk sense to unbelievers. People were so stupid that the only efficient argument was a good club. With that, he said, one could silence opposition by knocking brains out, even if one could not convince by knocking brains in. Though this was said jestingly, it seemed very wicked to me. I knew he half meant it. My own creed was love. I said nothing, but it made me wretched, for I saw that my husband agreed with his friend in his aggressiveness rather than with me. It was as if a something of evil growth had been planted between us by Mr. Jellipherson, and I dreaded him more than ever. Then one evening, during a discussion, Mr. Jellipherson, who was nearly 70, solemnly promised that if he should die before my husband, which he was likely to do, he would prove indubitably to him and the world that a dead man's spirit can return to earth. In what manner he should do it he could not tell, but it should be in a way that must destroy all doubt forever. And that promise was the real beginning of my trouble. I saw that he really believed, and somehow it made me believe, too. From that day I began to fancy shapes in the air, hear ghostly whispers and feel the presence of evil spirits crowding me in my room, not only at night, but sometimes in the daytime as well. My health suffered and soon we went abroad for change of climate. Scarcely had we arrived in Paris when we received a letter from home informing us of Mr. Jellipherson's death and, more than that, that his last words had been a message to Mr. Harish, telling him he would surely keep his promise. Then, to cap the climax of horrors, the toy club disappeared from my husband's watch chain!

"What I began to suffer then no words can describe. It was the spirit of the dead man that had removed the club, that was certain; we agreed on that, and all that had gone before was as nothing. But I still managed to conceal my fright from Mr. Harish. For two weeks we remained in the hotel, never ceasing to search for the lost club, expecting all the time we knew not what, when one day my husband in great excitement burst in upon me with an open letter in one hand and the little club in the other. The letter was dated and postmarked 'New York.' It was this—every queer word of it is burned into my brain:

"'My Dear Harish: It was me that got your club with my spirit hand, and I'm me sending it back to you to prove what I promised. Now do you believe and know? Because you got to, and can't help it. Go to the medium that sends you this, for you ain't strong enough to meet me in the spirit world yet, but he is, and I will tell you many strange and glorious things through this great medium. Don't mind this grammar. There ain't none here; we have greater things to think of. The note was signed, 'Yours in the Spirit World, Jellipherson.' Below was the medium's address, with an explanation by him of the conditions under which the message was received, and an urgent invitation to Mr. Harish to call upon him.

"There was but one possible meaning to all this now. Mr. Jellipherson had kept his word! It was proved beyond all doubt. Nobody but we three had ever known of the promise, of the gift of the club or of its strange loss. And it was returned to us from America only two weeks after having disappeared in Paris! Perhaps that man even at that moment was watching me, close at hand; in the air, hovering, malevolent, on the point of revealing himself to me in some unearthly shape! How I controlled myself is a constant surprise to me, but I did so; and, seeing that Mr. Harish was in a fever of desire to consult the medium, I proposed that we return to New York in order that he might have his wish. I felt better at home, I told him, than anywhere else; and I knew I should feel safer. So we came back. Mr. Harish hastened at once to the medium, and was more than satisfied. He told him many things which nobody in the world or out of it knew, except Mr. Jellipherson. Still, I made no sign of the torments I experienced. I managed to refrain from shrieking out as my husband gave me these positive proofs, but from then on I grew worse and worse. The slightest noise sent me nearly into hysterics. I saw plainer than ever horrible shapes in the air. They came to me and gibbered, making threatening gestures, leering at me, and touching me with their shadowy fingers; and finally, when one night Mr. Jellipherson himself appeared, as I had always known he would do, at the head of a legion of others like him, all of them with great clubs after the pattern of the toy one, and began to beat me, I knew I must give up. I could suffer no longer in silence. Something in my brain snapped, a sharp pain pierced my head, and at the top of my voice I screamed and hid beneath the bedclothes. But they followed me even there, and continued to beat me. They follow me always now at night, so that in the morning I am literally covered with black and blue spots from their clubs. See! My body is like that all over."

She bared her arms to the shoulder, holding them up pitifully for his inspection. They were beautiful arms, rounded, white, perfect. He was not obliged to remove his eyes from her own in order to see that, of the bruises mentioned, there was no trace throughout their lovely length!

