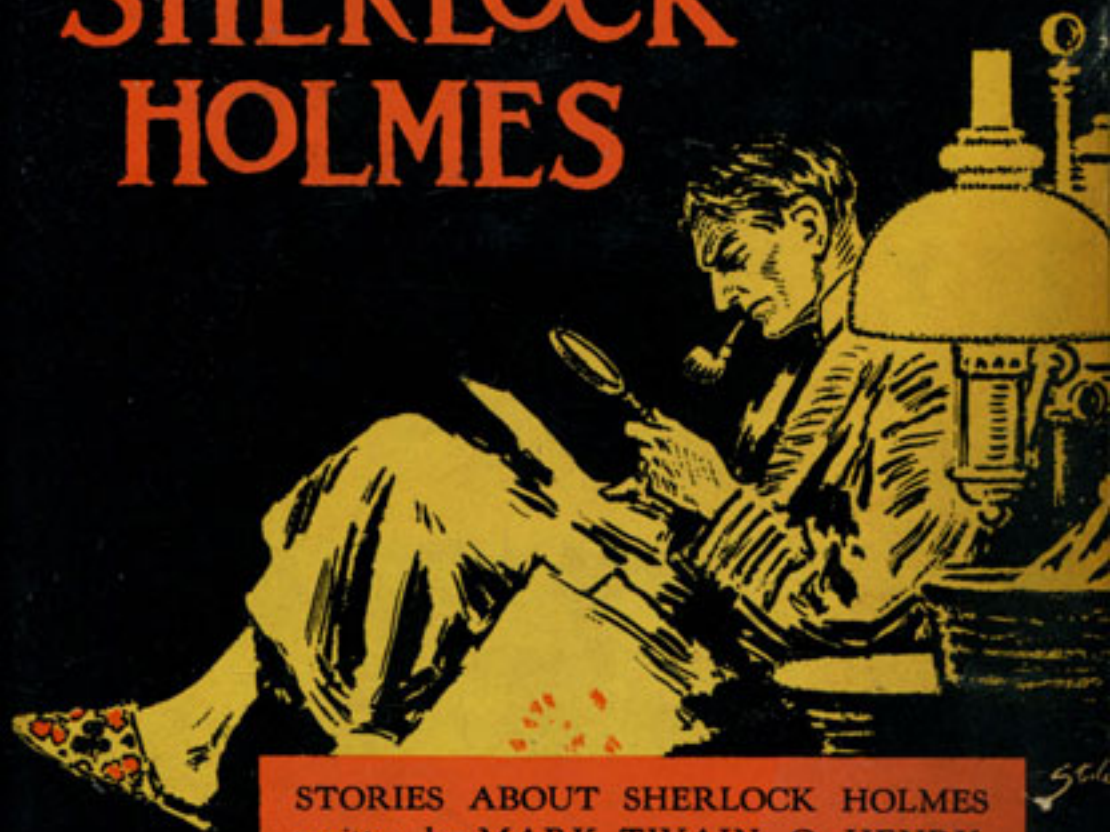


The
MISADVENTURES
of
SHERLOCK
HOLMES



STORIES ABOUT SHERLOCK HOLMES
written by MARK TWAIN, O. HENRY,
BRET HARTE, AGATHA CHRISTIE,
STEPHEN LEACOCK, CAROLYN WELLS,
VINCENT STARRETT, and many others.

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THE MISADVENTURES OF
SHERLOCK HOLMES



The members of the Society of Infatigable Detectives were
just sitting around and being excruciatingly infatigable in their
rooms in Fable Street when President Holmes made

(page 40) A WORD ABOUT



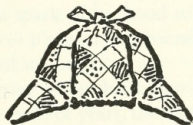
"The members of the Society of Infallible Detectives were just sitting around and being socially infallible, in their rooms in Fakir Street, when President Holmes strode in." (page 40)

THE MISADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES



EDITED BY

ELLERY QUEEN



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INTRODUCTION

Dear Reader:

This is one of the Queens speaking . . .

I want to tell you the unforgettable circumstances that led to my first meeting with Sherlock Holmes.

When I was a child my family lived in a small town in western New York. I didn't realize it then, but I was given a colossal gift early in life — a Huckleberry Finn-Tom Sawyer boyhood spent, by a strange coincidence, in the very town in which Mark Twain lived shortly before I was born.

Does any man with a spark of boyhood still in his heart ever forget his home town? No — it's an unconquerable memory. Most of us never return, but none of us forgets.

I remember we had a river at our back door — the gentle Chemung. I remember how, in the cycle of years, the spring torrents came down from the hills; how they overflowed our peaceful valley — yes, over the massive concrete dikes that towered with grim Egyptian austerity above the shallow bed of the Chemung. I remember how old man river burst through our back door, flooding our kitchen and parlor, driving us — temporary refugees — to our top floor. Happy days for a wide-eyed boy, proud in his hip-boots and man's sou'wester, with the prospect of daily trips by rowboat — voyages of high adventure — to the nearest grocer!

I remember the unpaved streets — the heavily rutted road that slept in the sun before our house. I have a queer memory about those ruts. Every 4th of July we boys would plant our firecrackers deep in the soft earth of those ruts. Then we'd touch our smoking punks to the row of seedling fuses, run for cover, and watch the "thunderbolts" (that's what they were called in those days) explode with a muffled roar and send heavenward — at least three feet! — a shower of dirt and stones. It wasn't so long after the Spanish-American War that we couldn't pretend we were blowing up the

Maine — in some strangely perverted terrestrial fashion only small boys can invent.

I remember the long walks to and from public school — three miles each way, in summer mud and winter drifts; the cherry trees and apple trees and chicken coops and dogs — the long succession of dogs ending with that fine hunter that was killed by a queer-looking machine called an “automobile.” I remember the all-day trips to the brown October hills, gathering nuts; the wood fires and the popping corn; the swimming hole that no one knew about but ourselves; the boyhood secret society and its meeting place in the shed behind my best friend’s house. We called it “The League of the Clutching Hand” — can you guess why?

But I started to tell you how I first met Sherlock Holmes. Somehow I cannot think of Holmes without succumbing to a wave of sentimental nostalgia. I find myself fading back — far, far back in the remembrance of things past.

As a boy my reading habits were pure and innocent. I confess now that I never read a Nick Carter until I was past thirty. My literary childhood consisted of Horatio Alger and Tom Swift and the Viking legends and the multi-colored Lang fairy books and — yes, the Oz stories. I can reread the Oz stories even today — and I do. Somehow crime and detection failed to cross my path in all those happy days, except in the movies — “The Clutching Hand,” remember? The closest I might have come to blood and thunder would have been TOM SAWYER, DETECTIVE — I say “might have come,” because oddly enough I have no recollection of TOM SAWYER, DETECTIVE as part of my early reading.

When I was twelve years old my family moved to New York City. For a time we lived with my grandfather in Brooklyn. It was in my grandfather’s house, only a few weeks after my arrival in fabulous New York, that I met Sherlock Holmes. Oh, unforgettable day!

I was ill in bed. In those days I was afflicted periodically with an abscess of the left ear. It came year after year, with almost astronomical regularity — and always, I remember, during the week of school exams. My grandfather had an old turnip of a watch that he used to place flat against my left ear, and it always astounded him that, even after the ordeal of having had my ear lanced, I still couldn’t hear his Big Ben tick.

I was lying in bed, a miserable youngster, on just such a day as Dr. Watson has so often described — a “bleak and windy” day with the fingers of winter scratching at the window pane. One of my aunts walked in and handed me a book she had borrowed at the near-by public library.

It WAS THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES.

I opened the book with no realization that I stood — rather, I sat — on the brink of my fate. I had no inkling, no premonition, that in another minute my life’s work, such as it is, would be born. My first glance was disheartening. I saw the frontispiece of the Harper edition — a picture of a rather innocuous man in dress coat and striped trousers holding the arm of a young woman in bridal gown. *A love story*, I said to myself — for surely this unattractive couple were in a church about to be married. The quotation under the illustration — “The gentleman in the pew handed it up to her” — was not encouraging. In fact, there was nothing in that ill-chosen frontispiece by Sidney Paget to make a twelve-year-old boy sit up and take notice — especially with his left ear in agony.

Only an unknown and unknowable sixth sense prompted me to turn to the table of contents — and then the world brightened. The first story — *A Scandal in Bohemia* — seemed to hold little red-blooded promise, but the next story was, and always will be, a milestone.

A strange rushing thrill challenged the pain in my ear. *The Red-Headed League!* What a combination of simple words to skewer themselves into the brain of a hungry boy! I glanced down quickly — *The Man with the Twisted Lip* — *The Adventure of the Speckled Band* — and I was lost! Ecstatically, everlastingly lost!

I started on the first page of *A Scandal in Bohemia* and truly, the game was afoot. The unbearable pain in my ear — vanished! The abyss of melancholy into which only a twelve-year-old boy can sink — forgotten!

I finished THE ADVENTURES that night. I wasn’t sad — I was glad. It wasn’t the end — it was the beginning. I had knocked fearlessly on the door of a new world and I had been admitted. There was a long road ahead — even longer than I dreamed. That night, as I closed the book, I knew that I had read one of the greatest books ever written. And today I realize with amazement how true and

tempered was my twelve-year-old critical sense. For in the mature smugness of my present literary judgment, I still feel — unalterably — that *THE ADVENTURES* is one of the world's masterworks.

I could not have slept much that night. If I did, I merely passed from one dreamworld to another — with the waking dream infinitely more wondrous. I remember when morning came — how symbolically the sun shone past my window. I leaped from bed, dressed, and with that great wad of yellow-stained cotton still in my ear, stole out of the house. As if by instinct I knew where the public library was. Of course it wasn't open, but I sat on the steps and waited. And though I waited hours, it seemed only minutes until a prim old lady came and unlocked the front door.

But, alas — I had no card. Yes, I might fill out this form, and take it home, and have my parents sign it, and then after three days — three days? three eternities! — I could call and pick up my card.

I begged, I pleaded, I implored — and there must have been something irresistible in my voice and in my eyes. Thank you now, Miss Librarian-of-Those-Days! Those thanks are long overdue. For that gentle-hearted old lady broke all the rules of librarydom and gave me a card — and told me with a twinkle in her eyes where I could find books by a man named Doyle.

I rushed to the stacks. My first reaction was one of horrible and devastating disappointment. Yes, there were books by Doyle on the shelves — but so few of them! I had expected a whole libraryful — rows and rows of Sherlock, all waiting patiently for my “coming of age.”

I found three precious volumes. I bundled them under my arm, had them stamped, and fled home. Back in bed I started to read — *A STUDY IN SCARLET*, *THE MEMOIRS* (with a frontispiece that almost frightened me to death), *THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES*. They were food and drink and medicine — and all the Queen's horses and all the Queen's men couldn't put Ellery together again.

But my doom had been signed, sealed, and delivered in *THE ADVENTURES*. The books which followed merely broadened the picture, filled in the indelible details. That tall, excessively lean man. His thin razor-like face and hawk's-bill of a nose. The curved pipe, the dressing gown. The way he paced up and down the room, quickly,

eagerly, his head sunk upon his chest. The way he examined the scene of a crime, on all fours, his nose to the ground. The gaunt dynamic figure and his incisive speech. The gasogene, the Persian slipper, and the coal scuttle for the cigars. The bullet-pocks on the wall, the scraping violin. The hypodermic syringe¹—what a shock to my fledgling sensibilities! The ghostly hansom cab—with a twelve-year-old boy clinging by some miracle of literary gymnastics to its back as it rattled off through the mist and fog . . .

Reader, I had met Sherlock Holmes.

THIS IS now both Queens speaking . . .

To think of Sherlock Holmes by any other name,² as Vincent Starrett has said, is paradoxically unthinkable. And yet in this book you will meet him under a host of aliases.

It is interesting to note that the name, as we know it today, did not come to Doyle's mind in a lightning flash of inspiration. Doyle had to labor over it. His first choice, according to H. Douglas Thomson,³ was Sherrington Hope. Only after considerable shuffling and reshuffling did Doyle hit on that peculiarly magical and inexplicably satisfying combination of syllables which is now so permanent a part of the English language.

There seems to have been a halfway mark when the name was Sherrinford Holmes, which Vincent Starrett claims to have been the first form,⁴ substantiating this claim with a reproduction of a page from Conan Doyle's old notebook⁵ in which "Sherrinford Holmes"

¹ A persistent legend attributes the reform of Sherlock Holmes (the cocaine habit disappears in the later adventures) to a member of Britain's Royal Family who is supposed to have suggested to Doyle that Holmes abandon the hypodermic in the interests of propriety.

² Holmes is sometimes called Fu-erh-mo-hsi by Chinese detective-story writers. He is invariably treated as a great popular hero who wages deadly combat with ghosts, fox-women, tiger-men, and other supernatural horrors so dear to the heart of the Chinese masses.

³ H. Douglas Thomson's *MASTERS OF MYSTERY: A Study of the Detective Story*; London, Collins, 1931. Page 139: "In a study in *Scarlet* Sherlock Holmes made his first appearance as Mr. Sherrington Hope."

⁴ Vincent Starrett's *THE PRIVATE LIFE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES*; New York, Macmillan, 1933, page 8.

⁵ *Ibid.*, page 11. The same notebook page proves that Watson also experienced a metamorphosis: his original name was supposed to have been Ormond Sacker!

can be clearly deciphered in his creator's own handwriting. But there is no proof that the notebook page represents Doyle's *earliest* thinking,⁶ since in his autobiography⁷ Sir Arthur makes the statement: "First it was Sherringford Holmes; then it was Sherlock Holmes." Note the additional "g" in the first name: this is unsupported by the notebook page and must be interpreted either as a trick of Doyle's memory or another evolutionary stage harking back to Thomson's "Sherrington."⁸

It has been said too that Doyle finally chose the surname "Holmes" because of his great admiration for Oliver Wendell Holmes, the American essayist, poet, and physician; and "Sherlock" because he once made thirty runs against a bowler of that name and thereafter had a kindly feeling for it. Both are mere beliefs, though almost universally accepted. It is significant that Doyle revealed no details whatever in his autobiography as to the true origin of the final name.

As a general rule writers of pastiches retain the sacred and inviolate form — Sherlock Holmes — and rightfully, since a pastiche is a serious and sincere imitation in the exact manner of the original author. But writers of parodies, which are humorous or satirical take-offs, have no such reverent scruples. They usually strive for the weirdest possible distortions and it must be admitted that many highly ingenious travesties have been conceived. Fortunately or unfortunately, depending on how much of a purist one is, the name Sherlock Holmes is peculiarly susceptible to the twistings and misshapenings of burlesque-minded authors.

⁶ Great writers are capable of great afterthoughts. The evolution of "Sherlock Holmes" from the incunabular "Sherrington Hope" and/or "Sherringford Holmes" is a creative change second only to Edgar Allan Poe's magnificent alteration in the title of the world's first detective story. Poe originally called it *The Murders in the Rue Trion Bas*. The scratching out of *Trion Bas* and the adding of [*Rue*] *Morgue* is one of the most inspired acts of penmanship in the history of literature.

⁷ *MEMORIES AND ADVENTURES*; London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1924; Boston, Little, Brown, 1924. How could Doyle have resisted the overwhelming temptation to call his autobiography *ADVENTURES AND MEMOIRS*?

⁸ It is Vincent Starrett's opinion that Mr. Thomson merely trusted to his memory when he claimed Sherrington Hope to be the original name — and that his memory failed him. Mr. Thomson probably garbled Doyle's own statement about Sherrin(g)ford Holmes, then mixed it up with Jefferson Hope, *the name of the murderer in A STUDY IN SCARLET*. Mr. Starrett is so certain this is what happened that he is willing to bet all his precious first editions of Holmes that he is right! Personally, we agree with Mr. Starrett's views — so unconditionally, in fact, that we are prepared to risk our own precious first editions by offering to share Mr. Starrett's bet.

That is why you will meet in this volume such appellative disguises as

Sherlaw Kombs
 Picklock Holes
 Thinlock Bones
 Shylock Homes⁹
 Hemlock Jones
 Purlock Hone
 Holmlock Shears
 Herlock Sholmes
 Shamrock Jolnes
 Solar Pons
 Shirley Holmes

and, by comparison, such moderately warped Watsonisms as

Watson
 Potson
 Whatsoname
 Jobson
 Whatsup

WE CANNOT bring you anything new of Sherlock — you've read all there is. By the time this book is published, the newly discovered short story, *The Man Who Was Wanted*, may have been given to the world by the Doyle estate — and you will have devoured that. And that's all there is, there is no more. We are realists enough to face the hard fact that there is no Cox's Bank — not in this world; that there is no dispatch-box in its legendary vaults containing the documents of unrecorded cases. They are lost to us forever.

⁹ One of the newest variants has a curious politico-economic flavor: on the night of May 6, 1943, in the Rudy Vallee radio show, Basil Rathbone played the part of a detective named F. H. A. Homes. And currently, in the magazine "Speed Comics," there is a series of color comics in which The Master Detective (assisted by Dr. Watsis) is called Padlock Homes.

Two bizarre uses of Sherlock as a first name also come to mind. On July 11, 1943, Station WJZ of New York broadcast a "Sneak Preview" radio program titled "Cohen the Detective"; this show, Potash and Perlmutter style, concerned the detectival misadventures of two partners in the clothing business, Mr. Sherlock Cohen and his associate, Mr. Wasserman. And in the magazine "Funny Animals," there is now appearing a series of color comics about Sherlock Monk, a monkey wearing a deerstalker-cap and smoking a calabash pipe, and his assistant, Chuck, a duck wearing a flat, wide-brimmed straw hat; it is Chuck, however, who is the real sleuth of this strange zoological detective-team.

Someone has said that more has been written *about* Sherlock Holmes than about any other character in fiction. It is further true that more has been written about Holmes *by others* than by Doyle himself. Vincent Starrett once conjectured that "innumerable parodies of *THE ADVENTURES* have appeared in innumerable journals."¹⁰ There aren't that many, of course; but a half dozen or more full-length volumes have been devoted to Holmes's career and personality, literally hundreds of essays and magazine articles, a few-score radio dramas, some memorable plays, many moving-picture scripts — and to put it more accurately, numerous parodies and pastiches.

We bring you the finest of these parodies and pastiches. They are the next best thing to new stories — unrecorded cases of The Great Man, not as Dr. Watson related them, but as some of our most brilliant literary figures have imagined them. These "misadventures" — these Barriesque adventures that might have been — are all written with sincere reverence, despite the occasional laughter and fun-pokings, which are only a psychological form of adoration — or, perhaps, downright envy. The old proverb — "imitation is the sincerest flattery" — reveals in a single laconic sentence the comprehensive motif of this book.

You will see Holmes through the eyes of Mark Twain, O. Henry, Bret Harte, Sir James Barrie, Stephen Leacock, and lesser lights — all Devotees of Doyle and Sycophants of Sherlock, all humble Watsons paying homage from their own 221B, the eternal sanctuary of perpetual youth.

AND FINALLY, an explanation for certain omissions — "missing misadventures." We have not failed to consider the inclusion of three pastiches in which Sherlock Holmes solves the mystery of Charles Dickens's Edwin Drood. The first of these, by Andrew Lang, appeared in "Longman's Magazine," London, issue of September 1905. The second, by Edmund Lester Pearson, is contained in Chapter III of the author's *THE SECRET BOOK* (New York, Macmillan, 1914). The third, by Harry B. Smith, appeared in "Munsey's Magazine," December 1924, and was later published in book form.¹¹ After many pipefuls of indecision we came to the conclusion that all three are

¹⁰ Vincent Starrett's *THE PRIVATE LIFE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES*; page 162.

¹¹ Harry B. Smith's *HOW SHERLOCK HOLMES SOLVED THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD*; Glen Rock, Pa., Walter Klinefelter, 1934, private edition limited to thirty-three copies.

too specialized in treatment and content matter to appeal to the general reader.

Nor have we overlooked Corey Ford's *The Rollo Boys with Sherlock in Mayfair; or, Keep It Under Your Green Hat*. This is to be found in the author's THREE ROUSING CHEERS FOR THE ROLLO BOYS¹² and in the January 1926 issue of "The Bookman." As the title indicates, Mr. Ford contrived a triple-barreled parody of the Rover Boys, Sherlock Holmes, and Michael Arlen. But the satirical emphasis was almost exclusively on Arlen's literary style in his famous book, *THE GREEN HAT*, and so fails to maintain contemporary interest.

Regretfully we have been forced to exclude the pastiches written by H. Bedford Jones. This popular author once wrote a series of stories revealing the "true facts" in Watson's unrecorded cases—an imaginary dip into that "travel-worn and battered tin dispatch-box" in the vaults of the bank of Cox and Co., at Charing Cross. But after writing the series, H. Bedford Jones decided to remove Sherlock—thus disenchanting the stories—and sold most of them as "ordinary" detective tales. We have had the pleasure of reading three of Mr. Jones's "recorded" cases—*The Adventure of the Atkinson Brothers* (referred to by Watson in *A Scandal in Bohemia*),¹³ *The Affair of the Aluminium Crutch* (referred to in *The Musgrave Ritual*),¹⁴ and *The Adventure of the Matilda Briggs* (referred to in *The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire*).¹⁵

We have also—this time without regret—omitted a translation of the numerous "Sherlock Ol-mes" pastiches counterfeited, so to speak, in the pulp-factories of Barcelona. These were written by anonymous hacks and spread throughout the Spanish-language countries of the world. You will understand our restraint when you read the following synopsis, generously supplied by that indefatigable enthusiast, Mr. Anthony Boucher. It is a typical example of what happened to Holmes in MEMORIAS ÚLTIMAS—a potboiler-potpourri of sex and sensation titled *Jack, El Destripador* (*Jack the Ripper*).

¹² A rare instance in which book-appearance (New York, Doran, 1925) anticipated magazine-appearance ("The Bookman," January 1926).

¹³ THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES; London, Newnes, 1892; New York, Harper, 1892.

¹⁴ MEMOIRS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES; New York, Harper, 1894; London, Newnes, 1894.

¹⁵ THE CASE-BOOK OF SHERLOCK HOLMES; London, Murray, 1927; New York, Doran, 1927.

The story opens in the office of Mr. Warrn [*sic*], chief of police of London. Holmes has just returned from handling a delicate affair in Italy, and Warrn brings him up to date on the latest development in London crime: Jack the Ripper. There have been 37 (!) victims so far — all women.

Holmes's ancient rival, detective Murphy, enters with news of the 38th — the singer Lilian Bell. After a crude exchange of insults, Holmes and Murphy agree to a wager as to who will catch the Ripper. The stakes are £1000, to which Warrn adds 25 bottles of champagne for the winner.

Next we see the bedroom of the fair Lilian, with her disembowelled corpse tastefully arranged amid flowers on the bed. Her maid, Harriette Blunt, is disconsolate. Her brother, Grover Bell, is wondering about her will. Josias Wakefield, representative of the *Requiescat in Pace* Funeral Directors, calls to measure the body. His activities are curious, including the discovery of Lilian's false tooth and the deduction from it that she smoked opium. He drops his magnifying glass under the bed and there finds a disguised individual whom he recognizes as Murphy. Murphy clenches his fist and rages:

"Man, or rather devil, I know you! You are — you are —"

"Sherlock Holmes, detective, at your service," said the other laughing. And vanished.

Holmes next disguises himself as an opium addict, to the admiring amazement of his assistant, Harry Taxon (!), and slips out of his house to keep such a disreputable masquerade from his landlady, Mrs. Bonnet (!). He visits an opium den run by a half-caste Mrs. Cajana, secures opium from her, and then blackmails her for information on the threat of exposing her racket. He learns that Lilian Bell was a customer, and that Mrs. Cajana gets her drugs from a mysterious person known to her only as "The Indian Doctor." Suddenly a scream is heard from the next room. They dash in and find a beautiful damsel with her belly ripped open. Holmes spies the Ripper escaping, pursues him, but the Ripper makes good his flight by daringly jumping aboard a moving train.

Holmes identifies the latest (and 39th) victim by her custom-built shoes as Comtesse de Malmaison. He visits her father, the Marquis, a harsh old gentleman who thinks his daughter's death served her right if she spent her time in opium dens.

Holmes questions the Comtesse's maid. She tells him that the Comtesse used the opium den as a blind — to cover up assassinations with her American riding instructor, Carlos Lake.

Holmes grills Lake and learns that the only other person who knew of this arrangement was Dr. Roberto Fitzgerald, a prominent and respectable West End physician of Indian antecedents, who had made an appointment to meet the Comtesse at Mrs. Cajana's. The Doctor was to examine the Comtesse for a contemplated abortion.

Holmes shadows the Doctor's wife —

“When you wish to learn a man's
secrets, you must follow his wife,”

and witnesses a lover's tryst in Hyde Park between her and Captain Harry Thomson. He overhears Ruth Fitzgerald, the Doctor's wife, arrange to flee from her brutal, half-mad husband and take refuge with her lover's mother.

Holmes then disguises himself as a retired soap manufacturer named Patrick O'Connor, calls on Dr. Fitzgerald, and warns him of his wife's elopement. The Doctor has a fit, literally, and denounces all the tribe of Eve as serpents that must be destroyed. He has a terrible scene with Ruth, after which he quiets himself with a shot of morphine.

Holmes next disguises himself as Ruth Fitzgerald (!) —

“Englishwomen are usually slender rather than full-
fleshed, and their stature is at times surprisingly tall.”

He manoeuvres Ruth away from her rendezvous and saunters along “with that special gait with which public women stroll the street.”

Dr. Fitzgerald comes along and recognizes “him.”

“My wife — on the streets!”

And the Ripper emerges full blast. He attacks Holmes but is frustrated; the detective has wisely donned a steel cuirasse.

Meanwhile, back in Warrn's office, the chief of police is listening to Murphy's report. Holmes, still looking like a loose woman (even more so), drags in Dr. Fitzgerald, and Murphy acknowledges that he has lost the bet.

Further comment, you'll agree, is unnecessary.

WE HAVE omitted too John Chapman's *The Unmasking of Sherlock Holmes*, because this pastiche is devoted primarily to subtle literary criticism rather than to *story*.¹⁶ In this article which appeared in "The Critic," issue of February 1905, Mr. Chapman reports an imaginary conversation between the two greatest detectives in print — C. Auguste Dupin and Sherlock Holmes.

Dupin, appearing suddenly in the rooms on Baker Street, strikes terror into the heart of Holmes, who looked "at the little Frenchman on the threshold as if M. Dupin had been a ghost." Dupin accuses Holmes of filching "the product of another's brain and palming it off as his own."

Holmes admits that "it looks like a bad case against me. I've drawn freely upon you, M. Dupin." And Dupin, with a last admonition to Holmes not to overwork the exaggerated reports of his death, vanishes, leaving Holmes as shamefaced as a schoolboy caught with stolen apples.

The debt Holmes owed to Dupin — rather, that Doyle owed to Poe — is not a moot point. The first person to admit it was Sir Arthur Conan Doyle himself. In his Preface to the Author's Edition of 1903 (comparatively unknown in the United States), Doyle frankly revealed this indebtedness when, like the great and true gentleman he was, he stated that "Edgar Allan Poe was the father of the detective tale, and covered its limits so completely that I fail to see how his followers can find any fresh ground they can confidently call their own. . . . The writer sees the footmarks of Poe always in front of him. . . . I can only claim the very limited credit of doing it from a fresh model and from a new point of view."

But it is to Doyle's everlasting fame that while he took up where Poe left off, his "fresh model" of the immortal Dupin performed the impossible feat of achieving even greater immortality.

Further omissions, listed for the benefit of those who have a passion for completeness, include:

¹⁶ A. A. Milne's *Dr. Watson Speaks Out* is omitted for the same reason. This classic review of an omnibus edition of Sherlock Holmes short stories was written as if by Dr. Watson himself — and at long last the good doctor defends himself and "exposes" Sherlock. First appearance in "Nation & Athenaeum," issue of November 17, 1928. Later included in the author's book of essays, *BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION*; London, Methuen, 1929; New York, Dutton, 1929.

