

BAUERSTEIN:

Emily met her death as the result of strychnine poisoning. Judging from the quantity recovered, she must have taken not less than three-quarters of a grain.

JAPP:

Is it possible that she could have swallowed the poison by accident?

BAUERSTEIN:

I should consider it very unlikely. Strychnine is not used for domestic purposes and there are restrictions placed on its sale.

JAPP:

Does anything in your examination lead you to determine how the poison was administered? Could the strychnine have been administered in Emily's after-dinner coffee which was taken to her by her husband?

BAUERSTEIN:

The symptoms appear from one to two hours after it has been swallowed. I presume Emily took the coffee after dinner about eight o'clock, whereas the symptoms did not manifest themselves until the early hours.

JAPP:

Emily was in the habit of drinking a cup of cocoa in the middle of the night. Could the strychnine have been administered in that?

BAUERSTEIN:

No, I myself took a sample of the cocoa remaining in the saucepan and had it analyzed. There was no strychnine present. I should say that I would have been considerably surprised at any other result.

JAPP:

Why?

BAUERSTEIN:

Strychnine has an unusually bitter taste. It can be detected in a solution of one in seventy thousand. Cocoa would be quite powerless to mask it. Coffee has a bitter taste of its own which would probably cover the taste.

JAPP:

Did you test the coffee?

BAUERSTEIN:

The cup being completely smashed, there is no possibility of analyzing its contents.