"And you never told your husband a word of all this?" he asked evenly.

"No. I could not. The subject distracts me. I have tried to speak, but the spirits prevent me. All I have been able to do is to try to call his attention to the bruises by showing him my arms; but he does not even see them. I don't understand it. It makes me afraid of him. It is as if he were against me, on their side, not on mine, and refused to accept any evidence of their hostility to me—would resent my accusing them of this horrible thing."

He arose and rearranged the pillows. "That is enough, Mrs. Harish," he said. "Lie comfortably down again and free your mind of all uneasiness. You shall never be troubled in this way any more. The persecution shall be stopped at once. I am going to bring you a visitor, and when he comes in you must not cover your head, but, on the contrary, you must listen to every word that passes between him and me. Will you do this?"

"But you are not going to leave me alone?" doctor, I can't—"

He was not holding her eyes now, and she started up in fright.

"No," he assured her; "you shall have all the company you want, and all the light. Feel no fear whatever. I know just what to do in this matter, and from this moment you are safe."

He called in the nurses, and, after giving them his instructions, sought Mr. Harish, who was in the hall. At sight of the doctor he ran forward eagerly.

"I heard her voice," he whispered. "It is wonderful that you could get her to speak. What did she say? Can you do anything for her?"

Without a word Dr. Furnival led the way down stairs to the reception-room. Here he resumed his colored spectacles, motioning to his companion to sit facing him.

"Mr. Harish," he said, "I can certainly restore your wife to sanity and health, but only on condition that you aid me, at no matter what cost to your sentiments or hopes or even beliefs."

"I—I don't understand," he faltered anxiously. "Certainly," he continued, "I would do anything in the world for my wife, and as for beliefs, how can one change them? Proof is necessarily convincing, and—"

"It is proof that I am going to give you," the doctor interrupted. "I am merely providing against any shock you may receive in that proof. I might proceed without letting you know what I propose, but as your aid is necessary, I will not ask it of you without warning you of the results in advance. Mrs. Harish is suffering from a not extremely rare kind of delusion regarding the spirits of the dead, and in order to restore her to sanity and health, and make the cure permanent I shall be obliged to convince not only her, but you, of a certain truth which will startle you. It is for this that I wish to prepare you."

"I don't think anything would shock me that will cure my wife," said Mr. Harish, with a touch of resentment in his tones. "And my mind is certainly open to conviction as much as any man's. Proof is all I want, of anything. If it is spiritualism you are hitting at," he went on, rising in sudden excitement, "if you can bring stronger proofs against it than I have for it I'll drop it at once. I promise you. But you can't do it. I know! I know by proofs so perfect that even you, if you only dreamed of them, would be as strong in the faith as I am."

Dr. Furnivall proceeded imperturably: "In every walk of life, in every art, profession, science, trade, religion, or society, there are some persons who are wise in their way, and some foolish; some honest and sincere, others dishonest and insincere. In most cases it naturally happens that, by outsiders, the class is judged by the lower ranks, by the fools or impostors, rather than by the true disciples, for it is they with whom the outsiders come most in contact, and hear most about. And it is the foolish or the evil, not the wise and good, that the uncultivated delight in spreading, because of their superior qualities of excitement. In spiritualism as in everything these ranks exist of course. But it is not in spiritualism that I am interested now, whether it be true or false, good or bad, or indifferent. What I am intent upon is to cure Mrs. Harish, and as you are sure to be staggered by the very medicine that will effect that cure, I think it right to prepare you for it, rather than to lead you unconsciously on to it."

Mr. Harish seized his hand.

"Forgive me, doctor," he said contritely. "I am scarcely myself. I don't know how it is, but that subject always irritates me out of my normal state. The thing seems so plain and indisputable to me, and its opponents are so obtuse and unconvincible! I thought you were an enemy at first, but I see you are not. Come, tell me what to do. I'll follow your directions to the letter. Shock out of me whatever you will, but save her!"

"That is more like it. Now we can start understandingly. It is all very simple and easily arranged. In the first place it is necessary for me to convince you not only of my ability to hypnotize a man, but also that in doing so I use no influence upon him except to draw from him the truth of the matters about which I question him. I put no thoughts, and can put no thoughts, into his mind, but can and do compel him to speak the true thought which is already in his mind. Do yo follow me?"