James L. Ford's *The Story of Bishop Johnson*, in "The Pocket Magazine," issue of November 1895

Allen Upward's *The Adventure of the Stolen Doormat*, a parody of a certain "criminal specialist in Baker Street" who signed himself H-LM-S, in the author's book, *THE WONDERFUL CAREER OF EBENEZER LOBB*, London, Hurst and Blackett, 1900

Charlton Andrews's *The Bound of the Astorbilts* and *The Resources of Mycroft Holmes*, in "The Bookman," issues of June 1902 and December 1903, respectively

J. Alston Cooper's *Dr. Watson's Wedding Present*, in "The Bookman," issue of February 1903

George F. Forrest's *The Adventure of the Diamond Necklace*, in *MISFITS: A BOOK OF PARODIES*, Oxford, Harvey, 1905, featuring detective Warlock Bones and narrator Goswell, the latter name obviously a "switch" on Boswell rather than on Watson

Robin Dunbar's *Sherlock Holmes Up-to-Date*, a socialistic satire in *THE DETECTIVE BUSINESS*, Chicago, Kerr, 1909

Maurice Baring's *From the Diary of Sherlock Holmes*, which first appeared in "Eye-Witness" (London), November 23, 1911, then in "The Living Age" (U.S.), June 20, 1912, and finally in the author's book, *LOST DIARIES*, London, Duckworth, 1913

Cornelis Veth's *DE ALLERLAATSTE AVONTUREN VAN SIR SHERLOCK HOLMES* (*THE VERY LAST ADVENTURES OF SIR SHERLOCK HOLMES*), Leiden, 1912 — a book of parodies containing *The Moving Picture Theatre*, *The Adventure of the Bloody Post Parcel*, *The Adventure of the Singular Advertisement*, and *The Adventure of the Mysterious Tom-Cat*, the last a burlesque of *THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES* changed to "The Tom-Cat of the Cookervilles"

James Francis Thierry's *THE ADVENTURE OF THE ELEVEN CUFF-BUTTONS*, New York, Neale, 1918, a long novelette in which Hemlock Holmes triumphs over Inspector Letstrayed

J. Storer Clouston's *The Truthful Lady*, a parody of Dr. Watson with Sherlock Holmes present only in spirit, in the author's book, *CARRINGTON'S CASES*, Edinburgh, Blackwood, 1920

H. F. Heard's *A TASTE FOR HONEY*, New York, Vanguard, 1941, and *REPLY PAID*, New York, Vanguard, 1942, in which the name Sherlock Holmes is never mentioned; but the detective, who calls himself Mr. Mycroft, is none other than The One and Only in beekeeping retirement

THE PUBLICATION of this anthology marks the first time the great parodies and pastiches of that "Extraordinary Man," as Mark Twain affectionately called him, have been collected in a single volume.

Why no one thought of doing it before, we shall never understand. But we are grateful the task has been left for us. Perhaps it was ordained that way from the beginning, by Someone who looks after twelve-year-old boys; perhaps this is a token-payment for the moment that, early or late, comes only once in a lifetime.

ELLERY QUEEN

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

v

PART ONE: BY DETECTIVE-STORY WRITERS

1892	THE GREAT PEGRAM MYSTERY	
	by <i>Robert Barr</i>	3
1907	HOLMLOCK SHEARS ARRIVES TOO LATE	
	by <i>Maurice Leblanc</i>	14
1915	THE ADVENTURE OF THE CLOTHES-LINE	
	by <i>Carolyn Wells</i>	39
1920	THE UNIQUE HAMLET	by <i>Vincent Starrett</i> 48
1925	HOLMES AND THE DASHER	
	by <i>Anthony Berkeley</i>	66
1929	THE CASE OF THE MISSING LADY	
	by <i>Agatha Christie</i>	70
1942	THE ADVENTURE OF THE ILLUSTRIOUS IMPOSTOR	
	by <i>Anthony Boucher</i>	84
1943	THE DISAPPEARANCE OF MR. JAMES PHILLIMORE	
	by <i>Ellery Queen</i>	89
1943	THE ADVENTURE OF THE REMARKABLE WORM	
	by <i>Stuart Palmer</i>	108

PART TWO: BY FAMOUS LITERARY FIGURES

- 1893 THE ADVENTURE OF THE TWO COLLABORATORS
by *Sir James M. Barrie* 119
- 1902 A DOUBLE-BARRELLED DETECTIVE STORY
by *Mark Twain* 123
- 1902 THE STOLEN CIGAR CASE
by *Bret Harte* 164
- 1911 THE ADVENTURES OF SHAMROCK JOLNES
by *O. Henry* 175

PART THREE: BY HUMORISTS

- 1893 THE UMBROSA BURGLARY
by *R. C. Lehmann* 185
- 1897 THE STRANGER UNRAVELS A MYSTERY
by *John Kendrick Bangs* 190
- 1903 SHYLOCK HOMES: HIS POSTHUMOUS MEMOIRS
by *John Kendrick Bangs* 208
- 1911 MADDENED BY MYSTERY: OR, THE DEFECTIVE DETECTIVE
by *Stephen Leacock* 218
- 1916 AN IRREDUCIBLE DETECTIVE STORY
by *Stephen Leacock* 227

PART FOUR: BY DEVOTEES AND OTHERS

- 1894 THE ADVENTURE OF THE TABLE FOOT
by *Zero (Allan Ramsay)* 231
- 1894 THE SIGN OF THE "400"
by *R. K. Munkittrick* 235
- 1907 OUR MR. SMITH
by *Oswald Crawford* 238
- 1920 THE FOOTPRINTS ON THE CEILING
by *Jules Castier* 245
- 1927 THE END OF SHERLOCK HOLMES
by *A. E. P.* 256
- 1928 THE ADVENTURE OF THE NORCROSS RIDDLE
by *August Derleth* 261
- 1929 THE MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS JEWEL
by *William O. Fuller* 275
- 1932 THE RUBY OF KHITMANDU
by *Hugh Kingsmill* 291
- 1932 HIS LAST SCRAPE: OR, HOLMES, SWEET HOLMES!
by *Rachel Ferguson* 301
- 1933 THE ADVENTURE OF THE MURDERED ART EDITOR
by *Frederic Dorr Steele* 306
- 1933 THE CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL MURDER
by *Frederic Arnold Kummer*
and *Basil Mitchell* 313

1934	THE CASE OF THE MISSING PATRIARCHS	
	by <i>Logan Clendening, M.D.</i>	330
1935	THE CASE OF THE DIABOLICAL PLOT	
	by <i>Richard Mallett</i>	332
1936	CHRISTMAS EVE	
	by <i>S. C. Roberts</i>	336
1941	THE MAN WHO WAS NOT DEAD	
	by <i>Manly Wade Wellman</i>	348
	ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	357
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	359
	INDEX	365

HOLMES, Sherlock; b. circa 1854, grandson of sister of the French military painter Vernet, younger brother of Mycroft Holmes. Unmarried. Educ. College graduate, irregular student in chemical and anatomical classes of London University at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London; while a student devised new test for bloodstains, replacing old guaiacum test, through reagent precipitated by hemoglobin and no other substance; private consultive practice begun circa 1877 and continued 23 years; after disappearance and reported death, May 1, 1891, explored Tibet and penetrated Lhasa as a Norwegian named Sigerson, visiting Persia, Mecca and Khartoum before returning to professional practice in London, April, 1894, to complete the destruction of Professor Moriarty's criminal gang; retired circa 1903 to small farm upon Sussex Downs five miles from Eastbourne, devoting himself to bee-keeping and giving up professional work except for a mysterious mission to Shantung, 1914, for the Admiralty, clearing up the death of Fitzroy McPherson, and a German espionage case, 1912-1914, which caused him to reside at various times in Chicago, Buffalo and Skibbareen, Ireland, under the name Altamont; received Congressional Medal for services to U. S. Government in so-called "Adventure of the American Ambassador and the Thermite Bullet"; diamond sword from King Albert of Belgium, 1916; and Versailles Plaque (with palms). Club: Diogenes. Author: Monographs, "Upon the Typewriter and Its Relation to Crime"; "Upon the Distinction Between the Ashes of the Various Tobaccos — 140 Forms of Cigar, Cigarette and Pipe Tobaccos," ill. with colored plates; "Upon the Influence of a Trade on the Form of a Hand," ill. with lithotypes; "Upon the Tracing of Footsteps"; "Upon the Dating of Documents"; "Upon Tattoo Marks"; "Upon the Polyphonic Motets of Lassus" and "Upon Variations in the Human Ear" (two issues of "The Anthropological Journal"); two short accounts of cases: "The Adventure of the Blanched Soldier" and "The Adventure of the Lion's Mane"; "The Book of Life," a magazine article on the theory of deduction, published anonymously; "Practical Handbook of Bee Culture with Some Observations on the Segregation of the Queen." Assistant and narrator: Dr. John H. Watson. For celebrated cases see: A STUDY IN SCARLET (1887); THE SIGN OF [THE] FOUR (1890); THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES (1892); MEMOIRS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES (1894); THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES (1902); THE RETURN OF SHERLOCK HOLMES (1905); THE VALLEY OF FEAR (1915); HIS LAST BOW (1917); THE CASE-BOOK OF SHERLOCK HOLMES (1927). Hobbies: The violin, medieval music, boxing, fencing, bee-keeping, sharpshooting and criminal law. Indulgences: cocaine, morphine and shag tobacco. Residences: Montague Street, near the British Museum, London till 1881; 221B Baker St., London till 1903, Sussex and, later, Devonshire.

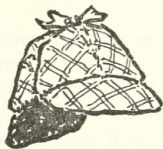
Prepared by KENNETH MACGOWAN

PART ONE:

BY DETECTIVE-STORY WRITERS

"Though he might be more humble, there's no
police like Holmes."

— E. W. HORNING



THE GREAT PEGRAM MYSTERY

by ROBERT BARR

Here is one of the earliest — and still, in your Editors' opinion, one of the finest — parodies of Sherlock Holmes. It appeared less than a year after the publication of the first Sherlock Holmes short story.

"The Great Pegram Mystery" has an interesting bibliographic history. It broke into print in the May 1892 issue of "The Idler Magazine" (London and New York), edited — do you remember? — by Jerome K. Jerome and Robert Barr. Originally it was called "Detective Stories Gone Wrong: The Adventures of Sherlaw Kombs," and was signed by the pen-name of Luke Sharp. Two years later, under its present title, it appeared in Robert Barr's book of short stories, THE FACE AND THE MASK (London, Hutchinson, 1894; New York, Stokes, 1895) — and thus the true authorship was acknowledged.

Mr. Barr's parody reveals a shrewd grasp of the character of Sherlock Holmes and an equally penetrating comprehension of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's style. You will recognize the inexorable sequence of idiosyncrasies and events — the violin, the contempt for Scotland Yard, the anticipated visitor, the extraordinary deductions, and the minute examination of the scene of the crime by magnifying glass. Alas! only the solution fails to follow the time-honored pattern!

It is especially fitting that Mr. Barr's burlesque be the chronological leader in our Pageant of Parodies. For Mr. Barr made his indelible mark in serious detective fiction too. His historically important book, THE TRIUMPHS OF EUGÈNE VALMONT (London, Hurst & Blackett, 1906; New York, Appleton, 1906), gave us "The Absent-Minded Coterie," one of the truly great classics among detective short stories.

I DROPPED in on my friend, Sherlaw Kombs, to hear what he had to say about the Pegram mystery, as it had come to be called in the newspapers. I found him playing the violin with a look of sweet peace and serenity on his face, which I never noticed on the countenances of those within hearing distance. I knew this expression of seraphic calm indicated that Kombs had been deeply annoyed about something. Such, indeed, proved to be the case, for one of the morning papers had contained an article eulogizing the alertness and general competence of Scotland Yard. So great was Sherlaw Kombs's contempt for Scotland Yard that he never would visit Scotland during his vacations, nor would he ever admit that a Scotchman was fit for anything but export.

He generously put away his violin, for he had a sincere liking for me, and greeted me with his usual kindness.

"I have come," I began, plunging at once into the matter on my mind, "to hear what you think of the great Pegram mystery."

"I haven't heard of it," he said quietly, just as if all London were not talking of that very thing. Kombs was curiously ignorant on some subjects, and abnormally learned on others. I found, for instance, that political discussion with him was impossible, because he did not know who Salisbury and Gladstone were. This made his friendship a great boon.

"The Pegram mystery has baffled even Gregory, of Scotland Yard."

"I can well believe it," said my friend, calmly. "Perpetual motion, or squaring the circle, would baffle Gregory. He's an infant, is Gregory."

This was one of the things I always liked about Kombs. There was no professional jealousy in him, such as characterizes so many other men.

He filled his pipe, threw himself into his deep-seated arm-chair, placed his feet on the mantel, and clasped his hands behind his head.

"Tell me about it," he said simply.

"Old Barrie Kipson," I began, "was a stock-broker in the City. He lived in Pegram, and it was his custom to —"

"COME IN!" shouted Kombs, without changing his position, but with a suddenness that startled me. I had heard no knock.

"Excuse me," said my friend, laughing, "my invitation to enter was a trifle premature. I was really so interested in your recital that I spoke before I thought, which a detective should never do. The fact is, a man will be here in a moment who will tell me all about this crime, and so you will be spared further effort in that line."

"Ah, you have an appointment. In that case I will not intrude," I said, rising.

"Sit down; I have no appointment. I did not know until I spoke that he was coming."

I gazed at him in amazement. Accustomed as I was to his extraordinary talents, the man was a perpetual surprise to me. He continued to smoke quietly, but evidently enjoyed my consternation.

"I see you are surprised. It is really too simple to talk about, but, from my position opposite the mirror, I can see the reflection of objects in the street. A man stopped, looked at one of my cards, and then glanced across the street. I recognized my card, because, as you know, they are all in scarlet. If, as you say, London is talking of this mystery, it naturally follows that *he* will talk of it, and the chances are he wished to consult with me upon it. Anyone can see that, besides there is always — *Come in!*"

There was a rap at the door this time.

A stranger entered. Sherlaw Kombs did not change his lounging attitude.

"I wish to see Mr. Sherlaw Kombs, the detective," said the stranger, coming within the range of the smoker's vision.

"This is Mr. Kombs," I remarked at last, as my friend smoked quietly, and seemed half-asleep.

"Allow me to introduce myself," continued the stranger, fumbling for a card.

"There is no need. You are a journalist," said Kombs.

"Ah," said the stranger, somewhat taken aback, "you know me, then."

"Never saw or heard of you in my life before."

"Then how in the world —"

"Nothing simpler. You write for an evening paper. You have written an article condemning the book of a friend. He will feel bad

about it, and you will condole with him. He will never know who stabbed him unless I tell him."

"The devil!" cried the journalist, sinking into a chair and mopping his brow, while his face became livid.

"Yes," drawled Kombs, "it is a devil of a shame that such things are done. But what would you, as we say in France?"

When the journalist had recovered his second wind he pulled himself together somewhat. "Would you object to telling me how you know these particulars about a man you say you have never seen?"

"I rarely talk about these things," said Kombs with great composure. "But as the cultivation of the habit of observation may help you in your profession, and thus in a remote degree benefit me by making your paper less deadly dull, I will tell you. Your first and second fingers are smeared with ink, which shows that you write a great deal. This smeared class embraces two subclasses, clerks or accountants, and journalists. Clerks have to be neat in their work. The ink smear is slight in their case. Your fingers are badly and carelessly smeared; therefore, you are a journalist. You have an evening paper in your pocket. Anyone might have any evening paper, but yours is a Special Edition, which will not be on the streets for half an hour yet. You must have obtained it before you left the office, and to do this you must be on the staff. A book notice is marked with a blue pencil. A journalist always despises every article in his own paper not written by himself; therefore, you wrote the article you have marked, and doubtless are about to send it to the author of the book referred to. Your paper makes a speciality of abusing all books not written by some member of its own staff. That the author is a friend of yours, I merely surmised. It is all a trivial example of ordinary observation."

"Really, Mr. Kombs, you are the most wonderful man on earth. You are the equal of Gregory, by Jove, you are."

A frown marred the brow of my friend as he placed his pipe on the sideboard and drew his self-cocking six-shooter.

"Do you mean to insult me, sir?"

"I do not — I — I assure you. You are fit to take charge of Scotland Yard to-morrow — I am in earnest, indeed I am, sir."

"Then heaven help you," cried Kombs, slowly raising his right arm.

I sprang between them.

"Don't shoot!" I cried. "You will spoil the carpet. Besides, Sherlaw, don't you see the man means well. He actually thinks it is a compliment!"

"Perhaps you are right," remarked the detective, flinging his revolver carelessly beside his pipe, much to the relief of the third party. Then, turning to the journalist, he said, with his customary bland courtesy —

"You wanted to see me, I think you said. What can I do for you, Mr. Wilber Scribbings?"

The journalist started.

"How do you know my name?" he gasped.

Kombs waved his hand impatiently.

"Look inside your hat if you doubt your own name."

I then noticed for the first time that the name was plainly to be seen inside the top-hat Scribbings held upside down in his hands.

"You have heard, of course, of the Pegram mystery —"

"Tush," cried the detective; "do not, I beg of you, call it a mystery. There is no such thing. Life would become more tolerable if there ever *was* a mystery. Nothing is original. Everything has been done before. What about the Pegram affair?"

"The Pegram — ah — case has baffled everyone. The *Evening Blade* wishes you to investigate, so that it may publish the result. It will pay you well. Will you accept the commission?"

"Possibly. Tell me about the case."

"I thought everybody knew the particulars. Mr. Barrie Kipson lived at Pegram. He carried a first-class season ticket between the terminus and that station. It was his custom to leave for Pegram on the 5.30 train each evening. Some weeks ago, Mr. Kipson was brought down by the influenza. On his first visit to the City after his recovery, he drew something like £300 in notes, and left the office at his usual hour to catch the 5.30. He was never seen again alive, as far as the public have been able to learn. He was found at Brewster in a first-class compartment on the Scotch Express, which does not stop between London and Brewster. There was a bullet in his head,

and his money was gone, pointing plainly to murder and robbery."

"And where is the mystery, might I ask?"

"There are several unexplainable things about the case. First, how came he on the Scotch Express, which leaves at six, and does not stop at Pegram? Second, the ticket examiners at the terminus would have turned him out if he showed his season ticket; and all the tickets sold for the Scotch Express on the 21st are accounted for. Third, how could the murderer have escaped? Fourth, the passengers in two compartments on each side of the one where the body was found heard no scuffle and no shot fired."

"Are you sure the Scotch Express on the 21st did not stop between London and Brewster?"

"Now that you mention the fact, it did. It was stopped by signal just outside of Pegram. There was a few moments' pause, when the line was reported clear, and it went on again. This frequently happens, as there is a branch line beyond Pegram."

Mr. Sherlaw Kombs pondered for a few moments, smoking his pipe silently.

"I presume you wish the solution in time for to-morrow's paper?"

"Bless my soul, no. The editor thought if you evolved a theory in a month you would do well."

"My dear sir, I do not deal with theories, but with facts. If you can make it convenient to call here to-morrow at 8 A.M. I will give you the full particulars early enough for the first edition. There is no sense in taking up much time over so simple an affair as the Pegram case. Good afternoon, sir."

Mr. Scribbings was too much astonished to return the greeting. He left in a speechless condition, and I saw him go up the street with his hat still in his hand.

Sherlaw Kombs relapsed into his old lounging attitude, with his hands clasped behind his head. The smoke came from his lips in quick puffs at first, then at longer intervals. I saw he was coming to a conclusion, so I said nothing.

Finally he spoke in his most dreamy manner. "I do not wish to seem to be rushing things at all, Watson, but I am going out to-night on the Scotch Express. Would you care to accompany me?"

"Bless me!" I cried, glancing at the clock. "You haven't time, it is after five now."

"Ample time, Watson — ample," he murmured, without changing his position. "I give myself a minute and a half to change slippers and dressing-gown for boots and coat, three seconds for hat, twenty-five seconds to the street, forty-two seconds waiting for a hansom, and then seven minutes at the terminus before the express starts. I shall be glad of your company."

I was only too happy to have the privilege of going with him. It was most interesting to watch the workings of so inscrutable a mind. As we drove under the lofty iron roof of the terminus I noticed a look of annoyance pass over his face.

"We are fifteen seconds ahead of our time," he remarked, looking at the big clock. "I dislike having a miscalculation of that sort occur."

The great Scotch Express stood ready for its long journey. The detective tapped one of the guards on the shoulder.

"You have heard of the so-called Pegram mystery, I presume?"

"Certainly, sir. It happened on this very train, sir."

"Really? Is the same carriage still on the train?"

"Well, yes, sir, it is," replied the guard, lowering his voice, "but of course, sir, we have to keep very quiet about it. People wouldn't travel in it, else, sir."

"Doubtless. Do you happen to know if anybody occupies the compartment in which the body was found?"

"A lady and gentleman, sir; I put 'em in myself, sir."

"Would you further oblige me," said the detective, deftly slipping half a sovereign into the hand of the guard, "by going to the window and informing them in an offhand casual sort of way that the tragedy took place in that compartment?"

"Certainly, sir."

We followed the guard, and the moment he had imparted his news there was a suppressed scream in the carriage. Instantly a lady came out, followed by a florid-faced gentleman, who scowled at the guard. We entered the now empty compartment, and Kombs said:

"We would like to be alone here until we reach Brewster."

"I'll see to that, sir," answered the guard, locking the door.

When the official moved away, I asked my friend what he expected to find in the carriage that would cast any light on the case.

"Nothing," was his brief reply.

"Then why do you come?"

"Merely to corroborate the conclusions I have already arrived at."

"And might I ask what those conclusions are?"

"Certainly," replied the detective, with a touch of lassitude in his voice. "I beg to call your attention, first, to the fact that this train stands between two platforms, and can be entered from either side. Any man familiar with the station for years would be aware of that fact. This shows how Mr. Kipson entered the train just before it started."

"But the door on this side is locked," I objected, trying it.

"Of course. But every season ticket holder carries a key. This accounts for the guard not seeing him, and for the absence of a ticket. Now let me give you some information about the influenza. The patient's temperature rises several degrees above normal, and he has a fever. When the malady has run its course, the temperature falls to three quarters of a degree below normal. These facts are unknown to you, I imagine, because you are a doctor."

I admitted such was the case.

"Well, the consequence of this fall in temperature is that the convalescent's mind turns towards thoughts of suicide. Then is the time he should be watched by his friends. Then was the time Mr. Barrie Kipson's friends did *not* watch him. You remember the 21st, of course. No? It was a most depressing day. Fog all around and mud under foot. Very good. He resolves on suicide. He wishes to be unidentified, if possible, but forgets his season ticket. My experience is that a man about to commit a crime always forgets something."

"But how do you account for the disappearance of the money?"

"The money has nothing to do with the matter. If he was a deep man, and knew the stupidity of Scotland Yard, he probably sent the notes to an enemy. If not, they may have been given to a friend. Nothing is more calculated to prepare the mind for self-destruction than the prospect of a night ride on the Scotch Express, and the view from the windows of the train as it passes through the northern part of London is particularly conducive to thoughts of annihilation."

"What became of the weapon?"

"That is just the point on which I wish to satisfy myself. Excuse me for a moment."

Mr. Sherlaw Kombs drew down the window on the right-hand

side, and examined the top of the casing minutely with a magnifying glass. Presently he heaved a sigh of relief, and drew up the sash.

"Just as I expected," he remarked, speaking more to himself than to me. "There is a slight dent on the top of the window frame. It is of such a nature as to be made only by the trigger of a pistol falling from the nerveless hand of a suicide. He intended to throw the weapon far out of the window, but had not the strength. It might have fallen into the carriage. As a matter of fact, it bounced away from the line and lies among the grass about ten feet six inches from the outside rail. The only question that now remains is where the deed was committed, and the exact present position of the pistol reckoned in miles from London, but that, fortunately, is too simple even to need explanation."

"Great heavens, Sherlaw!" I cried. "How can you call that simple? It seems to me impossible to compute."

We were now flying over northern London, and the great detective leaned back with every sign of *ennui*, closing his eyes. At last he spoke wearily:

"It is really too elementary, Watson, but I am always willing to oblige a friend. I shall be relieved, however, when you are able to work out the A B C of detection for yourself, although I shall never object to helping you with the words of more than three syllables. Having made up his mind to commit suicide, Kipson naturally intended to do it before he reached Brewster, because tickets are again examined at that point. When the train began to stop at the signal near Pegram, he came to the false conclusion that it was stopping at Brewster. The fact that the shot was not heard is accounted for by the screech of the air-brake, added to the noise of the train. Probably the whistle was also sounding at the same moment. The train being a fast express would stop as near the signal as possible. The air-brake will stop a train in twice its own length. Call it three times in this case. Very well. At three times the length of this train from the signal-post towards London, deducting half the length of the train, as this carriage is in the middle, you will find the pistol."

"Wonderful!" I exclaimed.

"Commonplace," he murmured.

At this moment the whistle sounded shrilly, and we felt the grind of the air-brakes.

"The Pegram signal again," cried Kombs, with something almost like enthusiasm. "This is indeed luck. We will get out here, Watson, and test the matter."

As the train stopped, we got out on the right-hand side of the line. The engine stood panting impatiently under the red light, which changed to green as I looked at it. As the train moved on with increasing speed, the detective counted the carriages, and noted down the number. It was now dark, with the thin crescent of the moon hanging in the western sky throwing a weird half-light on the shining metals. The rear lamps of the train disappeared around a curve, and the signal stood at baleful red again. The black magic of the lonesome night in that strange place impressed me, but the detective was a most practical man. He placed his back against the signal-post, and paced up the line with even strides, counting his steps. I walked along the permanent way beside him silently. At last he stopped, and took a tape-line from his pocket. He ran it out until the ten feet six inches were unrolled, scanning the figures in the wan light of the new moon. Giving me the end, he placed his knuckles on the metals, motioning me to proceed down the embankment. I stretched out the line, and then sank my hand in the damp grass to mark the spot.

"Good God!" I cried, aghast. "What is this?"

"It is the pistol," said Kombs quietly.

It was!

Journalistic London will not soon forget the sensation that was caused by the record of the investigations of Sherlaw Kombs, as printed at length in the next day's *Evening Blade*. Would that my story ended here. Alas! Kombs contemptuously turned over the pistol to Scotland Yard. The meddlesome officials, actuated, as I always hold, by jealousy, found the name of the seller upon it. They investigated. The seller testified that it had never been in the possession of Mr. Kipson, as far as he knew. It was sold to a man whose description tallied with that of a criminal long watched by the police. He was arrested, and turned Queen's evidence in the hope of hanging his pal. It seemed that Mr. Kipson, who was a gloomy, taciturn man, and usually came home in a compartment by himself, thus escaping observation, had been murdered in the lane leading to his house. After robbing him, the miscreants turned their thoughts

towards the disposal of the body — a subject that always occupies a first-class criminal mind after the deed is done. They agreed to place it on the line, and have it mangled by the Scotch Express, then nearly due. Before they got the body half-way up the embankment the express came along and stopped. The guard got out and walked along the other side to speak with the engineer. The thought of putting the body into an empty first-class carriage instantly occurred to the murderers. They opened the door with the deceased's key. It is supposed that the pistol dropped when they were hoisting the body in the carriage.

The Queen's evidence dodge didn't work, and Scotland Yard ignobly insulted my friend Sherlaw Kombs by sending him a pass to see the villains hanged.

HOLMLOCK SHEARS ARRIVES TOO LATE

by MAURICE LEBLANC

Maurice Leblanc, creator of Arsène Lupin, conceived the brilliant idea of pitting his master rogue against the world's greatest detective. The opening skirmish occurred in the last story of THE EXPLOITS OF ARSÈNE LUPIN (New York, Harper, 1907). It is this tale — "Holmlock Shears Arrives Too Late" — that we now bring you. Happily for posterity, Holmlock Shears did not arrive too late!

Readers may be curious to know the further development of this epic conflict — Holmes vs. Lupin. The second duel, assuming grander proportions, required a full-length novel to recount all the delicious details. This novel appeared in England as THE FAIR-HAIRED LADY (London, Richards, 1909), was almost immediately retitled ARSÈNE LUPIN VERSUS HOLMLOCK SHEARS (London, Richards, 1909), and was reincarnated in the United States as THE BLONDE LADY (New York, Doubleday, Page, 1910).

Of the final page in this book, T. S. Eliot, the famous poet, has asked: "What greater compliment could France pay to England than the scene in which the great antagonists, Holmes and Lupin, are lying side by side on deck-chairs on the Calais-Dover paquebot, and the London Commissioner of Police walks up and down the deck all unsuspecting?"

The third and last contest took place in the closing chapter of the novel, THE HOLLOW NEEDLE (New York, Doubleday, Page, 1910; London, Nash, 1911). "The encounter appeared all the more terrible inasmuch as it was silent, almost solemn. For long moments the two enemies took each other's measure with their eyes."

In the final desperate struggle, when Shears was aiming his

revolver at Lupin, the woman who loved the great Arsène flung herself between the two men. The shot intended for Lupin killed her, and the scene that followed is one of the most tragic in all detective literature. "Night began to cover the field of battle with a shroud of darkness. . . . Then Lupin bent down, took the dead woman in his powerful arms . . . and bearing his precious and awful burden . . . silent and fierce he turned toward the sea and plunged into the darkness of the night."

So ended the death-struggle between the two great masters.

A point of explanation about the various names under which Sherlock Holmes appears in the Lupin saga: The original French version is Herlock Sholmès. This was changed in English editions to Holmlock Shears. Both forms have been used in American books—Holmlock Shears in the Harper editions, and Herlock Sholmes (without the accent) in the Donohue and Ogilvie reprints.

But Shears or Sholmes, he is the only detective whom Leblanc considered a worthy adversary for his clever and resourceful Arsène. For while Lupin consistently vanquished Ganimard, Guerschard, and all the other Gallic sleuths, he never achieved more than a draw against the great Englishman—a monumental tribute indeed from that true French gentleman, M. Leblanc, who for a time controlled the destiny of Britain's man of the ages.

IT'S REALLY curious, your likeness to Arsène Lupin, my dear Vermont."

"Do you know him?"

"Oh, just as everybody does—by his photographs, not one of which in the least resembles the others; but they all leave the impression of the same face . . . which is undoubtedly yours."

Horace Vermont seemed rather annoyed.

"I suppose you're right, Devanne. You're not the first to tell me of it, I assure you."

"Upon my word," persisted Devanne, "if you had not been intro-

duced to me by my cousin d'Estavan, and if you were not the well-known painter whose charming seapieces I admire so much, I'm not sure but that I should have informed the police of your presence at Dieppe."

The sally was received with general laughter. There were gathered, in the great dining room of Thibermesnil Castle, in addition to Vermont, the Abbé Gélis, rector of the village, and a dozen officers whose regiments were taking part in the maneuvers in the neighborhood, and who had accepted the invitation of Georges Devanne, the banker, and his mother. One of them exclaimed:

"But, I say, wasn't Arsène Lupin seen on the coast after his famous performance in the train between Paris and Le Havre?"

"Just so, three months ago; and the week after that I made the acquaintance, at the Casino, of our friend Vermont here, who has since honored me with a few visits: an agreeable preliminary to a more serious call which I presume he means to pay me one of these days . . . or, rather, one of these nights!"

The company laughed once more, and moved into the old guard-room — a huge, lofty hall which occupies the whole of the lower portion of the Tour Guillaume, and in which Georges Devanne has arranged all the incomparable treasures accumulated through the centuries by the lords of Thibermesnil. It is filled and adorned with old chests and credence tables, fire dogs and candelabra. Splendid tapestries hang on the stone walls. The deep embrasures of the four windows are furnished with seats and end in pointed casements with leaded panes. Between the door and the window on the left stands a monumental Renaissance bookcase, on the pediment of which is inscribed, in gold letters, the word THIBERMESNIL and underneath it the proud motto of the family: *Fais ce que veux*.

And as they were lighting their cigars, Devanne added:

"But you will have to hurry, Vermont, for this is the last night on which you will have a chance."

"And why the last night?" said the painter, who certainly took the jest in very good part.

Devanne was about to reply when his mother made signs to him. But the excitement of the dinner and the wish to interest his guests were too much for him:

"Pooh!" he muttered. "Why shouldn't I tell them? There's no indiscretion to be feared now."

They sat round him, filled with a lively curiosity, and he declared, with the self-satisfied air of a man announcing a great piece of news:

"Tomorrow, at four o'clock in the afternoon, I shall have here, as my guest, Holmlock Shears, the great English detective, for whom no mystery exists, the most extraordinary solver of riddles that has ever been known, the wonderful individual who might have been the creation of a novelist's brain."

There was a general exclamation. Holmlock Shears at Thibermesnil! The thing was serious, then? Was Arsène Lupin really in the district?

"Arsène Lupin and his gang are not very far away. Without counting Baron Cahorn's mishap, to whom are we to ascribe the daring burglaries at Montigny and Gruchet and Crasville if not to our national thief? Today it's my turn."

"And have you had a warning, like Baron Cahorn?"

"The same trick does not succeed twice."

"Then . . ."

"Look here."

He rose, and, pointing to a little empty space between two tall folios on one of the shelves of the bookcase, said:

"There was a book here — a sixteenth-century book, entitled *The Chronicles of Thibermesnil* — which was the history of the castle since the time of its construction by Duke Rollo, on the site of a feudal fortress. It contained three engraved plates. One of them presented a general view of the domain as a whole; the second a plan of the building; and the third — I call your special attention to this — the sketch of an underground passage, one of whose outlets opens outside the first line of the ramparts, while the other ends here — yes, in this very hall where we are sitting. Now this book disappeared last month."

"By Jove!" said Vermont. "That's a bad sign. Only it's not enough to justify the intervention of Holmlock Shears."

"Certainly it would not have been enough if another fact had not come to give its full significance to that which I have just told you. There was a second copy of the chronicle in the Bibliothèque

Nationale, and the two copies differed in certain details concerning the underground passage, such as the addition of a sectional drawing, and a scale and a number of notes, not printed, but written in ink and more or less obliterated. I knew of these particulars, and I knew that the definite sketch could not be reconstructed except by carefully collating the two plans. Well, on the day after that on which my copy disappeared the one in the Bibliothèque Nationale was applied for by a reader who carried it off without leaving any clue as to the manner in which the theft had been effected."

These words were greeted with many exclamations.

"This time the affair grows serious."

"Yes; and this time," said Devanne, "the police were roused, and there was a double inquiry which, however, led to no result."

"Like all those aimed at Arsène Lupin."

"Exactly. It then occurred to me to write and ask for the help of Holmlock Shears, who replied that he had the keenest wish to come into contact with Arsène Lupin."

"What an honor for Arsène Lupin!" said Velmont. "But if our national thief, as you call him, should not be contemplating a project upon Thibermesnil, then there will be nothing for Holmlock Shears to do but twiddle his thumbs."

"There is another matter which is sure to interest him: the discovery of the underground passage."

"Why, you told us that one end opened in the fields and the other here, in the guardroom!"

"Yes, but in what part of it? The line that represents the tunnel on the plans finishes, at one end, at a little circle accompanied by the initials T.G., which, of course, stand for Tour Guillaume. But it's a round tower, and who can decide at which point in the circle the line in the drawing touches?"

Devanne lit a second cigar, and poured himself out a glass of Benedictine. The others pressed him with questions. He smiled with pleasure at the interest which he had aroused. At last, he said:

"The secret is lost. Not a person in the world knows it. The story says that the high and mighty lords handed it down to one another, on their death-beds, from father to son, until the day when Geoffrey, the last of the name, lost his head on the scaffold, on the seventh of Thermidor, Year Second, in the nineteenth year of his age."

"Yes, but more than a century has passed since then; and it must have been looked for."

"It has been looked for, but in vain. I myself, after I bought the castle from the great-grandnephew of Leribourg of the National Convention, had excavations made. What was the good? Remember that this tower is surrounded by water on every side, and only joined to the castle by a bridge, and that, consequently, the tunnel must pass under the old moats. The plan in the Bibliothèque Nationale shows a series of four staircases, comprising forty-eight steps, which allows for a depth of over ten yards, and the scale annexed to the other plan fixes the length at two hundred yards. As a matter of fact, the whole problem lies here, between this floor, that ceiling, and these walls; and, upon my word, I do not feel inclined to have them pulled down."

"And is there no clue?"

"Not one."

The Abbé Gélis objected.

"Monsieur Devanne, we have to reckon with two quotations . . ."

"Oh," cried Devanne, laughing, "the rector is a great rummager of family papers, a great reader of memoirs, and he fondly loves everything that has to do with Thibermesnil. But the explanation to which he refers only serves to confuse matters."

"But tell us what it is."

"Do you really care to hear?"

"Immensely."

"Well, you must know that, as the result of his reading, he has discovered that two kings of France held the key to the riddle."

"Two kings of France?"

"Henry IV and Louis XVI."

"Two famous men. And how did the rector find out?"

"Oh, it's very simple," continued Devanne. "Two days before the Battle of Arques, King Henry IV came to sup and sleep in the castle, and on this occasion Duke Edgar confided the family secret to him. This secret Henry IV revealed later to Sully, his minister, who tells the story in his *Royales Oeconomies d'État*, without adding any comment besides this incomprehensible phrase: '*La hache tournoie dans l'air qui frémit, mais l'aile s'ouvre et l'on va jusqu'à Dieu.*'"

A silence followed, and Vermont remarked:

"It's not as clear as daylight, is it?"

"That's what I say. The rector maintains that Sully set down the key to the puzzle by means of those words, without betraying the secret to the scribes to whom he dictated his memoirs."

"It's an ingenious supposition."

"True. But what is the ax that turns? What bird is it whose wing opens?"

"And who goes to God?"

"Goodness knows!"

"And what about our good King Louis XVI?" asked Velmont.

"Louis XVI stayed at Thibermesnil in 1784, and the famous Iron Cupboard discovered at the Louvre on the information of Gamain, the locksmith, contained a paper with these words written in the king's hand: *Thibermesnil, 2-6-12.*"

Horace Velmont laughed aloud.

"Victory! The darkness is dispelled. Twice six are twelve!"

"Laugh as you please, sir," said the rector. "Those two quotations contain the solution for all that, and one of these days someone will come along who knows how to interpret them."

"Holmlock Shears, first of all," said Devanne, "unless Arsène Lupin forestalls him. What do you think, Velmont?"

Velmont rose, laid his hand on Devanne's shoulder, and declared:

"I think that the data supplied by your book and the copy in the Bibliothèque Nationale lacked just one link of the highest importance, and that you have been kind enough to supply it. I am much obliged to you."

"Well . . ."

"Well, now that the ax has turned and the bird flown, and that twice six are twelve, all I have to do is to set to work."

"Without losing a minute?"

"Without losing a second! You see, I must rob your castle tonight, that is to say, before Holmlock Shears arrives."

"You're quite right; you have only just got time. Would you like me to drive you?"

"To Dieppe?"

"Yes, I may as well fetch Monsieur and Madame d'Androl and a girl friend of theirs, who are arriving by the midnight train."

Then, turning to the officers:

"We shall all meet here at lunch tomorrow, shan't we, gentlemen? I rely upon you, for the castle is to be invested by your regiments and taken by assault at eleven in the morning."

The invitation was accepted, the officers took their leave, and a minute later a powerful motorcar was carrying Devanne and Velmont along the Dieppe road. Devanne dropped the painter at the Casino, and went on to the station.

His friends arrived at midnight, and at half-past twelve the motor passed through the gates of Thibermesnil. At one o'clock, after a light supper served in the drawing room, everyone went to bed. The lights were extinguished one by one. The deep silence of the night enshrouded the castle.

But the moon pierced the clouds that veiled it, and, through two of the windows, filled the hall with the light of its white beams. This lasted for but a moment. Soon the moon was hidden behind the curtain of the hills, and all was darkness. The silence increased as the shadows thickened. At most it was disturbed, from time to time, by the creaking of the furniture or the rustling of the reeds in the pond which bathes the old walls with its green waters.

The clock told the endless beads of its seconds. It struck two. Then once more the seconds fell hastily and monotonously in the heavy stillness of the night. Then three struck.

And suddenly something gave a clash, like the arm of a railway signal that drops as a train passes, and a thin streak of light crossed the hall from one end to the other, like an arrow, leaving a glittering track behind it. It issued from the central groove of a pilaster against which the pediment of the bookcase rests upon the right. It first lingered upon the opposite panel in a dazzling circle, next wandered on every side like a restless glance searching the darkness, and then faded away, only to appear once more, while the whole of one section of the bookcase turned upon its axis, and revealed a wide opening shaped like a vault.

A man entered, holding an electric lantern in his hand. Another man and a third emerged, carrying a coil of rope and different implements. The first man looked round the room, listened, and said: "Call the pals."

Eight of these pals came out of the underground passage—eight

strapping fellows, with determined faces. And the removal began.

It did not take long. Arsène Lupin passed from one piece of furniture to another, examined it, and, according to its size or its artistic value, spared it or gave an order:

"Take it away."

And the piece in question was removed, swallowed by the yawning mouth of the tunnel, and sent down into the bowels of the earth.

And thus were juggled away six Louis XV armchairs and as many occasional chairs, a number of Aubusson tapestries, some candelabra signed by Gouthière, two Fragonards and a Nattier, a bust by Houdon, and some statuettes. At times Arsène Lupin would stop before a magnificent oak chest or a splendid picture and sigh:

"That's too heavy . . . Too big . . . What a pity!"

And he would continue his expert survey.

In forty minutes the hall was "cleared," to use Arsène's expression. And all this was accomplished in an admirably orderly manner, without the least noise, as though all the objects which the men were handling had been wrapped in thick wadding.

To the last man who was leaving, carrying a clock signed by Boule, he said:

"You need not come back. You understand, don't you, that as soon as the motor van is loaded you're to make for the barn at Roquefort?"

"What about yourself, governor?"

"Leave me the motorcycle."

When the man had gone he pushed the movable section of the bookcase back into its place, and, after clearing away the traces of the removal and the footmarks, he raised a curtain and entered a gallery which served as a communication between the tower and the castle. Halfway down the gallery stood a glass case, and it was because of this case that Arsène Lupin had continued his investigations.

It contained marvels: a unique collection of watches, snuffboxes, rings, chatelaines, miniatures of the most exquisite workmanship. He forced the lock with a jimmy, and it was an unspeakable pleasure to him to finger those gems of gold and silver, those precious and dainty little works of art.

Hanging round his neck was a large canvas bag specially contrived

to hold these windfalls. He filled it. He also filled the pockets of his jacket, waistcoat, and trousers. And he was stuffing under his left arm a heap of those pearl reticules beloved of our ancestors and so eagerly sought after by our present fashion . . . when a slight sound fell upon his ear.

He listened; he was not mistaken; the noise became clearer.

And suddenly he remembered. At the end of the gallery an inner staircase led to a room which had been hitherto unoccupied, but which had been allotted that evening to the young girl whom Devanne had gone to meet at Dieppe with his friends the d'Androls.

With a quick movement he pressed the spring of his lantern and extinguished it. He had just time to hide in the recess of a window when the door at the top of the staircase opened and the gallery was lit by a faint gleam.

He had a feeling — for, half-hidden behind a curtain, he could not see — that a figure was cautiously descending the top stairs. He hoped that it would come no farther. It continued, however, and took several steps into the gallery. But it gave a cry. It must have caught sight of the broken case, three quarters emptied of its contents.

By the scent he recognized the presence of a woman. Her dress almost touched the curtain that concealed him, and he seemed to hear her heart beating, while she must needs herself perceive the presence of another person behind her in the dark, within reach of her hand. He said to himself:

"She's frightened . . . she'll go back . . . she is bound to go back."

She did not go back. The candle shaking in her hand became steadier. She turned round, hesitated for a moment, appeared to be listening to the alarming silence, and then, with a sudden movement, pulled back the curtain.

Their eyes met.

Arsène murmured, in confusion:

"You . . . you . . . Miss Underwood!"

It was Nellie Underwood, the passenger on the *Provence*, the girl who had mingled her dreams with his during that never-to-be-forgotten crossing, who had witnessed his arrest, and who, rather than betray him, had generously flung into the sea the kodak in

which he had hidden the stolen jewels and banknotes! . . . It was Nellie Underwood, whose image had so often saddened or gladdened his long hours spent in prison!

So extraordinary was their chance meeting in this castle and at that hour of the night that they did not stir, did not utter a word, dumfounded and, as it were, hypnotized by the fantastic apparition which each of them presented to the other's eyes.

Nellie, shattered with emotion, staggered to a seat.

He remained standing in front of her. And gradually, as the interminable seconds passed, he became aware of the impression which he must be making at that moment, with his arms loaded with curiosities, his pockets stuffed, his bag filled to bursting. A great sense of confusion mastered him, and he blushed to find himself there in the mean plight of a robber caught in the act. To her henceforth, come what might, he was the thief, the man who puts his hand into other men's pockets, the man who picks locks and enters doors by stealth.

One of the watches rolled upon the carpet, followed by another. And more things came slipping from under his arms, which were unable to retain them. Then, quickly making up his mind, he dropped a part of his booty into a chair, emptied his pockets, and took off his bag.

He now felt easier in Nellie's presence, and took a step towards her, with the intention of speaking to her. But she made a movement of recoil and rose quickly, as though seized with fright, and ran to the guardroom. The curtain fell behind her. He followed her. She stood there, trembling and speechless, and her eyes gazed in terror upon the great devastated hall.

Without a moment's hesitation, he said:

"At three o'clock tomorrow everything shall be restored to its place. . . . The things shall be brought back."

She did not reply; and he repeated:

"At three o'clock tomorrow, I give you my solemn pledge. . . . No power on earth shall prevent me from keeping my promise. . . . At three o'clock tomorrow."

A long silence weighed upon them both. He dared not break it, and the girl's emotion made him suffer in every nerve. Softly, without a word, he moved away.

And he thought to himself:

"She must go! . . . She must feel that she is free to go! . . . She must not be afraid of me! . . ."

But suddenly she started, and stammered:

"Footsteps! . . . I hear someone coming . . ."

He looked at her with surprise. She appeared distraught, as though at the approach of danger.

"I hear nothing," he said, "and, even so . . ."

"Why, you must fly! . . . Quick, fly! . . ."

"Fly . . . why?"

"You must! . . . You must! . . . Ah, don't stay!"

She rushed to the entrance to the gallery and listened. No, there was no one there. Perhaps the sound had come from the outside. . . . She waited a second, and then, reassured, turned round.

Arsène Lupin had disappeared.

Devanne's first thought, on ascertaining that his castle had been pillaged, found expression in the words which he spoke to himself:

"This is Vermont's work, and Vermont is none other than Arsène Lupin."

All was explained by this means, and nothing could be explained by any other. And yet the idea only just passed through his mind, for it seemed almost impossible that Vermont should not be Vermont — that is to say, the well-known painter, the club friend of his cousin d'Estavan. And when the sergeant of gendarmes had been sent for and arrived, Devanne did not even think of telling him of this absurd conjecture.

The whole of that morning was spent, at Thibermesnil, in an indescribable hubbub. The gendarmes, the rural police, the commissary of police from Dieppe, the inhabitants of the village thronged the passages, the park, the approaches to the castle. The arrival of the troops taking part in the maneuvers and the crack of the rifles added to the picturesqueness of the scene.

The early investigations furnished no clue. The windows had not been broken nor the doors smashed in. There was no doubt but that the removal had been effected through the secret outlet. And yet there was no trace of footsteps on the carpet, no unusual mark upon the walls.

There was one unexpected thing, however, which clearly pointed to the fanciful methods of Arsène Lupin: the famous sixteenth-century chronicle had been restored to its old place in the bookcase, and beside it stood a similar volume, which was none other than the copy stolen from the Bibliothèque Nationale.

The officers arrived at eleven. Devanne received them gayly; however annoyed he might feel at the loss of his artistic treasures, his fortune was large enough to enable him to bear it without showing ill-humor. His friends the d'Androls and Nellie came down from their rooms, and the officers were introduced.

One of the guests was missing: Horace Vermont. Was he not coming? He walked in upon the stroke of twelve, and Devanne exclaimed:

"Good! There you are at last!"

"Am I late?"

"No, but you might have been . . . after such an exciting night! You have heard the news, I suppose?"

"What news?"

"You robbed the castle last night."

"Nonsense!"

"I tell you, you did. But give your arm to Miss Underwood, and let us go in to lunch . . . Miss Underwood, let me introduce . . ."

He stopped, struck by the confusion on the girl's features. Then, seized with a sudden recollection, he said:

"By the way, of course, you once traveled on the same ship with Arsène Lupin . . . before his arrest. . . . You are surprised by the likeness, are you not?"

She did not reply. Vermont stood before her, smiling. He bowed; she took his arm. He led her to her place, and sat down opposite to her. . . .

During lunch they talked of nothing but Arsène Lupin, the stolen furniture, the underground passage, and Holmlock Shears. Not until the end of the meal, when other subjects were broached, did Vermont join in the conversation. He was amusing and serious, eloquent and witty, by turns. And whatever he said he appeared to say with the sole object of interesting Nellie. She, wholly engrossed in her own thoughts, seemed not to hear him.

Coffee was served on the terrace overlooking the courtyard and

the French garden in front of the castle. The regimental band played on the lawn, and a crowd of peasants and soldiers strolled about the walks in the park.

Nellie was thinking of Arsène Lupin's promise:

"At three o'clock everything will be there. I give you my solemn pledge."

At three o'clock! And the hands of the great clock in the right wing pointed to twenty to three. In spite of herself, she kept on looking at it. And she also looked at Vermont, who was swinging peacefully in a comfortable rocking chair.

Ten minutes to three . . . five minutes to three . . . A sort of impatience, mingled with a sense of exquisite pain, racked the young girl's mind. Was it possible for the miracle to be accomplished and to be accomplished at the fixed time, when the castle, the courtyard, and the country around were filled with people, and when, at that very moment, the public prosecutor and the examining magistrate were pursuing their investigations?

And still . . . still, Arsène Lupin had given such a solemn promise!

"It will happen just as he said," she thought, impressed by all the man's energy, authority, and certainty.

And it seemed to her no longer a miracle, but a natural event that was bound to take place in the ordinary course of things.

For a second their eyes met. She blushed, and turned away her head.

Three o'clock. . . . The first stroke rang out, the second, the third. . . . Horace Vermont took out his watch, glanced up at the clock, and put his watch back in his pocket. A few seconds elapsed. And then the crowd opened out around the lawn to make way for two carriages that had just passed through the park gates, each drawn by two horses. They were two of those regimental wagons which carry the cooking utensils of the officers' mess and the soldiers' kits. They stopped in front of the steps. A quartermaster sergeant jumped down from the box of the first wagon and asked for M. Devanne.

Devanne ran down the steps. Under the awnings, carefully packed and wrapped up, were his pictures, his furniture, his works of art of all kinds.

The sergeant replied to the questions put to him by producing

the order which the adjutant on duty had given him, and which the adjutant himself had received that morning in the orderly room. The order stated that No. 2 Company of the Fourth Battalion was to see that the goods and chattels deposited at the Halleux crossroads, in the Forest of Arques, were delivered at three o'clock to M. Georges Devanne, the owner of Thibermesnil Castle. It bore the signature of Colonel Beauvel.

"I found everything ready for us at the crossroads," added the sergeant, "laid out on the grass, under the charge of . . . anyone passing. That struck me as queer, but . . . well, sir, the order was plain enough!"

One of the officers examined the signature: it was a perfect copy, but forged.

The band had stopped. The wagons were emptied, and the furniture carried indoors.

In the midst of this excitement Nellie Underwood was left standing alone at one end of the terrace. She was grave and anxious, full of vague thoughts, which she did not seek to formulate. Suddenly she saw Vermont coming up to her. She wished to avoid him, but the corner of the balustrade that borders the terrace hemmed her in on two sides, and a row of great tubs of shrubs — orange trees, laurels, and bamboos — left her no other way of escape than that by which Vermont was approaching. She did not move. A ray of sunlight quivered on her golden hair, shaken by the frail leaves of a bamboo plant. She heard a soft voice say:

"I have kept the promise I made you last night."

Arsène Lupin stood by her side, and there was no one else near them.

He repeated, in a hesitating attitude and a timid voice:

"I have kept the promise I made you last night."

He expected a word of thanks, a gesture at least, to prove the interest which she took in his action. She was silent.

Her scorn irritated Arsène Lupin, and at the same time he received a profound sense of all that separated him from Nellie, now that she knew the truth. He would have liked to exonerate himself, to seek excuses, to show his life in its bolder and greater aspects. But the words jarred upon him before they were uttered, and he felt the absurdity and the impertinence of any explanation.

He gave a bitter smile:

"You are right," he said. "What has been will always be. Arsène Lupin is and can be no one but Arsène Lupin; and not even a memory can exist between you and him . . . Forgive me . . . I ought to have understood that my very presence near you must seem an outrage. . . ."

He made way for her, hat in hand, and Nellie passed before him along the balustrade. He felt tempted to hold her back, to beseech her. His courage failed him, and he followed her with his eyes, as he had done on the day long past when she crossed the gangplank on their arrival at New York. She went up the stairs that led to the door. For another instant her dainty figure was outlined against the marble of the entrance hall. Then he saw her no more.

"Come," he said to himself, "I have nothing more to do here. Let us see to our retreat. The more so as, if Holmlock Shears takes up the matter, it may become too hot for me."

The park was deserted, save for a group of gendarmes standing near the lodge at the entrance. Lupin plunged into the shrubbery, scaled the wall, and took the nearest way to the station—a path winding through the fields. He had been walking for eight or nine minutes when the road narrowed, boxed in between two slopes; and, as he reached this pass, he saw someone enter it at the opposite end.

It was a man of perhaps middle age, powerfully built and clean-shaven, whose dress accentuated his foreign appearance. He carried a heavy walking-stick in his hand and a traveling bag slung round his neck.

The two men crossed each other. The foreigner asked, in a hardly perceptible English accent:

"Excuse me, sir . . . can you tell me the way to the castle?"

"Straight on and turn to the left when you come to the foot of the wall. They are waiting for you impatiently."

"Ah!"

"Yes, my friend Devanne was announcing your visit to us last night."

"He made a great mistake if he said too much."

"And I am happy to be the first to pay you my compliments. Holmlock Shears has no greater admirer than myself."

There was the slightest shade of irony in his voice, which he regretted forthwith, for Holmlock Shears took a view of him from head to foot with an eye at once so all-embracing and so piercing that Arsène Lupin felt himself seized, caught, and registered by that glance more exactly and more essentially than he had ever been by any photographic apparatus.

"The snapshot's taken," he thought. "It will never be worth my while to disguise myself when this joker is about. Only . . . did he recognize me or not?"

They exchanged bows. But a noise of hoofs rang out, the clinking sound of horses trotting along the road. It was the gendarmes. The two men had to fall back against the slope, in the tall grass, to save themselves from being knocked over. The gendarmes passed, and as they were riding in single file, at quite a distance each from the other, this took some time. Lupin thought:

"It all depends upon whether he recognized me. If so, does he intend to take his advantage? . . ."

When the last horseman had passed, Holmlock Shears drew himself up and, without saying a word, brushed the dust from his clothes. The strap of his bag had caught in a branch of thorns. Arsène Lupin hastened to release him. They looked at each other for another second. And if anyone could have surprised them at that moment he would have beheld a stimulating sight in the first meeting of these two men, both so out of the common, so powerfully armed, both really superior characters, and inevitably destined by their special aptitudes to come into collision, like two equal forces which the order of things drives one against the other in space.

Then the Englishman said:

"I am much obliged to you."

"At your service," replied Lupin.

They went their respective ways — Lupin to the station, Holmlock Shears to the castle.