"That is not the usual notion of what hypnotism is," said Mr. Harish interestedly.

"No, it is not," returned Dr. Furnival dryly. "It is my notion, and since it is with my notion that we have to do just now, that is the one we will consider. I will tell you the secret of it in two words, as the French say. It is important that you should understand it. It is simply this: A man of good intelligence who will, instead of pursuing mere ends, mere results, as is the usual way of men; who will bend all his efforts upon abstract truth regardless of private gain; who is unbiased by expediency, driven neither by debt nor credit, nor friends nor foes, nor ignominy nor fame, nor riches nor poverty, must set up in his body a flow of forces unknown to and undreamed of by the ordinary human being. This is at once believable to any good physician, for we all of us know that the thoughts of the mind influence the body more or less, and that the longer or the shorter a certain thought is held and dwelt upon the more pronounced are its effects on the body containing it, especially in the more mobile parts, as the face and eyes. Fear shows there at once, and so does anger and joy and pain and weakness and vigor, and so forth; and any thought persisted in for a sufficient length of time will result in a settled change of appearance there. The eyes, when normal, are the most sensitive, most mobile, most expressive register of the owner's thought that he possesses. It is there probably that every thought of our minds finds its surest and quickest expression. Consequently, to hold continually to the desire and thought of pure, unadulterated truth, never to be swayed from that stand by any possible consideration, is to evolve an eye altogether different from that of the ordinary man, who is continually sacrificing truth to expediency. In fact, as I have learned by research and experiment, an eye so formed becomes, for every human being who looks into it, a sort of physical-mental magnet, drawing from him, even though he tries with all his powers to resist, such truth as he has in him on the subject suggested to him at the moment. He couldn't lie to save his life. That is the kind of hypnotism I possess. Does it seem plain to you? And is it reasonable?"

Mr. Harish, for the first time since the interview began, so far forgot his troubles, in his interest, as to smile.

"I think the theory is first rate," he said, "but can you declare that, in the midst of all your professional cares, from your early struggles onward, up to the famous position you have made for yourself, to say nothing of the necessity of expediency in your practice today, you have held to the pursuit of abstract truth as strongly as all that?"

"Does it seem so impossible?"

"To me, yes, I onfess it does." Mr. Harish returned somewhat dryly. "I am certain that in my own case six months' adherence to abstract truth, as opposed to expediency, would ruin me outright. And I must believe it is the same with all of us. I am as upright as anybody, and I feel obliged to think that other people's methods, if they are successful, do not differ materially from my own. In fact, I know they do not."

"That is, you would rather see the eyes and experience their quality than to consider a mere theory about them?"

"Well, yes." Mr. Harish spoke with polite reluctance. "I do not question your theory," he added hastily. "It seems logical and reasonable. But to practice it! If it can be carried out; if any man can succeed as you have done amid all this hurly-burly and wild scramble for dollars, still maintaining a constant desire for the abstract truth of every one of his transactions, refusing even to think of expediency as opposed to that truth, why, then I—I should indeed be glad to receive some proof of the fact that could not be disputed."

"And nothing but that sort of proof would satisfy you?"

"I think not."

He looked curiously into the thick colored spectacles, but could see only an outline of the eyes behind them.

"I wear these glasses," said Dr. Furnivall, observing the scrutiny, "whenever I do not wish to pry into a man's mind and force him to say what he would rather keep to himself. In fact, I wear them always on ordinary occasions, for without them I could not help hypnotizing everybody who should look into my eyes, even despite myself."

As he spoke he removed the disfiguring disks, wiped them carefully, and slipped them into his pocket. Mr. Harish started nervously. But he immediately controlled himself, sitting with a half smile around his mouth.

"I am going to give you the indisputable proof you require," said Dr. Furnivall, gazing him steadily in the eye. "Is there anything in your mind that you would tell nobody, something that wild horses could not draw from you?"

"I don't know. Maybe there is."

"Well, you are going to tell it to me. Not only that, but you will write it down, so that you may be absolutely convinced that you have told it. Will that satisfy you that I do not put anything into a man's mind, but simply draw out a truth already in it? It is necessary for you to comprehend this distinction."

He passed a pencil and a leaf torn from his notebook to Mr. Harish.

The gentleman took these smilingly, but the steely gleam that one is always suspected to be lying asleep awaiting occasion in his gray eyes leaped to alert life, the chin grew granite like and squarer than ever, the body stiffened, the breath came hard. He was nerving himself for the trial.

"Go ahead," he said, grimly. "I don't know the game, nor what you're after, but—go ahead."

"The game is to cure your wife. And what I am after is to give you a sample of the medicine that will do it. For you are a man who will believe in nothing without material proofs, and, once having been given what you, in your finite, fallible mind, consider to be proofs, you are convinced beyond all doubt—until a stronger proof to the contrary is forced upon you. It would be of little use for me to raise Mrs. Harish to a condition of health and sanity without teaching you a certain kind of caution of the very existence of which you seem unaware, a caution respecting the acceptance of material proofs as conclusive in all cases; for without this caution you would immediately begin sending her back again. To a man of your self-sufficiency, who has amassed $100,000,000 in 20 years, the teaching will doubtless turn out to be something drastic; but, if so, it is your lookout, not mine. It is on your own demand. Now, what is that thing in your mind that wild horses could not draw from you? Answer and write!"

Mr. Harish had summoned all his energies to resist. His face flushed and paled, his muscles grew tense, he set his jaw like a bulldog and clinched his hands, his teeth gritted like grindingstones. In vain. It was the old, old struggle—brute force against science, selfishness against love, one against the combined strength of skilled humanity. The conclusion was foregone. His eyes, fixed upon Dr. Furnivall as if nailed by some invisible power, gradually took on a more settled appearance, passing from the steely to a nervous-laughing expression, to soberness, to earnestness, to peacefulness, and, finally, with the doctor's closing words, to deep introspection. Immediately he began to write, awkwardly, without seeing the paper, pronouncing each word slowly as he set it down, conscious only of certain truths in his own soul.

"I—perjured — myself—in—court—yesterday—on—the—Brand—case."

"Very good, to start with! How much did you save out of it—or make?"

"I—may—make—two—millions."

"Charming! That admission would be enough to convince most men; but what you ask is real proof, indispensable prdof, something that nobody but yourself could possibly suspect. What is the first lie you ever told for money?"

"I—can't—think."

"Too long ago, eh? When you were very young? You began almost at once, probably. What was the first mean thing you did for money after you were 21?"

"I—fraudulently—got—and—foreclosed—a mortgage—on — Widow—Gage's — home — and — made—four — thousand — dollars—which—set—me—up—in—business."

"What is the latest thing of the kind you have done, aside from the perjury?"

"This — morning—I—closed — a — deal—that—will—practically—ruin — my — late—partner's—children."

"There are, besides, many other transactions of yours that you would not acknowledge to a living soul, aren't there?"

"Yes."

"Well, tell me one more, and that will do."

"I—swore—off—three—million—in—taxes—in—the—city."

"That's enough," said Dr. Furnivall, putting on his spectacles. Mr. Harish sat immovable an instant, and then began to gaze around as if just waking from sleep. His eye caught sight of the doctor.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, with a jocularity somewhat forced, "I remember. I didn't doze. It was the hypnotism, wasn't it? Ha, ha! How did it come out?"

Without a word Dr. Furnivall pointed to the paper in his hand.

He examined its appearance curiously at first. Then he read the writing, read it again, then stared at it in unbelieving horror. A long minute he stood with bowed head, his face the hue of chalk. Slowly he tore the leaf into minute fragments, thrust them into his vest pocket, shivered, pulled himself together sharply, and, with the steely gleam in his eyes, looked at the doctor.

"What are you going to do about it?" he said. His voice was as if his mouth were full of sand.

"You are forgetting our business. Still, since you ask—is that Widow Gage yet living?"

"Yes."

"In poverty, of course?"

"Yes."

"No doubt some action in that matter, and at once, recommends itself to you?"

"Yes."

"And the children of your late partner——"

"Yes."

"Very well. We will say no more about these things unless it should become necessary. They are for you to settle in your own way. My purpose at present is to restore Mrs. Harish. How long before you can have that medium here—the man you have been consulting about Mr. Jellipherson? Can you telephone to him?"