The examining magistrate and the public prosecutor had left, after a long but fruitless investigation, and the others were awaiting Holmlock Shears with an amount of curiosity fully justified by his reputation. They were a little disappointed by his very ordinary appearance, which was so different from the pictures which they had

formed of him. There was nothing of the novel hero about him, nothing of the enigmatic and diabolical personality which the idea of Holmlock Shears evokes in us. However, Devanne exclaimed, with exuberant delight:

"So you have come at last! This is indeed a joy! I have so long been hoping . . . I am almost glad of what has happened, since it gives me the pleasure of seeing you. But, by the way, how did you come?"

"By train."

"What a pity! I sent my motor to the landing stage to meet you!"

"An official arrival, I suppose," growled the Englishman, "with a brass band marching ahead! An excellent way of helping me in my business."

This uninviting tone disconcerted Devanne, who, making an effort to jest, retorted:

"The business, fortunately, is easier than I wrote to you."

"Why so?"

"Because the burglary took place last night."

"If you had not announced my visit beforehand, the burglary would probably have not taken place last night."

"When would it?"

"Tomorrow, or some other day."

"And then?"

"Arsène Lupin would have been caught in a trap."

"And my things . . ."

"Would not have been carried off."

"My things are here."

"Here?"

"They were brought back at three o'clock."

"By Lupin?"

"By a quartermaster sergeant, in two military wagons!"

Holmlock Shears violently thrust his cap down upon his head and adjusted his bag; but Devanne, in a fever of excitement, exclaimed:

"What are you doing?"

"I am going."

"Why should you?"

"Your things are here. Arsène Lupin is gone. There is nothing left for me to do."

"Why, my dear sir, I simply can't get on without you. What happened last night may be repeated tomorrow, seeing that we know nothing of the most important part: how Arsène Lupin effected his entrance, how he left, and why, a few hours later, he proceeded to restore what he had stolen."

"Oh, I see; you don't know . . ." The idea of a secret to be discovered mollified Holmlock Shears. "Very well, let's look into it. But at once, please, and, as far as possible, alone."

The phrase clearly referred to the bystanders. Devanne took the hint, and showed the Englishman into the guardroom. Shears put a number of questions to him touching the previous evening, the guests who were present, and the inmates and frequenters of the castle. He next examined the two volumes of the Chronicle, compared the plans of the underground passage, made Devanne repeat the two sentences noted by the Abbé Gélis, and asked:

"You're sure it was yesterday that you first spoke of those two quotations?"

"Yesterday."

"You had never mentioned them to Monsieur Horace Velmont?"

"Never."

"Very well. You might order your car. I shall leave in an hour."

"In an hour?"

"Arsène Lupin took no longer to solve the problem which you put to him."

"I! . . . Which I put to him?"

"Why, yes, Arsène Lupin or Velmont, it's all the same."

"I thought as much. . . . Oh, the rascal! . . ."

"Well, at ten o'clock last night you supplied Lupin with the facts which he lacked, and which he had been seeking for weeks. And during the course of the night Lupin found time to grasp these facts, to collect his gang, and to rob you of your property. I propose to be no less expeditious."

He walked from one end of the room to the other, thinking as he went, then sat down, crossed his long legs, and closed his eyes.

Devanne waited in some perplexity.

"Is he asleep? Is he thinking?"

In any case, he went out to give his instructions. When he returned

he found the Englishman on his knees at the foot of the staircase in the gallery, exploring the carpet.

"What is it?"

"Look at these candle stains."

"I see . . . they are quite fresh . . ."

"And you will find others at the top of the stairs, and more still around this glass case which Arsène Lupin broke open, and from which he removed the curiosities and placed them on this chair."

"And what do you conclude?"

"Nothing. All these facts would no doubt explain the restitution which he effected. But that is a side of the question which I have no time to go into. The essential thing is the map of the underground passage."

"You still hope . . ."

"I don't hope; I know. There's a chapel at two or three hundred yards from the castle, is there not?"

"Yes, a ruined chapel, with the tomb of Duke Rollo."

"Tell your chauffeur to wait near the chapel."

"My chauffeur is not back yet. . . . They are to let me know. . . . So, I see, you consider that the underground passage ends at the chapel. What indication —"

Holmlock Shears interrupted him:

"May I ask you to get me a ladder and a lantern?"

"Oh, do you want a ladder and a lantern?"

"I suppose so, or I wouldn't ask you for them."

Devanne, a little taken aback by this cold logic, rang the bell. The ladder and the lantern were brought.

Orders succeeded one another with the strictness and precision of military commands:

"Put the ladder against the bookcase, to the left of the word THIBERMESNIL . . ."

Devanne did as he was asked, and the Englishman continued:

"More to the left . . . to the right. . . . Stop! . . . Go up. . . . Good. . . . The letters are all in relief, are they not?"

"Yes."

"Catch hold of the letter H, and tell me whether it turns in either direction."

Devanne grasped the letter H, and exclaimed:

"Yes, it turns! A quarter of a circle to the right! How did you discover that? . . ."

Shears, without replying, continued:

"Can you reach the letter R from where you stand? Yes. . . . Move it about, as you would a bolt which you were pushing or drawing."

Devanne moved the letter R. To his great astonishment, something became unlatched inside.

"Just so," said Holmlock Shears. "All that you now have to do is to push your ladder to the other end; that is to say, to the end of the word THIBERMESNIL. . . . Good. . . . Now, if I am not mistaken, if things go as they should, the letter L will open like a shutter."

With a certain solemnity, Devanne took hold of the letter L. The letter L opened, but Devanne tumbled off his ladder, for the whole section of the bookcase between the first and last letters of the word swung round upon a pivot and disclosed the opening of the tunnel.

Holmlock Shears asked, phlegmatically:

"Have you hurt yourself?"

"No, no," said Devanne, scrambling to his feet. "I'm not hurt, but flurried, I admit. . . . Those moving letters. . . . that yawning tunnel . . ."

"And what then? Doesn't it all fit in exactly with the Sully quotation?"

"How do you mean?"

"Why, *l'H tournoie; l'R frémit, et l'L s'ouvre* . . ." ¹

"But what about Louis XVI?"

"Louis XVI was a really capable locksmith. I remember reading a *Treatise on Combination-locks* which was ascribed to him. On the part of a Thibermesnil, it would be an act of good courtiership to show his sovereign this masterpiece of mechanics. By the way of a memorandum, the king wrote down 2-6-12—that is to say, the second, sixth, and twelfth letters of the word: H, R, L."

"Oh, of course. . . . I am beginning to understand. . . . Only, look here . . . I can see how you get out of this room, but I can't see how Lupin got in; for, remember, he came from the outside."

¹ It can hardly be necessary to explain to modern English readers that, in French, the letter H is pronounced *hache*, an ax; R, *air*, the air; and L, *aile*, a wing. — TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

Holmlock Shears lit the lantern, and entered the underground passage.

"Look, you can see the whole mechanism here, like the works of a watch, and all the letters are reversed. Lupin, therefore, had only to move them from this side of the wall."

"What proof have you?"

"What proof? Look at this splash of oil. He even foresaw that the wheels would need greasing," said Shears, not without admiration.

"Then he knew the other outlet?"

"Just as I know it. Follow me."

"Into the underground passage?"

"Are you afraid?"

"No; but are you sure you can find your way?"

"I'll find it with my eyes shut."

They first went down twelve steps, then twelve more, and again twice twelve more. Then they passed through a long tunnel whose brick walls showed traces of successive restorations, and oozed, in places, with moisture. The ground underfoot was damp.

"We are passing under the pond," said Devanne, who felt far from comfortable.

The tunnel ended in a flight of twelve steps, followed by three other flights of twelve steps each, which they climbed with difficulty, and they emerged in a small hollow hewn out of the solid rock. The way did not go any farther.

"Hang it all!" muttered Holmlock Shears. "Nothing but bare walls. This is troublesome."

"Suppose we go back," suggested Devanne, "for I don't see the use of learning any more. I have seen all I want to."

But on raising his eyes the Englishman gave a sigh of relief: above their heads the same mechanism was repeated as at the entrance. He had only to work the three letters. A block of granite turned on a pivot. On the other side it formed Duke Rollo's tombstone, carved with the twelve letters in relief, THIBERMESNIL. And they found themselves in the little ruined chapel of which Holmlock Shears had spoken.

"'And you go to God' . . . that is to say, to the chapel," said Shears, quoting the end of the sentence.

"Is it possible —" cried Devanne, amazed at the other's perspicacity

and keenness — "is it possible that this simple clue told you all that you wanted to know?"

"Tush!" said the Englishman. "It was even superfluous. In the copy belonging to the Bibliothèque Nationale the drawing of the tunnel ends on the left, as you know, in a circle, and on the right, as you do not know, in a little cross, which is so faintly marked that it can only be seen through a magnifying glass. This cross obviously points to the chapel."

Poor Devanne could not believe his ears.

"It's wonderful, marvelous, and just as simple as A B C! How is it that the mystery was never seen through?"

"Because nobody ever united the three or four necessary elements; that is to say, the two books and the quotations . . . nobody, except Arsène Lupin and myself."

"But I also," said Devanne, "and the Abbé Gélis . . . we both of us knew as much about it as you, and yet . . ."

Shears smiled.

"Monsieur Devanne, it is not given to all the world to succeed in solving riddles."

"But I have been hunting for ten years. And you, in ten minutes . . ."

"Pooh! It's a matter of habit."

They walked out of the chapel, and the Englishman exclaimed:

"Hullo, a motorcar waiting!"

"Why, it's mine!"

"Yours? But I thought the chauffeur hadn't returned?"

"No more he had . . . I can't make out . . ."

They went up to the car, and Devanne said to the chauffeur:

"Victor, who told you to come here?"

"Monsieur Velmont, sir," replied the man.

"Monsieur Velmont? Did you meet him?"

"Yes, sir, near the station, and he told me to go to the chapel."

"To go to the chapel! What for?"

"To wait for you, sir . . . and your friend."

Devanne and Holmlock Shears exchanged glances. Devanne said:

"He saw that the riddle would be child's play to you. He has paid you a delicate compliment."

A smile of satisfaction passed over the detective's thin lips. The compliment pleased him. He jerked his head and said:

"He's a man, that! I took his measure the moment I saw him."

"So you've seen him?"

"We crossed on my way here."

"And you knew that he was Horace Velmont—I mean to say, Arsène Lupin?"

"No, but it did not take me long to guess as much . . . from a certain irony in his talk."

"And you let him escape?"

"I did . . . although I had only to put out my hand . . . five gendarmes rode past us."

"But, bless my soul, you'll never get an opportunity like that again . . ."

"Just so, Monsieur Devanne," said the Englishman, proudly. "When Holmlock Shears has to do with an adversary like Arsène Lupin, he does not take opportunities . . . he creates them . . ."

But time was pressing, and as Lupin had been so obliging as to send the motor, Devanne and Shears settled themselves in their seats. Victor started the engine, and they drove off. Fields, clumps of trees sped past. The gentle undulations of the Caux country leveled out before them. Suddenly Devanne's eyes were attracted to a little parcel in one of the carriage pockets.

"Hullo! What's this? A parcel! Whom for? Why, it's for you!"

"For me?"

"Read for yourself: *Holmlock Shears, Esq., from Arsène Lupin!*"

The Englishman took the parcel, untied the string, and removed the two sheets of paper in which it was wrapped. It was a watch.

"Oh!" he said, accompanying his exclamation with an angry gesture. . . .

"A watch," said Devanne. "Can he have . . ."

The Englishman did not reply.

"What! It's your watch? Is Arsène Lupin returning you your watch? Then he must have taken it! . . . He must have taken your watch! Oh, this is too good! Holmlock Shears's watch spirited away by Arsène Lupin! Oh, this is too funny for words! No, upon my honor . . . you must excuse me . . . I can't help laughing!"

He laughed till he cried, utterly unable to restrain himself. When he had done, he declared, in a tone of conviction:

"Yes, he's a man, as you said."

The Englishman did not move a muscle. With his eyes fixed on the fleeting horizon he spoke not a word until they reached Dieppe. His silence was terrible, unfathomable, more violent than the fiercest fury. On the landing stage he said simply, this time without betraying any anger, but in a tone that revealed all the iron will and energy of his remarkable personality:

"Yes, he's a man, and a man on whose shoulder I shall have great pleasure in laying this hand with which I now grasp yours, Monsieur Devanne. And I have an idea, mark you, that Arsène Lupin and Holmlock Shears will meet again someday. . . . Yes, the world is too small for them not to meet. . . . And when they do . . ."

THE ADVENTURE OF THE CLOTHES-LINE

by CAROLYN WELLS

"The Adventure of the Clothes-line" first appeared in "The Century," issue of May 1915—but to the best of your Editors' knowledge this is the first time Carolyn Wells's parody has ever been published in book form.

Holmes is depicted as the president—who would challenge his right?—of the Society of Infallible Detectives. If you will look at the frontispiece of this volume, which served as one of the original illustrations in "The Century" magazine, you will see Holmes literally towering above his colleagues—The Thinking Machine, Raffles, M. Lecoq, and others—perfect symbolism on the part of that great Sherlockian artist, Frederic Dorr Steele.

Shortly after the death of Carolyn Wells, a large part of her library was sent to the Parke-Bernet Galleries of New York City for auction. Through the kindness of Mr. Alfred Goldsmith, the eminent bookseller (and one of Carolyn Wells's most intimate friends), and Messrs. Swann and Gaffney of the Galleries, your Editors were permitted to examine the Wellsian books before they were catalogued.

It was a remarkable experience, this browsing among a lifetime of books, each touched with the memory of one of America's most prolific detective-story writers. There was almost a complete collection of Carolyn Wells's own works—numbering 170-odd different titles! Through the further kindness of Mary O'Connell, to whom this portion of Miss Wells's library was willed, your Editors were permitted to buy certain books in advance of the auction. Those are prized books now—a first edition of Rodrigues Ottolengui's FINAL PROOF (New York,

Putnam, 1898), a first edition of Jacques Futrelle's THE THINKING MACHINE ON THE CASE (New York, Appleton, 1908), and a few English anthologies.

Later, during the auction, Mr. Goldsmith successfully bid in for your Editors on a copy of Poe's TALES (London, Wiley & Putnam, 1845) — a rare and important book, in the original cloth, enclosed in a morocco slipcase, and enhanced by one of Carolyn Wells's charming and ironic bookplates. But we have strayed off the main road into bibliobypaths . . .

Passing from book to book, opening an occasional volume and dipping like bees into its honey, your Editors were deeply impressed by the catholicity and vigor of Miss Wells's literary taste. Certain deductions were obvious — or, shall we say, elementary? That Miss Wells loved the excitement of life on the printed page was all too clear — her favorite books were by Walt Whitman and Herman Melville; but judging from the treasured Conan Doyle volumes which she kept throughout her life, she must always have had a warm spot in her affections for that towering figure of a man, Sherlock Holmes.

THE MEMBERS of the Society of Infallible Detectives were just sitting around and being socially infallible, in their rooms in Fakir Street, when President Holmes strode in. He was much saturniner than usual, and the others at once deduced there was something toward.

"And it's this," said Holmes, perceiving that they had perceived it. "A reward is offered for the solution of a great mystery — so great, my colleagues, that I fear none of you will be able to solve it, or even to help me in the marvelous work I shall do when ferreting it out."

"Humph!" grunted the Thinking Machine, riveting his steel-blue eyes upon the speaker.

"He voices all our sentiments," said Raffles, with his winning smile. "Fire away, Holmes. What's the prob?"

"To explain a most mysterious proceeding down on the East Side."

Though a tall man, Holmes spoke shortly, for he was peeved at the

inattentive attitude of his collection of colleagues. But of course he still had his Watson, so he put up with the indifference of the rest of the cold world.

"Aren't all proceedings down on the East Side mysterious?" asked Arsène Lupin, with an aristocratic look.

Holmes passed his brow wearily under his hand.

"Inspector Spyer," he said, "was riding on the Elevated Road — one of the small numbered Avenues — when, as he passed a tenement-house district, he saw a clothes-line strung from one high window to another across a courtyard."

"Was it Monday?" asked the Thinking Machine, who for the moment was thinking he was a washing machine.

"That doesn't matter. About the middle of the line was suspended —"

"By clothes-pins?" asked two or three of the Infallibles at once.

"Was suspended a beautiful woman."

"Hanged?"

"No. *Do listen!* She hung by her hands, and was evidently trying to cross from one house to the other. By her exhausted and agonized face, the inspector feared she could not hold on much longer. He sprang from his seat to rush to her assistance, but the train had already started, and he was too late to get off."

"What was she doing there?" "Did she fall?" "What did she look like?" and various similar nonsensical queries fell from the lips of the great detectives.

"Be silent, and I will tell you all the known facts. She was a society woman, it is clear, for she was robed in a chiffon evening gown, one of those roll-top things. She wore rich jewelry and dainty slippers with jeweled buckles. Her hair, unloosed from its moorings, hung in heavy masses far down her back."

"How extraordinary! What does it all mean?" asked M. Dupin, ever straightforward of speech.

"I don't know yet," answered Holmes, honestly. "I've studied the matter only a few months. But I will find out, if I have to raze the whole tenement block. There *must* be a clue somewhere."

"Marvelous! Holmes, marvelous!" said a phonograph in the corner, which Watson had fixed up, as he had to go out.

"The police have asked us to take up the case and have offered a reward for its solution. Find out who was the lady, what she was doing, and why she did it."

"Are there any clues?" asked M. Vidocq, while M. Lecoq said simultaneously, "Any footprints?"

"There is one footprint; no other clue."

"Where is the footprint?"

"On the ground, right under where the lady was hanging."

"But you said the rope was high from the ground."

"More than a hundred feet."

"And she stepped down and made a single footprint. Strange! Quite strange!" and the Thinking Machine shook his yellow old head.

"She did nothing of the sort," said Holmes, petulantly. "If you fellows would listen, you might hear something. The occupants of the tenement houses have been questioned. But, as it turns out, none of them chanced to be at home at the time of the occurrence. There was a parade in the next street, and they had all gone to see it."

"Had a light snow fallen the night before?" asked Lecoq, eagerly.

"Yes, of course," answered Holmes. "How could we know anything, else? Well, the lady had dropped her slipper, and although the slipper was not found, it having been annexed by the tenement people who came home first, I had a chance to study the footprint. The slipper was a two and a half D. It was too small for her."

"How do you know?"

"Women always wear slippers too small for them."

"Then how did she come to drop it off?" This from Raffles, triumphantly.

Holmes looked at him pityingly.

"She kicked it off because it was too tight. Women always kick off their slippers when playing bridge or in an opera box or at a dinner."

"And always when they're crossing a clothes-line?" This in Lupin's most sarcastic vein.

"Naturally," said Holmes, with a taciturnine frown. "The footprint clearly denotes a lady of wealth and fashion, somewhat short of stature, and weighing about one hundred and sixty. She was of an animated nature —"

"Suspended animation," put in Luther Trant, wittily, and Scientific Sprague added, "Like the Coffin of Damocles, or whoever it was."

But Holmes frowned on their light-headedness.

"We must find out what it all means," he said in his gloomiest way. "I have a tracing of the footprint."

"I wonder if my seismospygmograph would work on it," mused Trant.

"I am the Prince of Footprints," declared Lecoq, pompously. "I will solve the mystery."

"Do your best, all of you," said their illustrious president. "I fear you can do little; these things are unintelligible to the unintelligent. But study on it, and meet here again one week from tonight, with your answers neatly typewritten on one side of the paper."

The Infallible Detectives started off, each affecting a jaunty sanguineness of demeanor, which did not in the least impress their president, who was used to sanguinary impressions.

They spent their allotted seven days in the study of the problem; and a lot of the seven nights, too, for they wanted to delve into the baffling secret by sun or candlelight, as dear Mrs. Browning so poetically puts it.

And when the week had fled, the Infallibles again gathered in the Fakir Street sanctum, each face wearing the smug smirk and smile of one who had quested a successful quest and was about to accept his just reward.

"And now," said President Holmes, "as nothing can be hid from the Infallible Detectives, I assume we have all discovered *why* the lady hung from the clothes-line above that deep and dangerous chasm of a tenement courtyard."

"We have," replied his colleagues, in varying tones of pride, conceit, and mock modesty.

"I cannot think," went on the hawk-like voice, "that you have, any of you, stumbled upon the real solution of the mystery; but I will listen to your amateur attempts."

"As the oldest member of our organization, I will tell my solution first," said Vidocq, calmly. "I have not been able to find the lady, but I am convinced that she was merely an expert trapezist or tight-

rope walker, practising a new trick to amaze her Coney Island audiences."

"Nonsense!" cried Holmes. "In that case the lady would have worn tights or fleshings. We are told she was in full evening dress of the smartest set."

Arsène Lupin spoke next.

"It's too easy," he said boredly; "she was a typist or stenographer who had been annoyed by attentions from her employer, and was trying to escape from the brute."

"Again I call your attention to her costume," said Holmes, with a look of intolerance on his finely cold-chiseled face.

"That's all right," returned Lupin, easily. "Those girls dress every old way! I've seen 'em. They don't think anything of evening clothes at their work."

"Humph!" said the Thinking Machine, and the others all agreed with him.

"Next," said Holmes, sternly.

"I'm next," said Lecoq. "I submit that the lady escaped from a near-by lunatic asylum. She had the illusion that she was an old overcoat and the moths had got at her. So of course she hung herself on the clothes-line. This theory of lunacy also accounts for the fact that the lady's hair was down — like *Ophelia's*, you know."

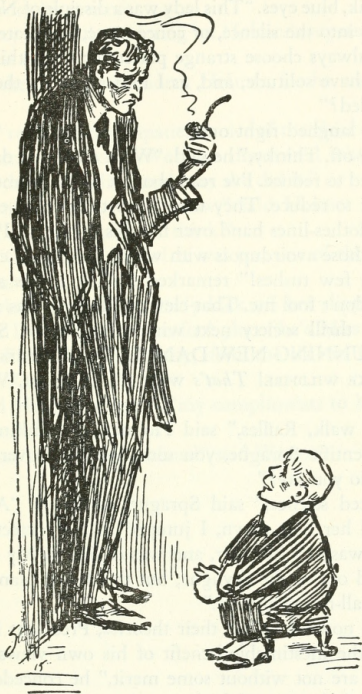
"It would have been easier for her to swallow a few good moth balls," said Holmes, looking at Lecoq in stormy silence. "Mr. Gryce, you are an experienced deducer; what did *you* conclude?"

Mr. Gryce glued his eyes to his right boot toe, after his celebrated habit. "I make out she was a-slumming. You know, all the best ladies are keen about it. And I feel that she belonged to the Cult for the Betterment of Clothes-lines. She was by way of being a tester. She had to go across them hand over hand, and if they bore her weight, they were passed by the censor."

"And if they didn't?"

"Apparently that predicament had not occurred at the time of our problem, and so cannot be considered."

"I think Gryce is right about the slumming," remarked Luther Trant, "but the reason for the lady hanging from the clothes-line is the imperative necessity she felt for a thorough airing, after her



tenemental visitations; there is a certain tenement scent, if I may express it, that requires ozone in quantities."

"You're too material," said the Thinking Machine, with a faraway look in his weak, blue eyes. "This lady was a disciple of New Thought. She had to go into the silence, or concentrate, or whatever they call it. And they always choose strange places for these thinking spells. They have to have solitude, and, as I understand it, the clothes-line was not crowded?"

Rouletabille laughed right out.

"You're way off, Thinky," he said. "What ailed that dame was just that she wanted to reduce. I've read about it in the women's journals. They all want to reduce. They take all sorts of crazy exercises, and this crossing clothes-lines hand over hand is the latest. I'll bet it took off twenty of those avoirdupois with which old Sherly credited her."

"Pish and a few tushes!" remarked Raffles, in his smart society jargon. "You don't fool me. That clever little bear was making up a new dance to thrill society next winter. You'll see. Sunday-paper headlines: STUNNING NEW DANCE! THE CLOTHES-LINE CLING! CAUGHT ON LIKE WILDFIRE! *That's* what it's all about. What do you know, eh?"

"Go take a walk, Raffles," said Holmes, not unkindly; "you're sleepy yet. Scientific Sprague, you sometimes put over an abstruse theory, what do you say?"

"I didn't need science," said Sprague, carelessly. "As soon as I heard she had her hair down, I jumped to the correct conclusion. She had been washing her hair, and was drying it. My sister always sticks her head out of the skylight; but this lady's plan is, I should judge, a more all-round success."

As they had now all voiced their theories, President Holmes rose to give them the inestimable benefit of his own views.

"Your ideas are not without some merit," he conceded, "but you have overlooked the eternal-feminine element in the problem. As soon as I tell you the real solution, you will each wonder why it escaped your notice. The lady thought she heard a mouse, so she scrambled out of the window, preferring to risk her life on the perilous clothes-line rather than stay in the dwelling where the mouse was also. It is all very simple. She was doing her hair, threw her head

over forward to twist it, as they always do, and so espied the mouse sitting in the corner."

"Marvelous! Holmes, marvelous!" exclaimed Watson, who had just come back from his errand.

Even as they were all pondering on Holmes's superior wisdom, the telephone bell rang.

"Are you there?" said President Holmes, for he was ever English of speech.

"Yes, yes," returned the impatient voice of the chief of police. "Call off your detective workers. We have discovered who the lady was who crossed the clothes-line, and why she did it."

"I can't imagine you really know," said Holmes into the transmitter; "but tell me what you think."

"A-r-r-rh! Of course I know! It was just one of those confounded moving-picture stunts!"

"Indeed! And why did the lady kick off her slipper?"

"A-r-r-r-h! It was part of the fool plot. She's Miss Flossy Flicker of the Flim-Flam Film Company, doin' the six-reel thriller, 'At the End of Her Rope.'"

"Ah," said Holmes, suavely, "my compliments to Miss Flicker on her good work."

"Marvelous, Holmes, marvelous!" said Watson.

THE UNIQUE HAMLET*by* VINCENT STARRETT

"The Unique Hamlet" is Vincent Starrett's most devout achievement in a lifelong "career of Conan Doyle idolatry." It is unanimously considered one of the finest pure pastiches of Sherlock Holmes ever written. Until recently it existed only in a private edition, printed in 1920 for the friends of Walter M. Hill. This slim and fragile first issue is one of the most eagerly sought rarities of Holmesiana.

Mr. Starrett, probably the outstanding authority on Sherlock in America, has never written a line about Holmes that hasn't tingled with interest, speculation, and intimate knowledge. His book, *THE PRIVATE LIFE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES* (New York, Macmillan, 1933) is easily the most fascinating work of its kind. But in your Editors' opinion one of the most provocative paragraphs Mr. Starrett ever wrote about Holmes has never appeared in print — until now. Here it is — a postscript from one of Mr. Starrett's letters to your Editors:

"I've always wanted to do a synthetic Sherlock — the beginning of one story, the middle of another, and the conclusion of a third; or perhaps six or eight of the adventures merged into a perfect Holmes tale. I may yet do it. The reason would be to produce a Holmes adventure that I could completely admire, and which would contain everything I like — the opening at the breakfast table, with a page or two of deduction; the appearance of Mrs. Hudson, followed instantly by the troubled client, who would fall over the threshold in a faint; the hansom in the fog, and so on. I think it could be done. I find when I think of the Holmes stories that almost instinctively I think of just such a yarn, wonder which one it is, then realize it's a cento existing only in my mind."

Note the buried line — "I may yet do it." By all means, Vin-

cent, do it! Provided the estate of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle grants its permission, your Editors guarantee to publish your cento—"The Adventure, Memoir, and Return of Sherlock Holmes; or, His Really Last Bow"—in the pages of "Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine."

HOLMES," said I, one morning as I stood in our bay window, looking idly into the street, "surely here comes a madman. Someone has incautiously left the door open and the poor fellow has slipped out. What a pity!"

It was a glorious morning in the spring, with a fresh breeze and inviting sunlight, but as it was early few persons were as yet astir. Birds twittered under the neighboring eaves, and from the far end of the thoroughfare came faintly the droning cry of an umbrella-repair man; a lean cat slunk across the cobbles and disappeared into a courtway; but for the most part the street was deserted save for the eccentric individual who had called forth my exclamation.

My friend rose lazily from the chair in which he had been lounging, and came to my side, standing with long legs spread and hands in the pockets of his dressing gown. He smiled as he saw the singular personage coming along; and a personage indeed he seemed to be, despite his curious actions, for he was tall and portly, with elderly whiskers of the variety called mutton-chop, and eminently respectable. He was loping curiously, like a tired hound, lifting his knees high as he ran, and a heavy double watch-chain bounced against and rebounded from the plump line of his figured waistcoat. With one hand he clutched despairingly at his silk, two-gallon hat, while with the other he made strange gestures in the air in an emotion bordering upon distraction. We could almost see the spasmodic workings of his countenance.

"What under heaven can ail him?" I cried. "See how he glances at the houses as he passes."

"He is looking at the numbers," responded Sherlock Holmes, with dancing eyes, "and I fancy it is ours that will bring him the greatest happiness. His profession, of course, is obvious."

"A banker, I should imagine, or at least a person of affluence," I

ventured, wondering what curious bit of minutiae had betrayed the man's vocation to my remarkable companion, in a single glance.

"Affluent, yes," said Holmes, with a mischievous twinkle, "but not exactly a banker, Watson. Notice the sagging pockets, despite the excellence of his clothing, and the rather exaggerated madness of his eye. He is a collector, or I am very much mistaken."

"My dear fellow!" I exclaimed. "At his age and in his station! And why should he be seeking us? When we settled that last bill —"

"Of books," said my friend, severely. "He is a book collector. His line is Caxtons, Elzevirs, and Gutenberg Bibles; not the sordid reminders of unpaid grocery accounts. See, he is turning in, as I expected, and in a moment he will stand upon our hearthrug and tell the harrowing tale of an unique volume and its extraordinary disappearance."

His eyes gleamed and he rubbed his hands together in satisfaction. I could not but hope that his conjecture was correct, for he had had little recently to occupy his mind, and I lived in constant fear that he would seek that stimulation his active brain required in the long-tabooed cocaine bottle.

As Holmes finished speaking the doorbell echoed through the house; then hurried feet were sounding on the stairs, while the wailing voice of Mrs. Hudson, raised in protest, could only have been occasioned by frustration of her coveted privilege of bearing up our caller's card. Then the door burst violently inward and the object of our analysis staggered to the center of the room and, without announcing his intention by word or sign, pitched headforemost to our center rug. There he lay, a magnificent ruin, with his head on the fringed border and his feet in the coal scuttle; and sealed within his lifeless lips was the amazing story he had come to tell — for that it was amazing we could not doubt in the light of our client's extraordinary behavior.

Sherlock Holmes ran quickly for the brandy bottle, while I knelt beside the stricken man and loosened his wilted neckband. He was not dead, and when we had forced the nozzle of the flask between his teeth he sat up in groggy fashion, passing a dazed hand across his eyes. Then he scrambled to his feet with an embarrassed apology for his weakness, and fell into the chair which Holmes invitingly held towards him.

"That is right, Mr. Harrington Edwards," said my companion, soothingly. "Be quite calm, my dear sir, and when you have recovered your composure you will find us ready to listen."

"You know me then?" cried our visitor. There was pride in his voice and he lifted his eyebrows in surprise.

"I had never heard of you until this moment; but if you wish to conceal your identity it would be well," said Sherlock Holmes, "for you to leave your bookplates at home." As Holmes spoke he returned a little package of folded paper slips, which he had picked from the floor. "They fell from your hat when you had the misfortune to collapse," he added whimsically.

"Yes, yes," cried the collector, a deep blush spreading across his features. "I remember now; my hat was a little large and I folded a number of them and placed them beneath the sweatband. I had forgotten."

"Rather shabby usage for a handsome etched plate," smiled my companion; "but that is your affair. And now, sir, if you are quite at ease, let us hear what it is that has brought you, a collector of books, from Poke Stogis Manor — the name is on the plate — to the office of Mr. Sherlock Holmes, consulting expert in crime. Surely nothing but the theft of Mahomet's own copy of the Koran can have affected you so strongly."

Mr. Harrington Edwards smiled feebly at the jest, then sighed. "Alas," he murmured, "if that were all! But I shall begin at the beginning."

"You must know, then, that I am the greatest Shakespearean commentator in the world. My collection of *ana* is unrivaled and much of the world's collection (and consequently its knowledge of the veritable Shakespeare) has emanated from my pen. One book I did not possess: it was unique, in the correct sense of that abused word; the greatest Shakespeare rarity in the world. Few knew that it existed, for its existence was kept a profound secret among a chosen few. Had it become known that this book was in England — any place, indeed — its owner would have been hounded to his grave by wealthy Americans.

"It was in the possession of my friend — I tell you this in strictest confidence — of my friend, Sir Nathaniel Brooke-Bannerman, whose place at Walton-on-Walton is next to my own. A scant two hundred

yards separate our dwellings; so intimate has been our friendship that a few years ago the fence between our estates was removed, and each roamed or loitered at will in the other's preserves.

"For some years, now, I have been at work upon my greatest book — my *magnum opus*. It was to be my last book also, embodying the results of a lifetime of study and research. Sir, I know Elizabethan London better than any man alive; better than any man who ever lived, I think —" He burst suddenly into tears.

"There, there," said Sherlock Holmes, gently. "Do not be distressed. Pray continue with your interesting narrative. What was this book — which, I take it, in some manner has disappeared? You borrowed it from your friend?"

"That is what I am coming to," said Mr. Harrington Edwards, drying his tears, "but as for help, Mr. Holmes, I fear that is beyond even you. As you surmise, I needed this book. Knowing its value, which could not be fixed, for the book is priceless, and knowing Sir Nathaniel's idolatry of it, I hesitated before asking for the loan of it. But I had to have it, for without it my work could not have been completed, and at length I made my request. I suggested that I visit him in his home and go through the volume under his eyes, he sitting at my side throughout my entire examination, and servants stationed at every door and window, with fowling pieces in their hands.

"You can imagine my astonishment when Sir Nathaniel laughed at my precautions. 'My dear Edwards,' he said, 'that would be all very well were you Arthur Bambidge or Sir Homer Nantes (mentioning the two great men of the British Museum), or were you Mr. Henry Hutterson, the American railway magnate; but you are my friend Harrington Edwards, and you shall take the book home with you for as long as you like.' I protested vigorously, I can assure you; but he would have it so, and as I was touched by this mark of his esteem, at length I permitted him to have his way. My God! If I had remained adamant! If I had only . . ."

He broke off and for a moment stared blindly into space. His eyes were directed at the Persian slipper on the wall, in the toe of which Holmes kept his tobacco, but we could see that his thoughts were far away.

"Come, Mr. Edwards," said Holmes, firmly. "You are agitating

yourself unduly. And you are unreasonably prolonging our curiosity. You have not yet told us what this book is."

Mr. Harrington Edwards gripped the arm of the chair in which he sat. Then he spoke, and his voice was low and thrilling:

"The book was a *Hamlet* quarto, dated 1602, presented by Shakespeare to his friend Drayton, with an inscription four lines in length, written and signed by the Master, himself!"

"My dear sir!" I exclaimed. Holmes blew a long, slow whistle of astonishment.

"It is true," cried the collector. "That is the book I borrowed, and that is the book I lost! The long-sought quarto of 1602, actually inscribed in Shakespeare's own hand! His greatest drama, in an edition dated a year earlier than any that is known; a perfect copy, and with four lines in his own handwriting! Unique! Extraordinary! Amazing! Astounding! Colossal! Incredible! Un —"

He seemed wound up to continue indefinitely; but Holmes, who had sat quite still at first, shocked by the importance of the loss, interrupted the flow of adjectives.

"I appreciate your emotion, Mr. Edwards," he said, "and the book is indeed all that you say it is. Indeed, it is so important that we must at once attack the problem of rediscovering it. Compose yourself, my dear sir, and tell us of the loss. The book, I take it, is readily identifiable?"

"Mr. Holmes," said our client, earnestly, "it would be impossible to hide it. It is so important a volume that, upon coming into its possession, Sir Nathaniel Brooke-Bannerman called a consultation of the great binders of the Empire, at which were present Mr. Rivière, Messrs. Sangorski and Sutcliffe, Mr. Zaehnsdorf, and certain others. They and myself, with two others, alone know of the book's existence. When I tell you that it is bound in brown levant morocco, with leather joints and brown levant doublures and fly-leaves, the whole elaborately gold-tooled, inlaid with seven hundred and fifty separate pieces of various colored leathers, and enriched by the insertion of eighty-seven precious stones, I need not add that it is a design that never will be duplicated, and I mention only a few of its glories. The binding was personally done by Messrs. Rivière, Sangorski, Sutcliffe, and Zaehnsdorf, working alternately, and is a work of such en-

chantment that any man might gladly die a thousand deaths for the privilege of owning it for twenty minutes."

"Dear me," quoth Sherlock Holmes, "it must indeed be a handsome volume, and from your description, together with a realization of importance by reason of its association, I gather that it is something beyond what might be termed a valuable book."

"Priceless!" cried Mr. Harrington Edwards. "The combined wealth of India, Mexico, and Wall Street would be all too little for its purchase."

"You are anxious to recover this book?" asked Sherlock Holmes, looking at him keenly.

"My God!" shrieked the collector, rolling up his eyes and clawing at the air with his hands. "Do you suppose —"

"Tut, tut!" Holmes interrupted. "I was only testing you. It is a book that might move even you, Mr. Harrington Edwards, to theft — but we may put aside that notion. Your emotion is too sincere, and besides you know too well the difficulties of hiding such a volume as you describe. Indeed, only a very daring man would purloin it and keep it long in his possession. Pray tell us how you came to lose it."

Mr. Harrington Edwards seized the brandy flask, which stood at his elbow, and drained it at a gulp. With the renewed strength thus obtained, he continued his story:

"As I have said, Sir Nathaniel forced me to accept the loan of the book, much against my wishes. On the evening that I called for it, he told me that two of his servants, heavily armed, would accompany me across the grounds to my home. 'There is no danger,' he said, 'but you will feel better'; and I heartily agreed with him. How shall I tell you what happened? Mr. Holmes, it was those very servants who assailed me and robbed me of my priceless borrowing!"

Sherlock Holmes rubbed his lean hands with satisfaction. "Splendid!" he murmured. "This is a case after my own heart. Watson, these are deep waters in which we are adventuring. But you are rather lengthy about this, Mr. Edwards. Perhaps it will help matters if I ask you a few questions. By what road did you go to your home?"

"By the main road, a good highway which lies in front of our estates. I preferred it to the shadows of the wood."

"And there were some two hundred yards between your doors. At what point did the assault occur?"

"Almost midway between the two entrance drives, I should say."

"There was no light?"

"That of the moon only."

"Did you know these servants who accompanied you?"

"One I knew slightly; the other I had not seen before."

"Describe them to me, please."

"The man who is known to me is called Miles. He is clean-shaven, short and powerful, although somewhat elderly. He was known, I believe, as Sir Nathaniel's most trusted servant; he had been with Sir Nathaniel for years. I cannot describe him minutely for, of course, I never paid much attention to him. The other was tall and thickset, and wore a heavy beard. He was a silent fellow; I do not believe he spoke a word during the journey."

"Miles was more communicative?"

"Oh yes — even garrulous, perhaps. He talked about the weather and the moon, and I forget what all."

"Never about books?"

"There was no mention of books between any of us."

"Just how did the attack occur?"

"It was very sudden. We had reached, as I say, about the halfway point, when the big man seized me by the throat — to prevent outcry, I suppose — and on the instant, Miles snatched the volume from my grasp and was off. In a moment his companion followed him. I had been half throttled and could not immediately cry out; but when I could articulate, I made the countryside ring with my cries. I ran after them, but failed even to catch another sight of them. They had disappeared completely."

"Did you all leave the house together?"

"Miles and I left together; the second man joined us at the porter's lodge. He had been attending to some of his duties."

"And Sir Nathaniel — where was he?"

"He said good night on the threshold."

"What has he had to say about all this?"

"I have not told him."

"You have not told him!" echoed Sherlock Holmes, in astonishment.

"I have not dared," confessed our client miserably. "It will kill him. That book was the breath of his life."

"When did all this occur?" I put in, with a glance at Holmes.

"Excellent, Watson," said my friend, answering my glance. "I was about to ask the same question."

"Just last night," was Mr. Harrington Edwards's reply. "I was crazy most of the night, and didn't sleep a wink. I came to you the first thing this morning. Indeed, I tried to raise you on the telephone, last night, but could not establish a connection."

"Yes," said Holmes, reminiscently, "we were attending Mme. Trentini's first night. You remember, Watson, we dined later at Albani's."

"Oh, Mr. Holmes, do you think you can help me?" cried the abject collector.

"I trust so," answered my friend, cheerfully. "Indeed, I am certain I can. Such a book, as you remark, is not easily hidden. What say you, Watson, to a run down to Walton-on-Walton?"

"There is a train in half an hour," said Mr. Harrington Edwards, looking at his watch. "Will you return with me?"

"No, no," laughed Holmes, "that would never do. We must not be seen together just yet, Mr. Edwards. Go back yourself on the first train, by all means, unless you have further business in London. My friend and I will go together. There is another train this morning?"

"An hour later."

"Excellent. Until we meet, then!"

We took the train from Paddington Station an hour later, as we had promised, and began our journey to Walton-on-Walton, a pleasant, aristocratic little village and the scene of the curious accident to our friend of Poke Stogis Manor. Sherlock Holmes, lying back in his seat, blew earnest smoke rings at the ceiling of our compartment, which fortunately was empty, while I devoted myself to the morning paper. After a bit I tired of this occupation and turned to Holmes to find him looking out of the window, wreathed in smiles, and quoting Horace softly under his breath.

"You have a theory?" I asked, in surprise.

"It is a capital mistake to theorize in advance of the evidence," he replied. "Still, I have given some thought to the interesting problem of our friend, Mr. Harrington Edwards, and there are several indications which can point to only one conclusion."

"And whom do you believe to be the thief?"

"My dear fellow," said Sherlock Holmes, "you forget we already know the thief. Edwards has testified quite clearly that it was Miles who snatched the volume."

"True," I admitted, abashed. "I had forgotten. All we must do, then, is to find Miles."

"And a motive," added my friend, chuckling. "What would you say, Watson, was the motive in this case?"

"Jealousy," I replied.

"You surprise me!"

"Miles had been bribed by a rival collector, who in some manner had learned about this remarkable volume. You remember Edwards told us this second man joined them at the lodge. That would give an excellent opportunity for the substitution of a man other than the servant intended by Sir Nathaniel. Is not that good reasoning?"

"You surpass yourself, my dear Watson," murmured Holmes. "It is excellently reasoned, and, as you justly observe, the opportunity for a substitution was perfect."

"Do you not agree with me?"

"Hardly, Watson. A rival collector, in order to accomplish this remarkable coup, first would have to have known of the volume, as you suggest, but also he must have known upon what night Mr. Harrington Edwards would go to Sir Nathaniel's to get it, which would point to collaboration on the part of our client. As a matter of fact, however, Mr. Edwards's decision to accept the loan, was, I believe, sudden and without previous determination."

"I do not recall his saying so."

"He did not say so, but it is a simple deduction. A book collector is mad enough to begin with, Watson; but tempt him with some such bait as this Shakespeare quarto and he is bereft of all sanity. Mr. Edwards would not have been able to wait. It was just the night before that Sir Nathaniel promised him the book, and it was just last night that he flew to accept the offer — flying, incidentally, to disaster also. The miracle is that he was able to wait an entire day."

"Wonderful!" I cried.

"Elementary," said Holmes. "If you are interested, you will do well to read Harley Graham on *Transcendental Emotion*; while I have

myself been guilty of a small brochure in which I catalogue some twelve hundred professions and the emotional effect upon their members of unusual tidings, good and bad."

We were the only passengers to alight at Walton-on-Walton, but rapid inquiry developed that Mr. Harrington Edwards had returned on the previous train. Holmes, who had disguised himself before leaving the coach, did all the talking. He wore his cap peak backwards, carried a pencil behind his ear, and had turned up the bottoms of his trousers; while from one pocket dangled the end of a linen tape measure. He was a municipal surveyor to the life, and I could not but think that, meeting him suddenly in the highway, I should not myself have known him. At his suggestion, I dented the crown of my hat and turned my jacket inside out. Then he gave me an end of the tape measure, while he, carrying the other, went on ahead. In this fashion, stopping from time to time to kneel in the dust and ostensibly to measure sections of the roadway, we proceeded toward Poke Stogis Manor. The occasional villagers whom we encountered on their way to the station bar paid us no more attention than if we had been rabbits.

Shortly we came in sight of our friend's dwelling, a picturesque and rambling abode, sitting far back in its own grounds and bordered by a square of sentinel oaks. A gravel pathway led from the roadway to the house entrance and, as we passed, the sunlight struck fire from an antique brass knocker on the door. The whole picture, with its background of gleaming countryside, was one of rural calm and comfort; we could with difficulty believe it the scene of the sinister tragedy we were come to investigate.

"We shall not enter yet," said Sherlock Holmes, passing the gate leading into our client's acreage; "but we shall endeavor to be back in time for luncheon."

From this point the road progressed downward in a gentle incline and the trees were thicker on either side of the road. Sherlock Holmes kept his eyes stolidly on the path before us, and when we had covered about one hundred yards he stopped. "Here," he said, pointing, "the assault occurred."

I looked closely at the earth, but could see no sign of struggle.

"You recall it was midway between the two houses that it hap-

pened," he continued. "No, there are few signs; there was no violent tussle. Fortunately, however, we had our proverbial fall of rain last evening and the earth has retained impressions nicely." He indicated the faint imprint of a foot, then another, and still another. Kneeling down, I was able to see that, indeed, many feet had passed along the road.

Holmes flung himself at full length in the dirt and wriggled swiftly about, his nose to the earth, muttering rapidly in French. Then he whipped out a glass, the better to examine something that had caught his eye; but in a moment he shook his head in disappointment and continued with his exploration. I was irresistibly reminded of a noble hound, at fault, sniffing in circles in an effort to re-establish a lost scent. In a moment, however, he had it, for with a little cry of pleasure he rose to his feet, zigzagged curiously across the road and paused before a hedge, a lean finger pointing accusingly at a break in the thicket.

"No wonder they disappeared," he smiled as I came up. "Edwards thought they continued up the road, but here is where they broke through." Then stepping back a little distance, he ran forward lightly and cleared the hedge at a bound, alighting on his hands on the other side.

"Follow me carefully," he warned, "for we must not allow our own footprints to confuse us." I fell more heavily than my companion, but in a moment he had me by the heels and helped me to steady myself. "See," he cried, lowering his face to the earth; and deep in the mud and grass I saw the prints of two pairs of feet.

"The small man broke through," said Sherlock Holmes, exultantly, "but the larger rascal leaped over the hedge. See how deeply his prints are marked; he landed heavily here in the soft ooze. It is significant, Watson, that they came this way. Does it suggest nothing to you?"

"That they were men who knew Edwards's grounds as well as the Brooke-Bannerman estate," I answered; and thrilled with pleasure at my friend's nod of approbation.

He lowered himself to his stomach, without further conversation, and for some moments we crawled painfully across the grass. Then a shocking thought occurred to me.

"Holmes," I whispered in horror, "do you see where these footprints tend? They are directed toward the home of our client, Mr. Harrington Edwards!"

He nodded his head slowly, and his lips were tight and thin. The double line of impressions ended abruptly at the back door of Poke Stogis Manor!

Sherlock Holmes rose to his feet and looked at his watch.

"We are just in time for luncheon," he announced, and brushed off his garments. Then, deliberately, he knocked upon the door. In a few moments we were in the presence of our client.

"We have been roaming about the neighborhood," apologized the detective, "and took the liberty of coming to your rear door."

"You have a clue?" asked Mr. Harrington Edwards, eagerly.

A queer smile of triumph sat upon Holmes's lips.

"Indeed," he said, quietly, "I believe I have solved your little problem, Mr. Harrington Edwards."

"My dear Holmes!" I cried, and "My dear sir!" cried our client.

"I have yet to establish a motive," confessed my friend; "but as to the main facts there can be no question."

Mr. Harrington Edwards fell into a chair; he was white and shaking.

"The book," he croaked. "Tell me!"

"Patience, my good sir," counseled Holmes, kindly. "We have had nothing to eat since sunup, and we are famished. All in good time. Let us first dine and then all shall be made clear. Meanwhile, I should like to telephone to Sir Nathaniel Brooke-Bannerman, for I wish him also to hear what I have to say."

Our client's pleas were in vain. Holmes would have his little joke and his luncheon. In the end, Mr. Harrington Edwards staggered away to the kitchen to order a repast, and Sherlock Holmes talked rapidly and unintelligibly into the telephone and came back with a smile on his face. But I asked no questions; in good time this extraordinary man would tell his story in his own way. I had heard all that he had heard, and had seen all that he had seen; yet I was completely at sea. Still, our host's ghastly smile hung heavily in my mind, and come what would I felt sorry for him. In a little time we were seated at table. Our client, haggard and nervous, ate slowly and with apparent discomfort; his eyes were never long absent

from Holmes's inscrutable face. I was little better off, but Sherlock Holmes ate with gusto, relating meanwhile a number of his earlier adventures — which I may someday give to the world, if I am able to read my illegible notes made on the occasion.

When the sorry meal had been concluded we went into the library, where Sherlock Holmes took possession of the easiest chair with an air of proprietorship that would have been amusing in other circumstances. He screwed together his long pipe and lighted it with almost malicious lack of haste, while Mr. Harrington Edwards perspired against the mantel in an agony of apprehension.

"Why must you keep us waiting, Mr. Holmes?" he whispered. "Tell us, at once, please, who — who —" His voice trailed off into a moan.

"The criminal," said Sherlock Holmes, smoothly, "is —"

"Sir Nathaniel Brooke-Bannerman!" said a maid, suddenly, putting her head in at the door; and on the heels of her announcement stalked the handsome baronet, whose priceless volume had caused all this commotion and unhappiness.

Sir Nathaniel was white, and he appeared ill. He burst at once into talk.

"I have been much upset by your call," he said, looking meanwhile at our client. "You say you have something to tell me about the quarto. Don't say — that — anything — has happened — to it!" He clutched nervously at the wall to steady himself, and I felt deep pity for the unhappy man.

Mr. Harrington Edwards looked at Sherlock Holmes. "Oh, Mr. Holmes," he cried, pathetically, "why did you send for him?"

"Because," said my friend, "I wish him to hear the truth about the Shakespeare quarto. Sir Nathaniel, I believe you have not been told as yet that Mr. Edwards was robbed, last night, of your precious volume — robbed by the trusted servants whom you sent with him to protect it."

"*What!*" screamed the titled collector. He staggered and fumbled madly at his heart, then collapsed into a chair. "My God!" he muttered, and then again: "My God!"

"I should have thought you would have been suspicious of evil when your servants did not return," pursued the detective.

"I have not seen them," whispered Sir Nathaniel. "I do not mingle

with my servants. I did not know they had failed to return. Tell me — tell me all!”

“Mr. Edwards,” said Sherlock Holmes, turning to our client, “will you repeat your story, please?”

Mr. Harrington Edwards, thus adjured, told the unhappy tale again, ending with a heartbroken cry of “Oh, Nathaniel, can you ever forgive me?”

“I do not know that it was entirely your fault,” observed Holmes, cheerfully. “Sir Nathaniel’s own servants are the guilty ones, and surely he sent them with you.”

“But you said you had solved the case, Mr. Holmes,” cried our client, in a frenzy of despair.

“Yes,” agreed Holmes, “it is solved. You have had the clue in your own hands ever since the occurrence, but you did not know how to use it. It all turns upon the curious actions of the taller servant, prior to the assault.”

“The actions of —” stammered Mr. Harrington Edwards. “Why, he did nothing — said nothing!”

“That is the curious circumstance,” said Sherlock Holmes.

Sir Nathaniel got to his feet with difficulty.

“Mr. Holmes,” he said, “this has upset me more than I can tell you. Spare no pains to recover the book and to bring to justice the scoundrels who stole it. But I must go away and think — think —”

“Stay,” said my friend. “I have already caught one of them.”

“What! Where?” cried the two collectors together.

“Here,” said Sherlock Holmes, and stepping forward he laid a hand on the baronet’s shoulder. “You, Sir Nathaniel, were the taller servant; you were one of the thieves who throttled Mr. Harrington Edwards and took from him your own book. And now, sir, will you tell us why you did it?”

Sir Nathaniel Brooke-Bannerman toppled and would have fallen had not I rushed forward and supported him. I placed him in a chair. As we looked at him we saw confession in his eyes; guilt was written in his haggard face.

“Come, come,” said Holmes, impatiently. “Or will it make it easier for you if I tell the story as it occurred? Let it be so, then. You parted with Mr. Harrington Edwards on your doorsill, Sir Nathaniel, bidding your best friend good night with a smile on

your lips and evil in your heart. And as soon as you had closed the door, you slipped into an enveloping raincoat, turned up your collar, and hastened by a shorter road to the porter's lodge, where you joined Mr. Edwards and Miles as one of your own servants. You spoke no word at any time, because you feared to speak. You were afraid Mr. Edwards would recognize your voice, while your beard, hastily assumed, protected your face and in the darkness your figure passed unnoticed.

"Having strangled and robbed your best friend, then, of your own book, you and your scoundrelly assistant fled across Mr. Edwards's fields to his own back door, thinking that, if investigation followed, I would be called in, and would trace those footprints and fix the crime upon Mr. Harrington Edwards — as part of a criminal plan, prearranged with your rascally servants, who would be supposed to be in the pay of Mr. Edwards and the ringleaders in a counterfeit assault upon his person. Your mistake, sir, was in ending your trail abruptly at Mr. Edwards's back door. Had you left another trail, then, leading back to your own domicile, I should unhesitatingly have arrested Mr. Harrington Edwards for the theft.

"Surely you must know that in criminal cases handled by me, it is never the obvious solution that is the correct one. The mere fact that the finger of suspicion is made to point at a certain individual is sufficient to absolve that individual from guilt. Had you read the little works of my friend and colleague, Dr. Watson, you would not have made such a mistake. Yet you claim to be a bookman!"

A low moan from the unhappy baronet was his only answer.

"To continue, however: there at Mr. Edwards's own back door you ended your trail, entering his house — his own house — and spending the night under his roof, while his cries and ravings over his loss filled the night and brought joy to your unspeakable soul. And in the morning, when he had gone forth to consult me, you quietly left — you and Miles — and returned to your own place by the beaten highway."

"Mercy!" cried the defeated wretch, cowering in his chair. "If it is made public, I am ruined. I was driven to it. I could not let Mr. Edwards examine the book, for that way exposure would follow; yet I could not refuse him — my best friend — when he asked its loan."

"Your words tell me all that I did not know," said Sherlock Holmes, sternly. "The motive now is only too plain. The work, sir, was a forgery, and knowing that your erudite friend would discover it, you chose to blacken his name to save your own. Was the book insured?"

"Insured for £100,000, he told me," interrupted Mr. Harrington Edwards, excitedly.

"So that he planned at once to dispose of this dangerous and dubious item, and to reap a golden reward," commented Holmes. "Come, sir, tell us about it. How much of it was forgery? Merely the inscription?"

"I will tell you," said the baronet, suddenly, "and throw myself upon the mercy of my friend, Mr. Edwards. The whole book, in effect, was a forgery. It was originally made up of two imperfect copies of the 1604 quarto. Out of the pair I made one perfect volume, and a skillful workman, now dead, changed the date for me so cleverly that only an expert of the first water could have detected it. Such an expert, however, is Mr. Harrington Edwards — the one man in the world who could have unmasked me."

"Thank you, Nathaniel," said Mr. Harrington Edwards, gratefully.