Mr. Harish measured him darkly. His face was very red now, he gnawed his lip nervously, his mustache bristled, his fingers opened and shut, and he breathed heavily.

"I can get him very shortly, if you wish it," he answered at last. "But is it necessary to bring him into the matter?"

"It is. He must come at once. Mrs. Harish's cure depends on him. I am going to her now, and when he arrives show him up immediately, for it is there that I wish to see him."

"Ah, that's it, is it? I suppose I now know what you want. But you can't do it. He shook his head, with a touch of a cynical smile around his mouth. "You can't do it," he repeated. "I know." But as the doctor turned and without a word looked at him he added, "Well, if you insist." And he went to the telephone.

A half-hour later a tall, slim man of 30, with curling black hair, staring eyes, in which a wild gleam flitted furtively, and dark mustached face, came into the sickroom with Mr. Harish. Dr. Furnivall immediately removed his spectacles.

"Business looking up?" he suggested pleasantly to him.

The other returned his gaze with a stare, and then seemed inclined to shift his regards in the direction of the bed, where Mrs. Harish lay peering fearfully above the covers. But he only moved his head slightly. His eyes remained fixed on the doctor's, staring harder and harder. After some hesitation he answered:

"No, we don't do much. Truth is too high for people. They won't come in. They don't want it. Money is what they want and fashionable clo'es—the women, anyway."

He gave a little, hasty, deprecating laugh, and moved his feet about awkwardly, as one unused to conventional society. But his eyes never left the doctor's.

"Yes, but aren't there ways of starting people up, attracting their attention, making them wish to come to you and pay for your services?"

"I dunno what you mean." He said this grievedly, as if he took it as a reflection of some kind on himself; but even as he spoke Dr. Furnivall saw the familiar, introspective expression pass into his eyes. He asked at once:

"Where did you get that little ornamental club which you sent to Mr. Harish?"

"My sister gut it for me," he replied readily.

"Where?"

"She took it off'n Mr. Harish's chain one night in Paris."

"Who is your sister? How could she get it?"

"She is Mrs. Harish's maid, and is with 'em all the time."

There was the sound of a startled movement in the bed.

"Keep perfectly quiet, Mrs. Harish," cautioned the doctor. "All you have to do is to listen and understand. Mr. Harish, go to your wife. Sit on the bed and take her hand. Now," he continued to the medium, "tell me about that transaction. Why did you do it? And how did you do it? Begin at the beginning."

"Wal," he answered, "of course I try to git the names of all the people I can that's anyways interested in spiritualism, specially the rich ones and them that's well known, and find out all about 'em that I can, so's I can answer their questions if they come to me. I keep a list of 'em, and all about 'em, and have their pictures, so's I'll recognize 'em and can tell 'em things they thought nobody knowed of. When my sister said Mr. Harish had mediums come here I told her she must git him for me, so she listened to everything they said, and read their letters, and found out a lot of things, and all about that club and Mr. Jellipherson's promise to come back from the spirit world, and I told her to git the club and send it to me if Mr. Jellipherson died——"

Another hasty movement and an ominous exclamation rose from the bed.

"Keep perfectly quiet, Mr. Harish," said the doctor. "And you, Mrs. Harish, listen now attentively. Have you," he continued to the medium, "ever known spirits to beat anybody?"

"Tha ain't no such thing, but it's cur'us—a lot of women think they do, women that's nervous, and them that's just begun to b'lieve, but don't want to, and fight against it. They git scared and see things that ain't there, and think the spirits is mad at 'em and huting 'em. I've had 'em come to me and show me their arms and necks so I could see the bruises, but tha never worn't no bruises there. They imagined 'em, 'cause their minds was set that way."

"Do you believe that the spirit of a dead person can communicate with the living?"

"I dunno. I never had none communicate with me; but great men, college professors, say they can, and I 'spose they know better'n what I do."

"In fact, then, while you believe there may be honest mediums, who possibly receive communications, you yourself are a medium for business only, and all these messages which for years you have pretended to receive from spirits, including those you gave Mr. Harish purporting to be from Jellipherson, were made up by yourself for the purpose of getting money?"

"Yes, sir."

Dr. Furnivall turned to the bed, to a singular tableau. Mrs. Harish, the light of a great joy in her face, her eyes streaming with happy tears, was reaching out her arms to her husband, while he, plainly torn between two powerful emotions—great love for his wife and bitter, overwhelming anger toward the medium—stared first at one, then at the other, and finally at Dr. Furnivall.

The Technique of Baseball

IT was at a professional baseball game in Philadelphia. On the great tiered, half moon benches 5,000 people made so slight a showing that one heard their number with surprise.

Only the bleachers were full. They, with their solid alternation of coats and faces, looked like a dark blanket thickly polka-dotted with dingy white.

Up in the second story of the grandstand, where you pay 75 cents and don't care who knows it, sat rank and fashion, indicated by the presence here and there of flowery hats. That the wearers of the hats were familiars of the place would have impressed even a detective, for when a stray ball hot from the bat shot straight in among them, striking the boards with a fear-some crash, not a shriek, not a squeal, scarred the tense silence of the throng.

Down on the floor below, in the very front row, and just beyond the screen behind the bat, sat a woman who had never seen a ball game before. Beside her sat a friend.

You pay only 50 cents in the lesser glory, but you really see better than from anywhere else, and you really feel that you are one of us. Flowery hats count for nothing there. All distinctions sink unnoticed under a happy haze of ball.

The woman had been curious to see the National game and the friend had been obliging.

"But," he had asked, "will you have it college or professional? The difference is that college teams sometimes play real ball, while professionals play it always."

"Now, don't try to explain things," said the woman virtuously as they settled into their places. "I know what a nuisance it would be. Just watch the game and enjoy yourself, and let me look."

And yet she asked questions. Questions like: "They don't run very well, do they? What makes them fall down so often when they stop?" Or "Why does he make such angry faces at that other man with the muzzle on his head?"

Next her, on the other side from the friend, sat a red headed youth, alone; a youth of proletariat, liberal minded, gregarious. The fate that gave him that day no mate had been unkind. He suffered for some one to talk to.

The first time that the friend answered a query of the woman's with "I don't know" this young man supplied the facts from an evident specialist's depth of information. He did it shyly knuckling his hat still further back from his freckled brow, shifting his cigarette hard aport, and with his eyes unswerving from the game.

But he might never have spoken, might never have existed, for all the recognition the friend vouchsafed. The friend was no snob, but he considered that youth excessive in local color when one had a lady in charge.

Again and again it happened. A less genial one would have congealed. But the red headed one too truly abounded in good fellowship easily to believe in an intention to rebuff.

Nevertheless, he felt a certain something, and his remarks grew rarer and more rare. The woman was sorry. But this was the friend's party, and he knew best.

The game progressed. Innings waxed and waned. Then came a moment when the visiting pitcher, given heretofore to pyrotechnic sweep and velocity in his play, stood suddenly motionless with the ball held close before his face.

Seconds flew, and still he stood, with never a shift from that queer attitude.

"What is he doing? Whatever can he be waiting for?" cried the woman, now keen after the idea of the game.

"I'm sure I can't guess," answered the friend.

The red headed youth stirred uneasily. Mental stress showed in the very twist of his shoulders.

He had meant not to speak again. But this was too much! His resolution shook and fell.

Ostensibly apostrophizing the pitcher, toward whom his face was turned, but with his mouth so wrenched awry that it spoke straight into the woman's ear, he jerked out, deep and hoarse, this brief, enlightening truth:

"A-ah, you, Maggie! Stop spittin' on dat ball!"

All the Old Favorites.

From the Louisville Courier-Journal.

There are no birds in last year's nests
Adown the flood of years.
Maud Muller on a Summer's day lay dying
In Algiers.
Man wants but little here below thy cold
gray crags, O sea!
'Tis sweet to hear the watch dog's bark
across the sands of Dee.

At midnight in his guarded tent, when all
but him had fled,
Lifeless but beautiful he lay, the bivouac
of the dead!
Past Montenoy, past Fontenoy, to hastening
fills a prey,
Under a spreading chestnut tree my fond-
est hopes decay.

She was a phantom of delight that man
was made to mourn
The mill will never grind again; only five
grains of corn!
Oh, come into the garden, Maude and list
unto me tell
Of how Horatius kept the bridge when
Kosciusko fell!