"The inscription, of course, also was forged," continued the baronet. "You may as well know everything."

"And the book?" asked Holmes. "Where did you destroy it?"

A grim smile settled on Sir Nathaniel's features. "It is even now burning in Mr. Edwards's own furnace," he said.

"Then it cannot yet be consumed," cried Holmes, and dashed into the cellar. He was absent for some time and we heard the clinking of bottles and, finally, the clang of a great metal door. He emerged, some moments later, in high spirits, carrying a charred leaf of paper in his hand.

"It is a pity," he cried, "a pity! In spite of its questionable authenticity, it was a noble specimen. It is only half consumed; but let it burn away. I have preserved one leaf as a souvenir of the occasion." He folded it carefully and placed it in his wallet. "Mr. Harrington Edwards, I fancy the decision in this matter is for you to announce. Sir Nathaniel, of course, must make no effort to collect the insurance."

"Let us forget it, then," said Mr. Harrington Edwards, with a

sigh. "Let it be a sealed chapter in the history of bibliomania." He looked at Sir Nathaniel Brooke-Bannerman for a long moment, then held out his hand. "I forgive you, Nathaniel," he said, simply.

Their hands met; tears stood in the baronet's eyes. Powerfully moved, Holmes and I turned from the affecting scene and crept to the door unnoticed. In a moment the free air was blowing on our temples, and we were coughing the dust of the library from our lungs.

"They are a strange people, these book collectors," mused Sherlock Holmes, as we rattled back to town.

"My only regret is that I shall be unable to publish my notes on this interesting case," I responded.

"Wait a bit, my dear Doctor," counseled Holmes, "and it will be possible. In time both of them will come to look upon it as a hugely diverting episode, and will tell it upon themselves. Then your notes shall be brought forth and the history of another of Mr. Sherlock Holmes's little problems shall be given to the world."

"It will always be a reflection upon Sir Nathaniel," I demurred.

"He will glory in it," prophesied Sherlock Holmes. "He will go down in bookish chronicle with Chatterton, and Ireland, and Payne Collier. Mark my words, he is not blind even now to the chance this gives him for a sinister immortality. He will be the first to tell it." (And so, indeed, it proved, as this narrative suggests.)

"But why did you preserve the leaf from *Hamlet*?" I inquired. "Why not a jewel from the binding?"

Sherlock Holmes laughed heartily. Then he slowly unfolded the leaf in question, and directed a humorous finger to a spot upon the page.

"A fancy," he responded, "to preserve so accurate a characterization of either of our friends. The line is a real jewel. See, the good Polonius says: 'That he is mad, 'tis true: 'tis true 'tis pittie; and pittie it is true.' There is as much sense in Master Will as in Hafiz or Confucius, and a greater felicity of expression. . . . Here is London, and now, my dear Watson, if we hasten we shall be just in time for Zabriski's matinee!"

HOLMES AND THE DASHER

by ANTHONY BERKELEY

In his delightful book of satires, JUGGED JOURNALISM (London, Jenkins, 1925), A. B. Cox—alias Anthony Berkeley, alias Francis Iles—included as Lesson XIX in the Art of Writing a humorous dissertation on "Literary Style." He posed to himself the fruity problem of how another famous author would, "with all due reverence," write a Sherlock Holmes story. But let Anthony Berkeley Cox, the droll fellow responsible for this bi-blasphemous, this semi-sacrilegious parody, speak for himself:

"Suppose, for example, that Dr. Conan Doyle, having been asked to supply a Sherlock Holmes story to a certain magazine, suddenly developed measles or thought he would rather play golf instead, and so handed the thing over to Mr. P. G. Wodehouse to write for him. Would Mr. Wodehouse then write the story in the style of Dr. Doyle? Certainly not, for that would be very naughty indeed; it is one of the first rules of literary technique that you must never slavishly copy the style of another writer.

"No, he would write it in his own style, thus: . . ."

IT WAS a pretty rotten sort of day in March, I remember, that dear old Holmes and I were sitting in the ancestral halls in Baker Street, putting in a quiet bit of meditation. At least Holmes was exercising the good old gray matter over a letter that had just come, while I was relaxing gently in an armchair.

"What-ho, Watson, old fruit," he said at last, tossing the letter over to me. "What does that mass of alluvial deposit you call a brain make of this, what, what?"

The letter went something like this, as far as I can remember; at least, I may not have got all the words quite right, but this was the sort of gist of it, if you take me:

Jolly old Mr. Holmes,—I shall be rolling round at about three o'clock to discuss a pretty ripe little problem with you. It's like this. Freddie Devereux asked me to marry him last night, as I can prove with witnesses; but this morning he says he must have been a bit over the edge (a trifle sozzled, if you get me), and that a proposal doesn't count in the eyes of the rotten old Law if made under the influence of friend Demon Rum, as it were. Well, what I mean is—what about it? In other words, it's up to you to see that Freddie and I get tethered up together in front of an altar in the pretty near future. Get me?

Yours to a stick of lip salve,

CISSIE CROSSGARTERS

"Well, Watson?" Holmes asked, splashing a little soda into his glass of cocaine. "As the jolly old poet says—what, what, what?"

"It seems to me," I said, playing for safety, "that this is a letter from a girl called Cissie Crossgarters, who wants to put the stranglehold on a chappie called Devereux, while he's trying to counter with an uppercut from the jolly old Law. At least, that is, if you take my meaning."

"It's astounding how you get at the heart of things, Watson," said Holmes, in that dashed sneering way of his. "But it is already three o'clock, and there goes the bell. If I'm not barking up the wrong tree, this will be our client. Cissie Crossgarters!" he added ruminatively. "Mark my words, Watson, old laddie, she'll be a bit of a dasher. That is, a topnotcher, as it were."

In spite of his faults I'm bound to say that Holmes certainly is the lad with the outsize brain; the fellow simply exudes intuition. The girl *was* a topnotcher. The way she sailed into our little sitting room reminded me of a ray of sunshine lighting up the good old Gorgonzola cheese. I mean, poetry and bright effects and whatnot.

"Miss Crossgarters?" asked Holmes, doing the polite.

"Call me Cissie," she said, spraying him with smiles. Oh, she was a dasher all right.

"Allow me to present my friend, colleague and whatnot, Bertie

Watson," said Holmes, and she switched the smile onto me. I can tell you, I felt the old heart thumping like a motorbike as I squeezed the tiny little hand she held out to me. I mean, it was so dashed small. In fact, tiny, if you get me. I mean to say, it was such a dashed *tiny* little hand.

"Well?" said Holmes, when we were all seated, looking his most hatchet-faced and sleuthiest. "And what about everything, as it were? That is, what, what?"

"You got my letter?" cooed the girl, looking at Holmes as if he were the only man in the world. I mean, you know the sort of way they look at you when they want something out of you.

"You bet I did," said Holmes, leaning back and clashing his finger tips together, as was his habit when on the jolly old trail.

"And what do you think of it?"

"Ah!" said Holmes, fairly bursting with mystery. "That's what we've got to consider. But I may say that the situation appears to me dashed thick and not a little rotten. In fact, dashed rotten and pretty thick as well, if you take me. I mean to say," he added carefully, "well, if you follow what I'm driving at, altogether pretty well dashed thick and rotten, what?"

"You do put things well," said the girl admiringly. "That's just what I felt about it myself. And what had I better do, do you think?"

"Ah!" said Holmes again, clashing away like mad. "It's just that particular little fruity point that we've got to think over, isn't it? I mean, before we get down to action, we've got to put in a bit of pretty useful meditation and whatnot. At least, that's how the thing strikes me."

"How clever you are, Mr. Holmes!" sighed the girl.

Holmes heaved himself out of his chair. "And let me tell you that the best way of agitating the old bean into a proper performance of its duties is first of all to restore the good old tissues with a little delicate sustenance. In other words, what about something rather rare in tea somewhere first?"

"Oh, yes!" cried the girl. "How lovely!"

"Top-hole!" I said enthusiastically. I mean, the idea tickled me, what?

Holmes looked at me with a dashed cold eye. "You're not on the

stage for this bit of dialogue, dear old laddie," he remarked in the way that writer chappies call incisively.

They trickled out together.

It was past midnight before Holmes returned.

"What ho!" I said doubtfully, still feeling a bit sore, if you understand me.

"What ho!" said Holmes, unleashing his ulster.

"What ho! What ho!"

"What ho! What ho! What?"

"I mean, what about Freddie Devereux?" I asked, to change the conversation.

"That moon-faced lump of mediocrity? What about him?"

"Well, what about him? About him and Miss Crossgarters, as it were. I mean to say, what about them, what?"

"Oh, you mean what about them? Well, I don't think he'll trouble her much more. You see, Cissie and I have got engaged to be married, what? I mean, what, what, what?"

(And Mr. Berkeley adds: "That is one example of literary style.")

THE CASE OF THE MISSING LADY

by AGATHA CHRISTIE

Miss Christie has set her ingenuity and writing skill against every problem in detective-crime fiction. It was inevitable, therefore, that sooner or later she would tackle the subtle difficulties of burlesque. Of course, when she did, it was in typical Christie fashion — no halfway measures, as we hasten to explain.

"The Case of the Missing Lady" is a chapter lifted from Miss Christie's book, PARTNERS IN CRIME (London, Collins, 1929; New York, Dodd, Mead, 1929) — which contains not one burlesque but a baker's dozen of them! Other chapters parody Dr. Thorndyke, Father Brown, The Old Man in the Corner, Hanaud, Inspector French, Roger Sheringham, Reggie Fortune — and because Miss Christie plays no favorites, Hercule Poirot himself!

All the parodies concern the detectival affairs of that happy-go-lucky husband-and-wife team, Tommy and Tuppence Beresford — a delightful English version of Nick and Nora Charles. The Tommy-Tuppence take-off on Sherlock Holmes is gentle and somewhat spoofing, but none the less effective.

WHAT on earth are you doing?" demanded Tuppence, as she entered the inner sanctum of the International Detective Agency — (Slogan — Blunt's Brilliant Detectives) and discovered her lord and master prone on the floor in a sea of books.

Tommy struggled to his feet.

"I was trying to arrange these books on the top shelf of that cupboard," he complained. "And the damned chair gave way."

"What are they, anyway?" asked Tuppence, picking up a vol-

ume. "*The Hound of the Baskervilles*. I wouldn't mind reading that again sometime."

"You see the idea?" said Tommy, dusting himself with care. "Half hours with the Great Masters — that sort of thing. You see, Tuppence, I can't help feeling that we are more or less amateurs at this business — of course amateurs in one sense we cannot help being, but it would do no harm to acquire the technique, so to speak. These books are detective stories by the leading masters of the art. I intend to try different styles, and compare results."

"H'm," said Tuppence. "I often wonder how those detectives would have got on in real life." She picked up another volume. "You'll find difficulty in being a Thorndyke. You've no medical experience, and less legal, and I never heard that science was your strong point."

"Perhaps not," said Tommy. "But at any rate I've bought a very good camera, and I shall photograph footprints and enlarge the negatives and all that sort of thing. Now, *mon amie*, use your little gray cells — what does this convey to you?"

He pointed to the bottom shelf of the cupboard. On it lay a somewhat futuristic dressing gown, a Persian slipper, and a violin.

"Obvious, my dear Watson," said Tuppence.

"Exactly," said Tommy. "The Sherlock Holmes touch."

He took up the violin and drew the bow idly across the strings, causing Tuppence to give a wail of agony.

At that moment the buzzer rang on the desk, a sign that a client had arrived in the outer office and was being held in parley by Albert, the office boy.

Tommy hastily placed the violin on the table and kicked the books behind the desk.

"Not that there's any great hurry," he remarked. "Albert will be handing them out the stuff about my being engaged with Scotland Yard on the phone. Get into your office and start typing, Tuppence. It makes the office sound busy and active. No, on second thought, you shall be taking notes in shorthand from my dictation. Let's have a look before we get Albert to send the victim in."

They approached the peephole which had been artistically contrived so as to command a view of the outer office.

"I'll wait," the visitor was saying. "I haven't got a card with me, but my name is Gabriel Stavansson."

The client was a magnificent specimen of manhood, standing over six feet high. His face was bronzed and weather-beaten, and the extraordinary blue of his eyes made an almost startling contrast to the brown skin.

Tommy swiftly changed his mind. He put on his hat, picked up some gloves, and opened the door. He paused on the threshold.

"This gentleman is waiting to see you, Mr. Blunt," said Albert.

A quick frown passed over Tommy's face. He took out his watch.

"I am due at the Duke's at a quarter to eleven," he said. Then he looked keenly at the visitor. "I can give you a few minutes if you will come this way."

The latter followed him obediently into the inner office, where Tuppence was sitting demurely with pad and pencil.

"My confidential secretary, Miss Robinson," said Tommy. "Now, sir, perhaps you will state your business? Beyond the fact that it is urgent, that you came here in a taxi, and that you have lately been in the Arctic — or possibly the Antarctic — I know nothing."

The visitor stared at him in amazement.

"But this is marvelous," he cried. "I thought detectives only did such things in books! Your office boy did not even give you my name!"

Tommy sighed deprecatingly.

"Tut tut, all that was very easy," he said. "The rays of the midnight sun within the Arctic circle have a peculiar action upon the skin — the actinic rays have certain properties. I am writing a little monograph on the subject shortly. But all this is wide of the point. What is it that has brought you to me in such distress of mind?"

"To begin with, Mr. Blunt, my name is Gabriel Stavansson —"

"Ah! Of course," said Tommy. "The well-known explorer. You have recently returned from the region of the North Pole, I believe?"

"I landed in England three days ago. A friend who was cruising in northern waters brought me back on his yacht. Otherwise I should not have got back for another fortnight. Now I must tell you, Mr. Blunt, that before I started on this last expedition two years ago, I had the great fortune to become engaged to Mrs. Maurice Leigh Gordon —"

Tommy interrupted.

"Mrs. Leigh Gordon was, before her marriage —"

"The Honorable Hermione Crane, second daughter of Lord Lancaster," reeled off Tuppence glibly.

Tommy threw her a glance of admiration.

"Her first husband was killed in the War," added Tuppence.

Gabriel Stavansson nodded.

"That is quite correct. As I was saying, Hermione and I became engaged. I offered, of course, to give up this expedition, but she wouldn't hear of such a thing — bless her! She's the right kind of woman for an explorer's wife. Well, my first thought on landing was to see Hermione. I sent a telegram from Southampton, and rushed up to town by the first train. I knew that she was living for the time being with an aunt of hers, Lady Susan Clonray, in Pont Street, and I went straight there. To my great disappointment, I found that Hermy was away visiting some friends in Northumberland. Lady Susan was quite nice about it, after getting over her first surprise at seeing me. As I told you, I wasn't expected for another fortnight. She said Hermy would be returning in a few days' time. Then I asked for her address, but the old woman hummed and hawed — said Hermy was staying at one or two different places, and that she wasn't quite sure what order she was taking them in. I may as well tell you, Mr. Blunt, that Lady Susan and I have never got on very well. She's one of those fat women with double chins. I loathe fat women — always have — fat women and fat dogs are an abomination unto the Lord — and unfortunately they so often go together! It's an idiosyncrasy of mine, I know — but there it is — I never can get on with a fat woman."

"Fashion agrees with you, Mr. Stavansson," said Tommy dryly. "And everyone has his own pet aversion — that of the late Lord Roberts was cats."

"Mind you, I'm not saying that Lady Susan isn't a perfectly charming woman — she may be, but I've never taken to her. I've always felt, deep down, that she disapproved of our engagement, and I feel sure that she would influence Hermy against me if that were possible. I'm telling you this for what it's worth. Count it out as prejudice, if you like. Well, to go on with my story, I'm the kind of obstinate brute who likes his own way. I didn't leave Pont Street until I'd got out of her the names and addresses of the people Hermy was likely to be staying with. Then I took the mail train north."

"You are, I perceive, a man of action, Mr. Stavansson," said Tommy, smiling.

"The thing came upon me like a bombshell. Mr. Blunt, none of these people had seen a sign of Hermy! Of the three houses, only one had been expecting her — Lady Susan must have made a bloomer over the other two — and she had put off her visit there at the last moment by telegram. I returned post haste to London, of course, and went straight to Lady Susan. I will do her the justice to say that she seemed upset. She admitted that she had no idea where Hermy could be. All the same, she strongly negatived any idea of going to the police. She pointed out that Hermy was not a silly young girl, but an independent woman who had always been in the habit of making her own plans. She was probably carrying out some idea of her own.

"I thought it quite likely that Hermy didn't want to report all her movements to Lady Susan. But I was still worried. I had that queer feeling one gets when something is wrong. I was just leaving when a telegram was brought to Lady Susan. She read it with an expression of relief and handed it to me. It ran as follows: CHANGED MY PLANS JUST OFF TO MONTE CARLO FOR A WEEK HERMY.

Tommy held out his hand.

"You have got the telegram with you?"

"No, I haven't. But it was handed in at Maldon, Surrey. I noticed that at the time, because it struck me as odd. What should Hermy be doing at Maldon? She'd no friends there that I had ever heard of."

"You didn't think of rushing off to Monte Carlo in the same way that you had rushed north?"

"I thought of it, of course. But I decided against it. You see, Mr. Blunt, whilst Lady Susan seemed quite satisfied by that telegram, I wasn't. It struck me as odd that she should always telegraph, not write. A line or two in her own handwriting would have set all my fears at rest. But anyone can sign a telegram HERMY. The more I thought it over, the more uneasy I got. In the end I went down to Maldon. That was yesterday afternoon. It's a fair-sized place — good links there and all that — two hotels. I inquired everywhere I could think of, but there wasn't a sign that Hermy had ever been there. Coming back in the train I read your advertisement, and I thought I'd put it up to you. If Hermy has really gone off to Monte Carlo, I don't want to set the police on her track and make a scandal, but I'm

not going to be sent off on a wild-goose chase myself. I stay here in London, in case — in case there's been foul play of any kind."

Tommy nodded thoughtfully.

"What do you suspect exactly?"

"I don't know. But I feel there's something wrong."

With a quick movement, Stavansson took a case from his pocket and laid it open before them.

"That is Hermione," he said. "I will leave it with you."

The photograph represented a tall willowy woman, no longer in her first youth, but with a charming frank smile and lovely eyes.

"Now, Mr. Stavansson," said Tommy. "There is nothing you have omitted to tell me?"

"Nothing whatever."

"No detail, however small?"

"I don't think so."

Tommy sighed.

"That makes the task harder," he observed. "You must often have noticed, Mr. Stavansson, in reading of crime, how one small detail is all the great detective needs to set him on the track. I may say that this case presents some unusual features. I have, I think, practically solved it already, but time will show."

He picked up the violin which lay on the table and drew the bow once or twice across the strings. Tuppence ground her teeth and even the explorer blanched. The performer laid the instrument down again.

"A few chords from Mosgovskensky," he murmured. "Leave me your address, Mr. Stavansson, and I will report progress to you."

As the visitor left the office, Tuppence grabbed the violin and putting it in the cupboard turned the key in the lock.

"If you must be Sherlock Holmes," she observed, "I'll get you a nice little syringe and a bottle labeled COCAINE, but for God's sake leave that violin alone. If that nice explorer man hadn't been as simple as a child, he'd have seen through you. Are you going on with the Sherlock Holmes touch?"

"I flatter myself that I have carried it through very well so far," said Tommy with some complacency. "The deductions were good, weren't they? I had to risk the taxi. After all, it's the only sensible way of getting to this place."

"It's lucky I had just read the bit about his engagement in this morning's *Daily Mirror*," remarked Tuppence.

"Yes, that looked well for the efficiency of Blunt's Brilliant Detectives. This is decidedly a Sherlock Holmes case. Even you cannot have failed to notice the similarity between it and the disappearance of Lady Frances Carfax."

"Do you expect to find Mrs. Leigh Gordon's body in a coffin?"

"Logically, history should repeat itself. Actually — well, what do you think?"

"Well," said Tuppence. "The most obvious explanation seems to be that for some reason or other Hermy, as he calls her, is afraid to meet her fiancé, and that Lady Susan is backing her up. In fact, to put it bluntly, she's come a cropper of some kind, and has got the wind up about it."

"That occurred to me also," said Tommy. "But I thought we'd better make pretty certain before suggesting that explanation to a man like Stavansson. What about a run down to Maldon, old thing? And it would do no harm to take some golf clubs with us."

Tuppence agreeing, the International Detective Agency was left in the charge of Albert.

Maldon, though a well-known residential place, did not cover a large area. Tommy and Tuppence, making every possible inquiry that ingenuity could suggest, nevertheless drew a complete blank. It was as they were returning to London that a brilliant idea occurred to Tuppence.

"Tommy, why did they put MALDON SURREY on the telegram?"

"Because Maldon is in Surrey, idiot."

"Idiot yourself — I don't mean that. If you get a telegram from — Hastings, say, or Torquay, they don't put the county after it. But from Richmond, they do put RICHMOND SURREY. That's because there are two Richmonds."

Tommy, who was driving, slowed up.

"Tuppence," he said affectionately, "your idea is not so dusty. Let us make inquiries at yonder post office."

They drew up before a small building in the middle of a village street. A very few minutes sufficed to elicit the information that there were two Maldons. Maldon, Surrey, and Maldon, Sussex, the latter a tiny hamlet but possessed of a telegraph office.

"That's it," said Tuppence excitedly. "Stavansson knew Maldon was in Surrey, so he hardly looked at the word beginning with S after Maldon."

"Tomorrow," said Tommy, "we'll have a look at Maldon, Sussex."

Maldon, Sussex, was a very different proposition from its Surrey namesake. It was four miles from a railway station, possessed two public houses, two small shops, a post and telegraph office combined with a sweet and picture-postcard business, and about seven small cottages. Tuppence took on the shops whilst Tommy betook himself to the Cock and Sparrow. They met half an hour later.

"Well?" said Tuppence.

"Quite good beer," said Tommy, "but no information."

"You'd better try the King's Head," said Tuppence. "I'm going back to the post office. There's a sour old woman there, but I heard them yell to her that dinner was ready."

She returned to the place, and began examining postcards. A fresh-faced girl, still munching, came out of the back room.

"I'd like these, please," said Tuppence. "And do you mind waiting whilst I just look over these comic ones?"

She sorted through a packet, talking as she did so.

"I'm ever so disappointed you couldn't tell me my sister's address. She's staying near here and I've lost her letter. Leigh Wood, her name is."

The girl shook her head.

"I don't remember it. And we don't get many letters through here either — so I probably should if I'd seen it on a letter. Apart from the Grange, there isn't many big houses round about."

"What is the Grange?" asked Tuppence. "Who does it belong to?"

"Dr. Horrison has it. It's turned into a Nursing Home now. Nerve cases mostly, I believe. Ladies that come down for rest cures, and all that sort of thing. Well, it's quiet enough down here, Heaven knows." She giggled.

Tuppence hastily selected a few cards and paid for them.

"That's Dr. Horrison's car coming along now," exclaimed the girl.

Tuppence hurried to the shop door. A small two-seater was passing. At the wheel was a tall dark man with a neat black beard and a powerful, unpleasant face. The car went straight on down the street. Tuppence saw Tommy crossing the road towards her.

"Tommy, I believe I've got it. Dr. Horrison's Nursing Home."

"I heard about it at the King's Head, and I thought there might be something in it. But if she's had a nervous breakdown or anything of that sort, her aunt and her friends would know about it surely."

"Ye-es. I didn't mean that. Tommy, did you see that man in the two-seater?"

"Unpleasant-looking brute, yes."

"That was Dr. Horrison."

Tommy whistled.

"Shifty-looking beggar. What do you say about it, Tuppence? Shall we go and have a look at the Grange?"

They found the place at last, a big rambling house, surrounded by deserted grounds, with a swift mill stream running behind the house.

"Dismal sort of abode," said Tommy. "It gives me the creeps, Tuppence. You know, I've a feeling this is going to turn out a far more serious matter than we thought at first."

"Oh don't. If only we are in time. That woman's in some awful danger, I feel it in my bones."

"Don't let your imagination run away with you."

"I can't help it. I mistrust that man. What shall we do? I think it would be a good plan if I went and rang the bell alone first, and asked boldly for Mrs. Leigh Gordon just to see what answer I get. Because, after all, it may be perfectly fair and above board."

Tuppence carried out her plan. The door was opened almost immediately by a manservant with an impassive face.

"I want to see Mrs. Leigh Gordon if she is well enough to see me."

She fancied that there was a momentary flicker of the man's eyelashes, but he answered readily enough.

"There is no one of that name here, Madam."

"Oh, surely. This is Dr. Horrison's place, The Grange, is it not?"

"Yes, madam, but there is nobody of the name of Mrs. Leigh Gordon here."

Baffled, Tuppence was forced to withdraw and hold a further consultation with Tommy outside the gate.

"Perhaps he was speaking the truth. After all, we don't *know*."

"He wasn't. He was lying. I'm sure of it."

"Wait until the doctor comes back," said Tommy. "Then I'll pass

myself off as a journalist anxious to discuss his new system of rest cure with him. That will give me a chance of getting inside and studying the geography of the place."

The doctor returned about half an hour later. Tommy gave him about five minutes, then he in turn marched up to the front door. But he too returned baffled.

"The doctor was engaged and couldn't be disturbed. And he never sees journalists. Tuppence, you're right. There's something fishy about this place. It's ideally situated — miles from anywhere. Any mortal thing could go on here, and no one would ever know."

"Come on," said Tuppence, with determination.

"What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to climb over the wall, and see if I can't get up to the house quietly without being seen."

"Right. I'm with you."

The garden was somewhat overgrown, and afforded a multitude of cover. Tommy and Tuppence managed to reach the back of the house unobserved.

Here there was a wide terrace, with some crumbling steps leading down from it. In the middle some French windows opened onto the terrace, but they dared not step out into the open, and the windows where they were crouching were too high for them to be able to look in. It did not seem as though their reconnaissance would be much use, when suddenly Tuppence tightened her grasp on Tommy's arm.

Someone was speaking in the room close to them. The window was open and the fragment of conversation came clearly to their ears.

"Come in, come in, and shut the door," said a man's voice irritably. "A lady came about an hour ago, you said, and asked for Mrs. Leigh Gordon?"

Tuppence recognized the answering voice as that of the impassive manservant.

"Yes, sir."

"You said she wasn't here, of course?"

"Of course, sir."

"And now this journalist fellow," fumed the other.

He came suddenly to the window, throwing up the sash, and the two outside, peering through a screen of bushes, recognized Dr. Horriston.

"It's the woman I mind most about," continued the doctor. "What did she look like?"

"Young, good-looking, and very smartly dressed, sir."

Tommy nudged Tuppence in the ribs.

"Exactly," said the doctor between his teeth. "As I feared. Some friend of the Leigh Gordon woman's. It's getting very difficult. I shall have to take steps . . ."

He left the sentence unfinished. Tommy and Tuppence heard the door close. There was silence.

Gingerly, Tommy led the retreat. When they had reached a little clearing not far away, but out of earshot from the house, he spoke.

"Tuppence, old thing, this is getting serious. They mean mischief. I think we ought to get back to town at once and see Stavansson."

To his surprise Tuppence shook her head.

"We must stay down here. Didn't you hear him say he was going to take steps? That might mean anything."

"The worst of it is we've hardly got a case to go to the police on."

"Listen, Tommy. Why not ring up Stavansson from the village? I'll stay around here."

"Perhaps that is the best plan," agreed her husband. "But, I say — Tuppence —"

"Well?"

"Take care of yourself — won't you?"

"Of course I shall, you silly old thing. Cut along."

It was some two hours later that Tommy returned. He found Tuppence awaiting him near the gate.

"Well?"

"I couldn't get on to Stavansson. Then I tried Lady Susan. She was out too. Then I thought of ringing up old Brady. I asked him to look up Horrison in the Medical Directory or whatever the thing calls itself."

"Well, what did Dr. Brady say?"

"Oh he knew the name at once. Horrison was once a bona-fide doctor, but he came a cropper of some kind. Brady called him a most unscrupulous quack, and said he, personally, wouldn't be surprised at anything. The question is, what are we to do now?"

"We must stay here," said Tuppence instantly. "I've a feeling they mean something to happen tonight. By the way, a gardener has

been clipping ivy round the house. Tommy, *I saw where he put the ladder.*"

"Good for you, Tuppence," said her husband appreciatively. "Then tonight —"

"As soon as it's dark —"

"We shall see —"

"What we shall see."

Tommy took his turn at watching the house whilst Tuppence went to the village and had some food.

Then she returned and they took up the vigil together. At nine o'clock, they decided that it was dark enough to commence operations. They were now able to circle round the house in perfect freedom. Suddenly Tuppence clutched Tommy by the arm.

"Listen."

The sound she had heard came again, borne faintly on the night air. It was the moan of a woman in pain. Tuppence pointed upward to a window on the first floor.

"It came from that room," she whispered.

Again that low moan rent the stillness of the night.

The two listeners decided to put their original plan into action. Tuppence led the way to where she had seen the gardener put the ladder. Between them they carried it to the side of the house from which they had heard the moaning. All the blinds of the ground-floor rooms were drawn, but this particular window upstairs was unshuttered.

Tommy put the ladder as noiselessly as possible against the side of the house.

"I'll go up," whispered Tuppence. "You stay below. I don't mind climbing ladders and you can steady it better than I could. And in case the doctor should come round the corner you'd be able to deal with him and I shouldn't."

Nimble Tuppence hurried up the ladder, and raised her head cautiously to look in at the window. Then she ducked it swiftly, but after a minute or two brought it very slowly up again. She stayed there for about five minutes. Then she came down quickly.

"It's her," she said breathlessly and ungrammatically. "But oh, Tommy, it's horrible. She's lying there in bed, moaning, and turning to and fro — and just as I got there a woman dressed as a nurse came

in. She bent over her and injected something in her arm and then went away again. What shall we do?"

"Is she conscious?"

"I think so. I'm almost sure she is. I fancy she may be strapped to the bed. I'm going up again, and if I can, I'm going to get into that room."

"I say, Tuppence —"

"If I'm in any sort of danger I'll yell for you. So long."

Avoiding further argument Tuppence hurried up the ladder again. Tommy saw her try the window, then noiselessly push up the sash. Another second, and she had disappeared inside.

And now an agonizing time came for Tommy. He could hear nothing at first. Tuppence and Mrs. Leigh Gordon must be talking in whispers if they were talking at all. Presently he did hear a low murmur of voices and drew a breath of relief. But suddenly the voices stopped. Dead silence.

Tommy strained his ears. Nothing. What could they be doing? Suddenly a hand fell on his shoulder.

"Come on," said Tuppence's voice out of the darkness.

"Tuppence! How did you get here?"

"Through the front door. Let's get out of this."

"Get out of this?"

"That's what I said."

"But — Mrs. Leigh Gordon?"

In a tone of indescribable bitterness Tuppence replied:

"Getting thin!"

Tommy looked at her, suspecting irony.

"What do you mean?"

"What I say. Getting thin. Slinkiness. Reduction of weight. Didn't you hear Stavansson say he hated fat women? In the two years he's been away, his Hermy has put on weight. Got a panic when she knew he was coming back, and rushed off to do this new treatment of Dr. Horrison's. It's injections of some sort, and he makes a deadly secret of it, and charges through the nose. I daresay he *is* a quack — but he's a damned successful one! Stavansson comes home a fortnight too soon, when she's only beginning the treatment. Lady Susan has been sworn to secrecy, and plays up. And we come down here and make blithering idiots of ourselves!"

Tommy drew a deep breath.

"I believe, Watson," he said with dignity, "that there is a very good concert at the Queen's Hall tomorrow. We shall be in plenty of time for it. And you will oblige me by not placing this case upon your records. It has absolutely *no* distinctive features."

THE ADVENTURE OF THE ILLUSTRIOUS IMPOSTOR

by ANTHONY BOUCHER

Anthony Boucher, creator of Fergus O'Brien, Nick Noble, and Sister Ursula—a stellar triumvirate of fictional detectives—focuses the microscope of Sherlock Holmes's analytical mind on the problem of Rudolf Hess, the sensational one-man invasion of Great Britain. History alone will confirm or shatter the truth of Holmes's startling solution.

It is interesting to note in passing the cognominal affinity between Anthony Boucher and Sherlock Holmes. Is it sheer coincidence that Anthony Boucher's alter-pseudonym is H. H. Holmes? ¹

This stimulating pastiche has never before appeared in print.

THE LEAN old man on the Sussex bee farm looked up from the newspapers spread before him and announced, "The most interesting man in the world at this moment, this May of 1941, is a hitherto obscure German named Horn."

His friend stirred his tea testily. "Hang it, old man, have you found some obscurely fascinating personal again? I thought all the interest in the papers was centered on this chap Hess."

The lean old man smiled. "Precisely, my dear fellow. All the interest is centered on this chap Hess, and no one has bothered to notice that Rudolf Hess must have been murdered a month ago."

¹ A whimsy: the pseudonym actually derives from that of the infamous American murderer, Dr. H. H. Holmes, né Herman Mudgett (1860–1895), who eventually confessed to averaging two murders per year over a period of fourteen years.

"Murdered?" His friend's eyes held for a moment the gleam of a retired hunting dog who hears the horns. Then the gleam faded. "Only another Jerry . . ." he said dully.

"Ah, but what a Jerry! Some call him a Trojan Horse, some a traitor — a dove of peace, a spy. While we know that he must be . . . But here: Read these two paragraphs from the official statement dated May 12."

The aged doctor fumbled with his glasses and read from the paper:

He was taken to a hospital in Glasgow, where he first gave his name as Horn but later on he declared he was Rudolf Hess.

He brought with him various photographs of himself at different ages, apparently in order to establish his identity.

He read the paragraphs twice, then looked up vacuously.

"Come, come!" the lean old man snapped. "You know my methods. Can you not see how clearly those sentences tell us that this 'Hess' is an impostor?" His temper faded, and he looked at his friend with pity and sympathy. "Well, well; the years glide by, Postumus — and I even find myself quoting Horace rather than Hafiz. I no longer have the right to be so harsh with your dullness. But listen, and you shall understand."

His thumb crammed shag from the Persian slipper into the blackened clay. "Those photographs have been accepted as providing absolute proof of his identity. In fact, they disprove it completely.

"Say that he was coming on a mission to the Duke of Hamilton. The men have met. They have exchanged correspondence in which a signal could have been arranged. And yet we are expected to believe that Hess would walk in on the Duke and present him with a photograph as identification. Patent nonsense!

"Or say that his mission was to the people of England. Our intelligence service is not all dolts. Scotland Yard with men like Wilson and French and Alleyn is not what it was in the days of Lestrade. They have the minutest descriptions and pictures of every enemy leader. And yet he brings his own pictures!

"The real Hess would never have carried pictures. But anyone not Hess, but resembling him, would have had the strongest motive for carrying just those pictures which most stressed the resemblance."

He paused for a moment, and his friend said, "Amazing!"

"Elementary," he retorted. It was like ritual antiphon and response. "But the episode of the name is even more revealing.

"This 'Hess' was in Britain deliberately; his Messerschmitt could not have made the round flight, so that he must have intended to land. He was distinctively dressed: fine uniform, gold watch, gold wrist compass. Whatever his purpose, he could carry it out only by virtue of being Hess.

"Nevertheless, even with those curious photos on him, when he is first questioned he states that his name is Horn.

"Again nonsense . . . if he is Hess. But if he were Herr Horn, nervous, confused, his wrenched leg aching, what more natural than that in that first tense moment he should automatically reply with his true name?"

Dense clouds of shag smoke filled the room as the lean old man eagerly went on: "Realize that, and see how much else falls into place:

"Hess is described in an early dispatch as a strict vegetarian; Herr Horn is fussy about his salmon and chicken.

"Hess has lung lesions from the war, a scalp wound from 1919, and tuberculosis of the bone from a skiing injury; the Glasgow hospital report on Herr Horn mentions only heart trouble and gallstones.

"Hess is reputedly a devoted father; Herr Horn has abandoned the Hess child to a man not noted for mercy.

"Hess is a soldier, a flyer, and presumably not a fool; Herr Horn arrives in Scotland in an unarmed plane, totally defenseless against the RAF, who might reasonably be slow to understand the motive of a Messerschmitt's visit."

His friend roused himself. "But I say, old man, why should even your Herr Horn venture against the RAF unarmed?"

"It is obvious enough: Because he was meant to die. Because his death, as Hess, was essential to the murderers of Hess."

"Oh. Some dastardly plot of that devil Von Bork, no doubt."

The lean old man smiled. "Von Bork has been dead these twenty-five years. But there are still devils in his land, and one of them murdered Rudolf Hess. Why, I shall let the political experts explain.

"But it is obvious that Hess's murder was dangerous; it might

cause serious disaffection among his followers, even revolt. So he must be given a brave new death, glorious in battle. You will recall the curious episode of the martial death of Werner von Fritsch?

"Horn was probably Hess's habitual double. Say he was told that Hess was ill, that he must keep a secret tryst for him. He was provided with identification and with the map marking the Hamilton estate, chosen doubtless because of the Duke's dubious prewar connections. His instructions would be to lie low after the appointment (hence the concentrated foods which he carried) until he could be smuggled out.

"Instead, of course, he was to be shot down by the RAF or, if that failed, by the German plane which he thought was his escort. (The newspaper reports are still doubtful as to whether the bullet holes in his plane came from the RAF.) But by some trick of our ever ironic Providence, his plane escaped. He landed . . . and wrenched his ankle.

"That, my dear fellow, if you will forgive a pawky wit worthy of your own, was the turning point. Helpless because of his leg, he was captured and haled before the authorities. He mumbled his real name; but that would not be believed for a moment once his 'identification' was seen. And then —

"I admire the poor worm. This nonentity, this weakling double — in one moment he achieved a stroke of daring that Moran or Moriarty might have envied. He calmly said, 'Yes. I am Hess.' And who was there to deny him?"

"Who but you?" his friend marveled. "The only man in the British Empire who —"

"It was nothing. You know my tenet: Eliminate the impossible. . . . And here nothing can remain but the murder of Hess and the inspired masquerade of Herr Horn, while Goebbels and Duff-Cooper go mad contradicting each other and themselves in every fresh dispatch."

A smile of triumph lingered on his thin lips, then gave way to gravity. "But when I think of the future, this is more than an amusing little problem.

"For the moment, the capture of Hess seems a great British triumph. But when we have kept him for years, learning nothing from

him, profiting nothing by this stroke, when some few have guessed the truth but are afraid to reveal it lest we lose face . . . It may prove serious.

"Suppose that our allies, and we are bound to have more allies as this devilish war drags on, demand to see and use our prisoner. Suppose that our enemy conceives the ingenious notion of sending Frau Hess to join her husband; she would know the double Horn and at once upset the applecart.

"No, this comedy may yet prove deadly earnest. And when it does . . . There may be work for us yet, Watson."

His friend was asleep. The lean old man smiled, took down his violin, and began to play softly.

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF MR. JAMES PHILLIMORE

by ELLERY QUEEN

Dear Mr. Holmes:

For many years, in company with the legion of your devoted followers, I have been fascinated by the numerous references of Dr. Watson to your unrecorded cases.

By an understandable perversity of the mind, my imagination has seized with special zest upon those unrecorded cases of yours which, as Watson points out so forthrightly, you failed to solve.

I can well imagine your irritation at reading the good doctor's blunt statement in "The Problem of Thor Bridge"¹ that you had fizzled a number of cases, among them the singular affair of Mr. James Phillimore who, "stepping back into his own house to get his umbrella, was never more seen in this world."

No one likes to be reminded of his failures. I would not do so now, if not for my certainty that you will be professionally interested in my remarkable experience recently.

Imagine my astonishment when, early in the year of 1943, my father, Inspector Richard Queen of the New York Police Department, brought to my attention the case of Mr. James Phillimore of New York, who stepped back into his own house as if to get his umbrella (after anxiously studying the sky for signs of rain) and to all intents and purposes vanished from this world!

I could not believe my ears, although at the time I said nothing about it to my father. Such a coincidence stretched credence far beyond the breaking point. It was inconceivable, as you will be the first to agree, that two James Phillimores should spring

¹ THE CASE-BOOK OF SHERLOCK HOLMES; London, Murray, 1927; New York, Doran, 1927.

up fifty years apart, that they should both go back into their houses for an umbrella,² and that they should then disappear as if from the face of the earth — inconceivable that there should be no connection between the two men and the two situations.

Naturally, I went to work on the case despite my handicap of confinement to bed with a cold. But all through my investigation one part of my brain was trying to reconcile the inconceivable with the conceivable. And after I had solved the case, I made an entirely different inquiry — I tried to discover the connection between the James Phillimore of London in the closing years of the 19th Century and the James Phillimore of New York in the early years of the fifth decade of the 20th Century. And I found it!

My James Phillimore proved to be the grandson of yours (you will recall that the Phillimore family migrated to America after your brush with them). I found evidence that Grandson James had access to certain old records of his grandfather, your adversary, and that, when the occasion arose in his own lifetime, he duplicated the technique of his grandfather's disappearance!

Consequently, my solution of the case must bear a close parallel to the facts of the grandfather's disappearance — it may even be, although I hesitate to push the claim forward, that I was fortunate enough to succeed in exactly the situation in which you, the great master of us all, failed.

In any event, I gave the facts to the world in a radio broadcast. It may be that you were not tuned in that evening — there are so many detective-story programs, and you must be heartily sick of them. If you did not hear the modern version of the disappearance of Mr. James Phillimore, here is the full story as I unfolded it that night on the air.

Could you possibly arrange to write me your comments?

Respectfully yours,

ELLERY QUEEN

P.S. If you should honor me by writing, would you mind making sure that your letter is not signed in your name by some ethereal secretary, or even by Dr. Watson? I should ap-

² It turned out to be the identical umbrella!

preciate very much having a genuine Sherlock Holmes autograph — and a photograph if you've had one taken recently.

E. Q.

The Characters

MR. JAMES PHILLIMORE	. . .	<i>who disappears</i>
BIGGS	. . . . .	<i>his man</i>
COAL MAN	. . . . .	<i>briefly</i>
TELEGRAPH MESSENGER	. . .	<i>briefly</i>
NIKKI PORTER	. . . . .	<i>Ellery's secretary</i>
INSPECTOR QUEEN	. . . . .	<i>Ellery's father</i>
SERGEANT VELIE	. . . . .	<i>the Inspector's subordinate</i>
ELLERY QUEEN	. . . . .	<i>who solves a difficult case, perforce, on his back</i>
<i>and</i>		
SHERLOCK HOLMES	. . .	<i>present in spirit only</i>

The Scenes

The Queen Apartment — Mr. Phillimore's House

SCENE I: The Queen Apartment

(ELLERY is in bed with a cold. NIKKI is firmly ministering to him.)

NIKKI: Drink the rest of your orange juice, Ellery.

ELLERY: But Nikki, I don't *want* orange juice. I want to get out of bed. (*He has a coughing spell*)

NIKKI: With that cough? Drink it.

ELLERY: Nikki, it's just a cold — and we've got a lot of work to do on my novel —

NIKKI: You're staying in bed, Mr. Queen, until you stop coughing. You can dictate from bed.

ELLERY: (*Grumpily*) All right. Get your notebook.

NIKKI: Never knew a man yet who didn't act like a puppy with a sore nose when he was sick. (*Door opens off*) Inspector?

INSPECTOR: Yes, Nikki. How's the sick man? (ELLERY *coughs*) Say, that's a bad cough, son —

NIKKI: And he wants to get out of bed, Inspector!

INSPECTOR: (*Grimly*) Oh, he does? Well, he's not going to. (*Chuckles*) It's a shame, too.

ELLERY: What's a shame? What are you looking so gay about, Dad?

INSPECTOR: It's a great day, son. Yes, sir! I've got a rendezvous with Velie to close the book on the career of a bird who should have been in jail years ago.

ELLERY: Who's that, Dad?

INSPECTOR: Little Jim.

ELLERY: Little *Jim*? (*Groans*)

NIKKI: *Who* is Little Jim, Inspector?

INSPECTOR: James Phillimore, Nikki — The 20 Per Cent King.

ELLERY: And I have to be laid up! I'm getting out of —

INSPECTOR: You're staying right where you are. (*Wickedly*) We were tipped off that Little Jim made a reservation on this morning's plane to South America. So I threw a squad around his house last night and we'll grab Mr. Phillimore when he leaves with that satchel full of John Q. Public's dough.

NIKKI: What's his racket, Inspector?

INSPECTOR: He "invests" your money for you. Guarantees 20 per cent interest.

NIKKI: But how can he keep paying 20 per cent?

ELLERY: It's very simple, Nikki. Little Jim takes your \$100, pays out \$20 — that leaves him \$80.

NIKKI: But Ellery, he can't do that indefinitely!

INSPECTOR: There's always a fresh crop of suckers, Nikki. The new money keeps paying off the old interest.

NIKKI: But eventually a lot of people must want *all* their money back.

ELLERY: When that unhappy moment comes, Nikki, Little Jim packs up the remaining assets and departs hastily for cooler climes. Same old story, Dad. Remember William F. Miller and his "Franklin Syndicate" in 1899?

INSPECTOR: Yep. Well, this time Little Jim waited too long. So we're going to recover the sucker money and wrap Mr. James Phillimore up for immediate delivery to the D.A. Nikki, take care of Ellery.

NIKKI: I will, Inspector. (INSPECTOR *exits*)

ELLERY: Blast it. . . . Dad! Let me know how you make out!

SCENE 2: *Exterior of the Phillimore House*

(SERGEANT VELIE *is skulking behind a bush. INSPECTOR QUEEN approaches surreptitiously.*)

VELIE: Hi, Inspector.

INSPECTOR: Morning, Velie. How goes it?

VELIE: Smooth as a baby's neck, Inspector. Not a soul's left the house since we checked Little Jim in last night. I've been watchin' from the front gate here. Huh . . . Here comes Little Jim now!

INSPECTOR: Marching out of his front door with his black bag, cocky as an Irish cop. Down, Velie! Let him walk right into the arms of the law.

VELIE: What a runt.

INSPECTOR: Five-foot-one of pure cussedness. Wait a minute — why's he stopped? *What's he looking up at the sky for?*

VELIE: (*Intently*) Says to himself: "Looks like rain. So I'll turn around and go back into the house for an umbrella —" *and there he goes, Inspector!*

INSPECTOR: Where, Velie? I've lost him under that portico in front of the door! Let's get closer — I want to make sure he doesn't pull a sneak. (*They hurry towards the house, dodging from bush to bush*)

VELIE: That little twerp is li'ble to pull anything. There he is, Inspector! See him now?

INSPECTOR: Yeah. Back into the house. (*Front door slams*) We'll wait right here, Velie, till he comes out again. Got to nab him with that bag on him.

VELIE: Inspector, if Little Jim gets outa this house without us or the boys spotting him, he ain't a fraud artist — he's a magician!

SCENE 3: *Same, Fifteen Minutes Later*

(INSPECTOR QUEEN *paces in front of the Phillimore house restlessly.*

SERGEANT VELIE *appears from the side driveway.*)

INSPECTOR: Well, Velie? What do the men say?

VELIE: They say nobody's left the house, Inspector. So Little Jim's still inside.

INSPECTOR: Fifteen minutes to get an umbrella? Use your head, Velie! Phillimore spotted us — he's up to something. I'm not waiting any longer! (*They run to the front door*) Ring that bell, Velie!

VELIE: (*Rings bell*) I tell ya, Inspector, it's O.K. (*Door opens*) Uh, uh. Who's *this* beanpole?

BIGGS: (*A very tall thin man*) Yes, sir?

INSPECTOR: Where's Little Jim?

BIGGS: Beg pardon, sir?

INSPECTOR: James Phillimore! Where is he?

BIGGS: Oh. Mr. Phillimore is not here, sir.

VELIE: Now, listen, Daddy Longlegs, Little Jim came outa here fifteen minutes ago, ducked right back in — and he ain't been out since.

INSPECTOR: I'm Inspector Queen of Police Headquarters. Quit stalling! Where's Phillimore?

BIGGS: But you must be mistaken, sir. Mr. Phillimore did leave fifteen minutes ago, but I didn't see him return —

INSPECTOR: Well, we did. Velie, search the house. I'll wait here in the foyer with this man.

VELIE: (*Going*) Phillimore's last stand, huh? Playin' hard to get — (*He disappears up the front staircase*)

INSPECTOR: So you're covering up for him. Who are you?

BIGGS: Mr. Phillimore's man, sir, Jonathan Biggs, sir.

INSPECTOR: (*Chuckling*) Quite a team, aren't you? Phillimore's a five-footer and you're six foot four, Mr. Biggs, if you're an inch.

BIGGS: Yes, sir. Mr. Phillimore wouldn't engage anyone but a very tall person. He's *so* sensitive about his height, sir.

INSPECTOR: Yes, these little guys cause all the trouble.

BIGGS: I wouldn't know about that, sir. But Mr. Phillimore gets *furios* if you refer to him as "little." That's why he wears a beard, sir. (*Confidentially*) I believe it makes him feel bigger and more masterful.

INSPECTOR: Well, he'll get a quick trim in Sing Sing. (*Calling*) Velie! What's taking you so long?

VELIE: (*From upstairs*) I guess Jimmy-boy wants to play peekaboo, Inspector!

INSPECTOR: I'll peekaboo *him*. Biggs, why's it so cold in this house? Run out of oil-ration coupons?

BIGGS: Oh, no, sir. We burn coal.

INSPECTOR: Then why don't you burn some? The temperature here would discourage an Eskimo.

BIGGS: I was about to go down to the cellar, sir, when you arrived. We're expecting a coal delivery this morning — I was going to put the last few shovelful in the furnace . . .

INSPECTOR: Don't let me keep you. But come right back. (*Biggs leaves*) Brr. (*Calling*) Velie, how long does it take to find one man in one house?

VELIE: (*From upstairs*) You tell me, Inspector! I'm still lookin'!

SCENE 4: *Interior, Phillimore House, Later*

(INSPECTOR QUEEN *is still in the foyer; BIGGS has returned from the cellar. SERGEANT VELIE appears, shaking his head.*)

INSPECTOR: What's the matter, Velie? Where's Little Jim?

VELIE: Inspector, I'm baffled.

BIGGS: I told you, sir — Mr. Phillimore isn't here.

INSPECTOR: Then you didn't cover everything, Velie.

VELIE: Izzat so? I looked my eyes out! Every room.

INSPECTOR: Velie, I'm in no mood for gags.

VELIE: (*Hotly*) Who's gaggin'? I'm not gaggin', Inspector. He ain't here.

INSPECTOR: Did you look in the basement? The attic? All the closets?

VELIE: I tell ya I looked every place, Inspector.

INSPECTOR: But — Velie, you stay here in the house. I'll send a few of the boys in to help you make another search. Meanwhile, you — Biggs — don't leave this house. Is that clear?

BIGGS: Perfectly, sir.

INSPECTOR: Velie, keep your eye on this long drink of water. He's too smooth to suit *me*. Another thing. I'm giving strict orders to the men on duty outside that no one leaves this house except you and me, Velie, unless he's got one of my cards as a pass — and signed by me, to boot!

VELIE: But Inspector, I tell you Little Jim ain't here.

INSPECTOR: (*Angry*) He *must* be here! Biggs, get out of my way. I'm going home and talk to Ellery!

SCENE 5: *The Queen Apartment*

(INSPECTOR QUEEN *has returned home and told ELLERY, still sick in bed, the astonishing story of the man who went back into his house for an umbrella and vanished. The INSPECTOR, NIKKI, and ELLERY are in ELLERY's bedroom.*)

ELLERY: You've got it all down, Nikki?

NIKKI: Yes, Ellery. Full description of Mr. Phillimore's house and all the rooms.

ELLERY: Now Dad. You and Velie saw James Phillimore come out through the front door. You saw him pause, look up at the sky, and . . . you *unquestionably* saw him go back inside?

INSPECTOR: How many times do I have to tell you? He went back in!

ELLERY: Then that's a fact. (*He reflects earnestly*) After Little Jim went back into the house, no one left it, you say?

INSPECTOR: My men had every possible exit covered, son.

ELLERY: Obviously, then, Little Jim is still in there.

NIKKI: But Ellery, Sergeant Velie and the other detectives searched every nook and cranny!

ELLERY: That's what makes this such an interesting problem, Nikki. Dad, let's start at the bottom of the house and work up. How about the cellar?

INSPECTOR: Solid concrete. Floor, ceiling, walls all tapped.

ELLERY: Any packing cases in the cellar? Old trunks?

INSPECTOR: No. All we found down there are two coal bins. One empty, the other with a couple of shovelful of coal in it. The basement's out, Ellery.

ELLERY: The ground floor —

NIKKI: Three rooms — living room, study, kitchen.

ELLERY: Living room first. Dad, how about the fireplace?

INSPECTOR: Thoroughly investigated. Also all the walls, floor, ceiling — not only in that room but in every room in the house, Ellery.

ELLERY: Does the living room have a grand piano?

INSPECTOR: By Jove, yes! I wonder if Velie looked in there.

ELLERY: Note, Nikki: Search interior of piano. (NIKKI *makes a note*) Now — the kitchen. Closets? Pantry?

INSPECTOR: All covered.

ELLERY: Refrigerator? Remember, Phillimore's only five foot one and skinny as a spindle.

INSPECTOR: I'd better check with Velie on that, son.

NIKKI: (*As if noting*) Check . . . refrigerator.

ELLERY: The study. Is there a safe?

INSPECTOR: Yes. Phillimore's man, Biggs, opened it for us. Nothing in the safe but unimportant papers.

ELLERY: What about the foyer, Dad?

INSPECTOR: Suit of armor.

NIKKI: I'll bet that's it!

INSPECTOR: You'd lose, Nikki. We looked inside.

NIKKI: I suppose all the closets were searched, too?

INSPECTOR: Every one in the house, upstairs and down. *And* the bathrooms. And the attic — and the roof —

ELLERY: That's the whole house, then. No! The garage —

INSPECTOR: We went through it.

ELLERY: Did you search the car?

INSPECTOR: I left that to Velie. However, I'd better check it personally. Note car trunk compartment, Nikki.

ELLERY: Nikki, go back to Phillimore's house with Dad. When Dad's checked the piano, refrigerator, and car, phone me the results.

NIKKI: I can see it coming, though — Mr. James Phillimore isn't hiding in any of those places, Ellery!

ELLERY: I'm inclined to agree, Nikki. Toughest case all winter, and I have to investigate it on my back!

SCENE 6: *The Phillimore House, Later*

(INSPECTOR QUEEN, NIKKI, VELIE and BIGGS are in the lower hall. A doorbell rings from the rear of the house.)

INSPECTOR: Biggs, what's that bell?

BIGGS: The rear door, Inspector. (*They all troop into the kitchen*)

INSPECTOR: Velie, unlock it and slide the bolt.

VELIE: Uh-huh. (*He obeys and opens door. A workman with sooty hands and face stands outside*) Yeah?

COAL MAN: Coal company. Got two tons to deliver.

NIKKI: It's about time. It was warm here for a while, but now it's getting cold again.

COAL MAN: Well, if it's O.K. . . .

VELIE: Now, now. Don't step inside, fella.

INSPECTOR: Velie, go outside with this man. Let him run his coal chute into the cellar window to the bin, but he's not to set foot in any part of the house.

VELIE: Yes, sir. Anybody with you, my anthracite friend?

COAL MAN: I got a helper.

INSPECTOR: Stick with both of 'em every second, Velie. (VELIE leaves; INSPECTOR *locks and bolts the door*) Now, Nikki, let's you and I search those places Ellery mentioned!

SCENE 7: *The Same, Later*

(*The rear doorbell rings. INSPECTOR QUEEN unlocks and unbolts the door.*)

INSPECTOR: Oh, Velie. Well? What's about the coal?

VELIE: It's in, Inspector.

COAL MAN: (*From behind VELIE*) Hey, this big guy says I gotta have a pass to let me and my helper out. What goes here, anyway? (*The INSPECTOR makes out a pass and signs it*)

INSPECTOR: Here's your pass. Velie, go out with 'em—and better examine that truck, just to make sure. (VELIE and the COAL MAN leave, and the INSPECTOR refastens the door) Nikki! Where are you?

NIKKI: (*From another room*) In the study alcove off the foyer, Inspector!

INSPECTOR: Whom are you talking to, Nikki? (*He joins her in the study alcove*)

NIKKI: Ellery — on the phone. He's furious.

ELLERY: (*On the telephone throughout*) Nothing in the piano, Nikki?

NIKKI: Only strings and sounding board, Ellery.

ELLERY: Don't be cute! Refrigerator?

NIKKI: Filled with goodies. Which reminds me. I'm starved.

ELLERY: (*Groaning*) A man vanishes like the Cheshire cat and she's hungry! What about the car in the garage?

NIKKI: He's not in it, Ellery. Now what shall I tell the Inspector to do?

ELLERY: Blessed if I know. Anything new happen?

NIKKI: A coal truck just delivered two tons of coal.

ELLERY: What! (*Excitedly*) Let me talk to Dad!

NIKKI: Your celebrated son wishes a word with you, Inspector.
(*She hands the telephone to INSPECTOR QUEEN*)

INSPECTOR: Now Ellery, keep your shirt on. I kept the two coal men from entering the house and Velie was with 'em every minute. So Little Jim can't have sneaked out through the cellar window.

ELLERY: I realize that, Dad. But don't you realize that he may be playing hide-and-go-seek with you?

INSPECTOR: Come again?

ELLERY: While you were searching one part of the house, Phillimore may have been hiding in another part. When you came to *his* part, he slipped off to still another place! How do you know he wasn't in the coal bin when the coal started sliding down the chute? How do you know he isn't buried under the coal *at this moment*?

INSPECTOR: I'm ready to believe anything.

ELLERY: You'd better check, Dad. And call me back.

INSPECTOR: All right. (*He hangs up*)

NIKKI: What's Ellery say, Inspector?

INSPECTOR: (*Groaning*) As soon as Velie gets back into the house, Nikki — we start shoveling coal!

NIKKI: And for goodness' sake, Inspector, while you're at it, put some in that furnace.

SCENE 8: *The Same, Later*

INSPECTOR: Well, Velie?

NIKKI: (*Giggling*) Sergeant, you look like an end man in a minstrel show.

VELIE: Shovel coal! Keep the furnace going! What else do you gotta do on this job? Look at me! My wife'll have a fit.

INSPECTOR: Never mind your wife. Did you transfer all that coal to the other bin?

VELIE: Yeah! (*Cunningly*) And guess what we found under that coal, Inspector.

INSPECTOR: (*Biting eagerly*) What, Velie?

VELIE: (*Bellowing*) Coal dust! (*The telephone rings*)

NIKKI: I'll get it. Hello? Just a minute, Ellery! Inspector, it's Ellery and he's all agog.

INSPECTOR: (*Taking the telephone*) Hello, son.

ELLERY: Dad! Was Little Jim under the coal?

INSPECTOR: He was not! Any more bright ideas, Mr. Queen?

ELLERY: Mmm. Well, the coal was a long shot. But we had to eliminate it. Dad, I know where James Phillimore is!

INSPECTOR: (*Belligerently*) Where?

ELLERY: In the only place left for him to hide.

INSPECTOR: I'm still listening.

ELLERY: You said Phillimore's study is off the foyer. You listed all the study furniture. But Dad, you left out one thing.

INSPECTOR: You're lying there in bed halfway across town and you're telling me I left out something? What?

ELLERY: A study usually has a desk. You didn't mention one.

INSPECTOR: I didn't? Well, it's a fact there *is* a desk here . . . By

thunder, Ellery, you're right! And it's one of those old-fashioned rolltop desks at that! Hold on. Velie! Ellery's solved it.

NIKKI: He has, Inspector?

VELIE: Where's he say Little Jim's hidin'?

INSPECTOR: In that rolltop desk, Velie. Search it!

VELIE: Say, we did miss that before. (*Grim*) Phillimore, come outa there. (*He slides the top open*) Huh?

NIKKI: It's empty.

INSPECTOR: Solved it! (*He barks into the telephone*) Ellery! You were wrong, my son. The desk is empty . . .

ELLERY: But it can't be — (*The front doorbell rings*)

INSPECTOR: Hang on a minute, Ellery. Velie, answer the front doorbell.

BIGGS: (*Appearing*) But I'll answer it, sir.

INSPECTOR: Biggs, you'll stay where you are! Velie, who is it?

VELIE: (*Off*) Telegraph boy, Inspector, with a wire for Biggs.

BIGGS: (*Eagerly*) I'll take that, sir —

INSPECTOR: You will not. Don't move. Velie, grab that wire.

ELLERY: (*Through the telephone*) Dad, who's that wire from?

INSPECTOR: Wait, this phone has a long cord — I'll take it out into the foyer. Hold on, son. Nikki, take the phone. Velie, give me that wire.

VELIE: Here you are, Inspector. Biggs, stand still.

BIGGS: But it's my wire, sir.

NIKKI: (*Into telephone*) The Inspector's opening the telegram, Ellery.

ELLERY: For pity's sake, what's it say, Nikki?

INSPECTOR: (*Spluttering*) But — but it *can't* be! It's impossible!

MESSENGER: Can I please have a pass or somethin' to get outa here? The guy at the gate says I gotta have a pass. I got other telegrams to deliver, you know.

INSPECTOR: Here, Velie. Give him this pass.

VELIE: Now scram, squirt. (*The MESSENGER exits, front door closes*)
What's the wire say, Inspector?

INSPECTOR: Nikki, hand me that phone. Ellery, listen to this! I can't believe it —

ELLERY: (*Shouting*) Can't believe *what* —

INSPECTOR: It's from James Phillimore! Yes! It's addressed to his man, Biggs, and it says: GOT OUT OF HOUSE AS PLANNED. BRING CLOTHES AND PAPERS TO MEETING PLACE AGREED ON. — Signed — JAMES PHILLIMORE.

BIGGS: (*Snarling*) Out of my way!

INSPECTOR: Velie, grab that man. Don't let Biggs get away.

VELIE: Oh, no, you don't, flunkey — (*He grabs Biggs and they struggle*)

NIKKI: Sergeant — look out —

VELIE: Oh, yeah? (*He tries vainly to get Biggs down on the floor*)

ELLERY: Dad, for heaven's sake, what's going on there?

INSPECTOR: Biggs tried to beat it. Velie's wrestling with him — trying to get him down on the floor, but he can't. (*Sarcastically*) What's the matter, Velie — didn't you have your vitamins today?

VELIE: (*Panting*) I can't get this guy off his feet. O.K., brother, I'll cut you down to size! (*He punches Biggs on the jaw. Biggs crashes to the floor*)

NIKKI: What a fall was there, my countrymen.

INSPECTOR: Velie's got Biggs, son. But how did Little Jim get out of the house? I'll swear nobody left here!

ELLERY: Yes . . . (*Chuckles*) . . . Yes, of course!

INSPECTOR: Yes — of — course *what*, Ellery?

ELLERY: Of course I know where Little Jim is!

INSPECTOR: Is that so? You thought you knew once before, Ellery, and you were wrong!

ELLERY: Dad, this time I'm positive. I've solved the problem of James Phillimore — the man who stepped back into his own house to get his umbrella and was never more seen in this world!

THE SOLUTION

SCENE 9: *The Same, Immediately After*

INSPECTOR: You've *solved* it, son? But what — where — how?

ELLERY: Never mind now, Dad. Did you ask the telegraph messenger the obvious question?

INSPECTOR: Did I — *What* obvious question?

ELLERY: Oh, lord. Dad, maybe it's still not too late. Where's the boy now?

INSPECTOR: He just left. Wait a minute — I still see him through the foyer window. Piggott's examining the pass I just gave him, at the front gate.

ELLERY: Good. Hold the boy, Dad, and bring him to me here. I'll ask him that question myself!

SCENE 10: *The Queen Apartment, Later*

(*They are grouped around ELLERY's bed.*)

VELIE: O.K., so we've got the messenger boy outside your bedroom, Maestro. Now what?

ELLERY: Fine, Sergeant. Keep the boy there for a moment.

INSPECTOR: What I want to know, son, is — where's James Phillimore?

NIKKI: Yes, Ellery — how did he get out of the house with a dozen detectives watching every possible exit?

ELLERY: Elementary, Nikki. Dad, just answer my questions. Is Little Jim in that house now?

INSPECTOR: No, son. I'll stake my shield on *that*.

ELLERY: If he isn't *in* the house, then he must be *outside* the house. Right?

NIKKI: Naturally.

ELLERY: How many people left the house during the day, Dad? —
Not including yourselves or the detectives.

INSPECTOR: I told you a dozen times, Ellery: *Nobody* left that house.

ELLERY: Oh, but that's not so, Dad. *Three* people left it.

VELIE: Three? Inspector, he's delirious.

ELLERY: Come, come, didn't the coal men come to the house and then leave it? That makes two —

INSPECTOR: But they never stepped into the house, Ellery!

VELIE: And I was with 'em every second while they sent the coal down the chute from outside the house, Maestro. I even examined the truck before they left.

INSPECTOR: So Little Jim wasn't in the truck, and he wasn't one of the coal men, Ellery.

ELLERY: Oh, you're quite right about that. So that eliminates two of the three persons who left the house. Therefore, the *third* person must be Little Jim.

NIKKI: (*Excited*) I've got it! Ellery, you're wrong! Little Jim never left the house at all, Inspector!

INSPECTOR: But Nikki, we searched it from top to bottom. If he was in the house all the time, *where* was he?

NIKKI: He was in front of your eyes, Inspector. Little Jim was . . .
Biggs, the servant!

VELIE: He played two parts? Say . . .

INSPECTOR: Phillimore is five foot one, Nikki. Biggs is six foot four!

NIKKI: (*Airily*) He faked the extra height, Inspector. Used stilts, or something.

ELLERY: Stilts? No, Nikki. Velie actually wrestled with Biggs and couldn't even get him *off his feet*! If Biggs were on stilts, no matter how strong he was, *you* could have pushed him over, Nikki. No — call in that telegraph boy, Sergeant, and I'll ask him the obvious question Dad forgot. (*VELIE brings in the MESSENGER*)

INSPECTOR: (*Exasperated*) What obvious question, for Pete's sake?

VELIE: Here's the boy, Maestro.

MESSANGER: (*Fearfully*) What — what do you want, mister?

ELLERY: I want to ask you a question, sonny. (*Chuckles*) Here it is: you're James Phillimore, aren't you? (*There is a moment of complete silence*)

INSPECTOR: (*Spitting*) He's Little Jim, Ellery? This boy?

ELLERY: What makes him a boy, Dad? His small size. His clean-shaven cheeks. His messenger's uniform. His high-pitched voice. No, no, he's not a boy — he's a man. James Phillimore, in fact. He must be. He's the only other person who left the house.

MESSANGER: (*Backing away*) Think you're clever, don't you?

VELIE: Stand — still!

INSPECTOR: (*Softly*) I get it.

NIKKI: But Ellery, how did he leave the house in the first place in order to *come back* as the messenger?

ELLERY: He didn't leave at all, Nikki.

INSPECTOR: Now I see it! He prepared his escape in advance. He had this telegraph messenger's uniform ready. And a telegram, which he'd sent to himself some time ago. All he had to do today was change the date and reseal the envelope.

ELLERY: Yes, Dad, and when he spotted you this morning waiting for him outside the house, he quickly went back in, shaved off his beard, put on the uniform, told Biggs to play stupid, and then hid in the only place you did *not* search —

INSPECTOR: The rolltop desk!

ELLERY: Precisely. Just before I phoned about the desk, he saw that the coast was clear — nobody was in the study or foyer. So he jumped out of the desk, ran to the front door, opened it, went out and stood in the portico —

VELIE: Then why didn't Piggott at the front gate see him, Ellery?

ELLERY: He couldn't, Sergeant. Remember when you and Dad first

saw Little Jim re-enter the house this morning, Dad said you'd "lost" him — couldn't see him in the portico until you got *closer* to the front door? . . . So then Phillimore rang the bell, delivered his "telegram," and calmly asked for a pass to get him off the premises!

VELIE: Makin' this little devil sneakier than a Jap. Come along quietly, Phillimore, or I'll break you in little pieces. (INSPECTOR QUEEN, SERGEANT VELIE, and JAMES PHILLIMORE *exeunt*)

NIKKI: That was a mighty clever plot, Ellery.

ELLERY: Wasn't it? I especially call to your attention, my dear Nikki, the brilliant wording of Little Jim's spurious telegram. It convinced Inspector Queen that this daring criminal had escaped, when all the time he was *in* the house waiting for a pass from the Inspector himself to get him out!

THE ADVENTURE OF THE REMARKABLE WORM

by STUART PALMER

Stuart Palmer, creator of Hildegarde Withers, one of sleuthdom's most beloved detectivettes, is at the time of this writing Lieutenant Stuart Palmer of the United States Army. Good luck, Stu, and best wishes from millions of fans!

Lieutenant Palmer wrote this pastiche just before entering the service of his country. He wrote it especially for this book — for which your Editors will be eternally grateful and for which every reader will heartily sing out his fervent thanks. The "misadventure" stems from one of Dr. Watson's many provocative and teasing remarks — this one to be found in "The Problem of Thor Bridge"¹ wherein Watson referred to "a third case worthy of note . . . that of Isadora Persano, the well-known journalist and duellist, who was found stark staring mad with a matchbox in front of him which contained a remarkable worm, said to be unknown to science."

Lieutenant Palmer's pastiche, so cleverly, so ingeniously contrived, reflects a lifetime adoration of The Great Man — and in an even greater degree, an underdog sympathy for The Great Man's Boswell, whose detectival prowess has until now been most sadly neglected. But read for yourself this utterly delightful and satisfying "misadventure."

Another pastiche of Sherlock Holmes by Lieutenant Palmer is scheduled to appear in the July 1944 issue of "Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine." It is titled "The Adventure of the Marked Man."

SHERLOCK HOLMES turned abruptly away from the bay window, against which all day a raw April wind had been driving rain. The spring of '93 will be remembered as unusually inclement, even for London, and as always the dreariness of the weather conspired with professional inactivity to force Holmes farther and farther into the depths of black depression.

I was therefore not surprised to see him cross to the mantelpiece in three quick strides, obviously in search of the needle I abhorred. "Holmes, I beg of you!" cried I, half rising from my easy chair. Ordinarily I should not have ventured to remonstrate with my friend, but all day the Jezail bullet in my shoulder² had been sending excruciating pains down my right side as far as the knee, and I was not in the most tolerant of moods.

Holmes stopped short and turned toward me, the morocco case in his hand. "My dear Watson," he said, "can you suggest anything better than a 7 per cent solution of cocaine?"

I turned toward the table, decanted three fingers of good Irish whisky into a tall glass and then filled it to the brim with sparkling water from the gasogene.³ "If you will not listen to me as a medical man, then give heed to an old comrade in arms. Try this, I beg of you. It is a far milder poison."

Languidly Holmes accepted the glass, raised it to his lips, and then put it aside with a wry smile and a shake of his head. "Revolted, Watson, most revolted."

More than a little nettled, I replied, "But my dear fellow! As a man who makes a point of keeping good Burley tobacco in a Persian slipper, and who toasts two-and-six Trichinopoly cigars in a coal scuttle before the fire, your sense of taste cannot be so terribly affronted by a whisky-and-soda."

Holmes bowed mockingly. "*Touché*, Watson. I must confess that in the process of developing my faculties to their highest point it is possible my sense of taste has atrophied. Tobacco in its moist⁴ normal state repels me. So, by the way, does this atrocious mixture of fer-

² Connoisseurs: Please note.

³ Connoisseurs: Please note.

⁴ Connoisseurs: Please note.

mented potato juice and carbon-dioxide gas. Granted for the moment that you are correct in arguing that the final results are less deleterious to the system than the habitual use of cocaine, still I have always found the latter drug a specific in exalting and stimulating the mental processes."

Here he stopped, cocking his head toward the door. "As exalting, shall we say, as the sudden appearance of a new problem?"

There was another quick step in the passage, and then a nervous hammering upon our door. Holmes paused only to adjust the shade of the reading lamp so that it fell upon the vacant chair in which our visitor must sit, and then crossed to the door and flung it open.

The man who staggered into our sitting room was perhaps of some eight and thirty years, though his cadaverous aspect made him appear superficially older. His apparel spoke of Savile Row, though it hung loosely upon his gaunt frame like the dress of a neat scarecrow. He looked about him anxiously, turning from Holmes to me and back again. I could not help noticing that there were deep gentian circles beneath his faintly bulging eyes, and that the man was obviously in the grip of a powerful emotion.

"Mr. Holmes?" he gasped.

"Please sit down," said Holmes, indicating the visitor's chair. "I am he. And this is Dr. Watson, my friend and colleague. If I may say so, it would appear that you are far more in need of his professional services than of my own."

"I must be the judge of that," retorted our caller sharply. He sank wearily into the chair, grasping the arms with bloodless trembling hands. "I will begin at the beginning," said he. "My name is Persano." He hesitated, took a deep breath, and went on. "Isadora Persano."

Holmes nodded. "Indeed? Can it be that you are the journalist over whose signature have recently appeared a number of controversial articles? In the *Sketch*, I believe."

Persano bowed, brightening a little. "I had no idea, Mr. Holmes, that my poor efforts had come to the attention of such a celebrated person as yourself. It is true that I have published a few diatribes dealing with widely held popular superstitions . . ."

"Incidentally sinking home a few good thrusts at the medical profession, I believe?" Holmes nodded toward me, a flicker of amuse-

ment in his eye. "The good doctor here has not read them, so we may all still speak as friends. And now, Mr. Persano, having had a recent opportunity to study organized medicine at first hand in one of our London hospitals, you wish to consult me —"

"But this is black magic, sir!" interrupted the journalist.

"Not in the least. The faint but definite odor of iodoform and ether which clings to your person, plus an obviously recent loss of weight, plus the fact that you are wearing a hospital nightgown in place of a shirt, can only indicate the conclusion I mentioned."

A flickering smile crossed Persano's face. "Oh, I see. For a moment you gave me a start. But now that you explain I see how simple it all is."

Holmes nodded wearily. "As usual, I have made a mistake in disclosing the steps by which I arrive at my deductions. But let us get on, Mr. Persano. You wish to consult me about the object which bulges in your right-hand coat pocket?"

Isadora Persano fumbled nervously, and then thrust out at us a small glass flask, well stoppered. Even as he held it forth he kept his eyes averted, as if the very sight of the thing in the bottle were to be avoided as the glance of Medusa.

"Mr. Holmes, you must help me! I must find out the truth or lose my reason forever. Only a day or so ago — I have somehow lost track of time — I was the happiest man in the realm. Today —" and here he shuddered, a full perspiration breaking out on his pale brow — "today I am the most miserable. This — this *Thing* that I hold in my hand is the reason."

Holmes accepted the flask and held it to the light, so that we both saw clearly its contents. Floating in a clear viscous liquid was an object both strange and repellent, a slender, wormlike creature no more than six inches in length, with an eyeless, swollen head.

I must have given vent to an involuntary exclamation, for Holmes turned to me and nodded. "Exactly, Watson! You were about to say that we are looking upon a representative of the *phylla* group — possibly one of the *Platyhelminthes*, but most certainly of a venomous breed hitherto unknown to science." He turned back to our visitor. "Mr. Persano, how did you come by this thing?"

"In all my life," cried Persano wildly, "I have never intentionally

caused harm to any living being. I have avoided Error and pursued Truth as my guiding star. Why, then, should anyone send me this object of horror incarnate?"

Holmes turned the flask, so that the motion induced in the supporting liquid caused a faint serpentine movement of the creature inside. "You have an enemy, no doubt?"

"Yes, and no, Mr. Holmes," the man replied. "All Harley Street has been my enemy since I published those articles. I was even challenged to a duel last week. But I cannot believe that any civilized human being could take so foul a revenge as this. Imagine it, Mr. Holmes! One moment I was walking along Oxford Street, my mind filled with happy, constructive thoughts, concentrating upon Health and Truth. Then—I can hardly believe it even now—a blackness descended upon me. I have vague formless memories of lying there on the pavement, with the avid faces of a curious crowd staring down at me. And then—nothing!"

"Nothing at all?" pressed Holmes.

The man shook his head. "Nothing until I awakened. In the charity ward of Charing Cross Hospital I found myself, weak and hungry and filled with the illusion of pain. Some poor soul at the other end of the room was passing on to his reward, his last struggles occupying the attention of the doctors and nurses. I seized the opportunity to recover my clothing from the locker at the foot of my bed, and made my escape, bringing with me that flask which had been placed on the night stand for my waking eyes to light upon."

"I begin to understand," said Holmes, grimly. I had expected to see him impatient at this hysterical, maudlin narrative, but on the contrary he had listened with the greatest concentration of attention.

"You have an enemy? This former dueling antagonist, perhaps?"

Persano shrugged. "Honor was satisfied when the secretary of the College of Surgeons fired over my head, and I over his. No, Mr. Holmes, I cannot believe that my persecution arises from such a source."

"Very well," said Holmes. "By the way, when did you separate from your wife?"

Persano started. "Mr. Holmes, this *is* unfair! You have had prior knowledge of me and my affairs."

"Not in the least. There is very clearly the mark of a wedding ring upon the proper finger of your left hand, and one of the buttons on your waistcoat has been replaced with thread of a different color, plainly indicating a change to a bachelor existence. Please answer the question."

"Marina and I separated last autumn," Persano said. "She returned to the practice of her profession, and is, I believe, at the moment telling fortunes at the Red Rose teashop in Lambeth. But we had no quarrel—it was just that she could not, would not, follow me into the new fields, the fresh world which opened to me when I finally got hold of the Key of the Scriptures."

I could not but detect a noticeable intensification in Holmes's manner. "Never fear, Mr. Persano. I shall do my very best to help you. Suppose you leave this unholy object with me for the time being? I think I shall have news for you within the fortnight. Your address?"

"No. 31 Tottenham Mews."

"Thank you. Will you be kind enough to note the address, Watson?" Holmes ushered our visitor to the door, then closed it after him and turned back toward the fire, his face grave and thoughtful. "Quite an unusual little problem," he said. "You will find parallel cases, if you care to consult the index, in Malvern in '84, and Hammersmith as late as year before last. The man himself was most interesting."

"No doubt you read a good deal in his appearance which was invisible to me," I remarked, rubbing my lame shoulder tenderly.

"Invisible? Ah, no, my good Watson. Just unnoticed. The man is obviously a recent convert to one of the new sects, such as that which recently came to us from Mrs. Eddy in the United States of North America. Christian Science, I believe they call it."

"Science!" I interposed sarcastically.

"Exactly. However, it was a conversion hardly likely to appeal to his wife, with her Romany background. What is more likely than that the gypsy girl probed among the deeper, darker secrets of her race to secure revenge upon the husband who had cast her aside? I seem to remember a similar case in Prague some years ago, when a jilted Romany woman secured a most horrible revenge upon a rival

by feeding her the spores of a new species of mushroom, developed to thrive only upon human detritus. Myriads of tiny mushrooms burst from the victim's scalp, from beneath the fingernails—"

"Holmes!" I cried, shocked to the marrow. "This is too much!"

"All the same," said Sherlock Holmes quietly, "I believe that a visit to the Red Rose teashop is indicated."

"I refuse to believe that such things can exist in this civilized world!" I insisted.

Holmes shrugged. He took up the flask again, carefully removed the wax stopper, and poured out the liquid into a basin. The odor of raw spirits filled the room. He took a pair of forceps and lifted out the blind, lifeless worm, laying it on a bit of newspaper.

"No doubt we should burn this unholy object at once," he said thoughtfully. "But I intend first to take it with me when we journey to Lambeth. Will you be good enough to go down to the corner and summon a hansom?"

"In this deluge?" I shook my head, sinking back comfortably into the velvet lining of the easy chair.

"Come, come, Watson! The game is afoot. It is not every day that we are confronted with a worm unknown to science."

I hesitated, savoring my expected triumph. "Forgive me, Holmes. If you wish to visit the lady fortune teller, my best wishes go with you. But I can see no reason for my accompanying you, nor for taking along that repulsive object on the table."

"Of course you do not see. You never do, until afterwards. But in this case . . ."

"In this case, Holmes, you are well off the target." I smiled, having waited for this moment ever since the day Holmes talked me into giving away Fusilier, my bull pup, on the grounds that the poor fellow snored. "As a matter of fact, it is perfectly clear that Mr. Persano was seized with a sudden intestinal attack while strolling down Oxford Street. Removed to Charing Cross Hospital, an emergency operation was found necessary, and the unhappy little man recovered consciousness alone and unattended, with the evidence of the operation exhibited beside his bed."

Holmes surveyed me coldly. "I fail to see what, if anything, you are driving at."

"Only this," I said. "The 'worm unknown to science' is unknown

only to *Christian Science*. That unpleasant object before you is nothing more than an infected vermiform appendix."

Sherlock Holmes hesitated, swallowed, and then a reluctant smile broke across his face. He extended a lean brown hand toward mine. "Apologies, Watson! I forgot for a moment that medicine and surgery are your chosen field, in which I have but dabbled. This is your triumph. What disposition do you care to make of the case?"

"I should suggest returning his appendix to Mr. Isadora Persano, together with a note explaining the truth of the situation."

Holmes nodded. "It shall be done. This matchbox should serve as an excellent container. And now, by the way, I think that a good dinner at Simpsons would not be out of place. A good dinner for you, I should say. For myself I intend to order a double serving of humble pie."

PART TWO:

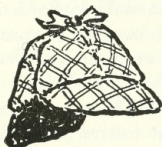
BY FAMOUS LITERARY FIGURES

"Perhaps no fiction character ever created has become so charmingly real to his readers . . . Holmes is pure anesthesia."

— CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

"Heaven forbid that anyone, with a hundred happy hours to be grateful for since boyhood, should ever undervalue the legend of Sherlock Holmes . . . the only real legend of our time."

— G. K. CHESTERTON



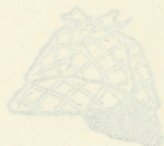
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THE ADVENTURE OF THE TWO COLLABORATORS

by SIR JAMES M. BARRIE

Here is Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's nomination for "the best of all the numerous parodies" of Sherlock Holmes. It first appeared in print as part of Chapter XI, "Sidelights on Sherlock Holmes," in Doyle's autobiography, MEMORIES AND ADVENTURES (London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1924; Boston, Little, Brown, 1924).

We can think of no better way of introducing this burlesque than to quote Doyle's own prefatory remarks: "Sir James Barrie paid his respects to Sherlock Holmes in a rollicking parody. It was really a gay gesture of resignation over the failure which we had encountered with a comic opera for which he undertook to write the libretto. I collaborated with him on this, but in spite of our joint efforts, the piece¹ fell flat. Whereupon Barrie sent me a parody on Holmes, written on the flyleaves of one of his books."

*As book collectors of the species *Fanaticus Americanus*, your Editors have always read those lines with infinite longing, with a surge of uncontrollable cupidity. Our collective heads have never failed to reel dizzily at the very thought of that book by Barrie, inscribed by the author, with a holograph manuscript of "The Adventure of the Two Collaborators" penned on the flyleaves.*

What a book to stand on our hungry shelves! What a price it would fetch at auction! What a first edition to gloat over, caress, boast about! We know at least six persons who would

¹ JANE ANNIE, OR THE GOOD CONDUCT PRIZE (music by Ernest Ford, book by J. M. Barrie and Conan Doyle) opened at the Savoy Theatre in London on May 13, 1893; although kept going for seven weeks, it was considered one of D'Oyly Carte's worst failures.

cheerfully commit anything up to and including murder to gain possession of that unique volume. But alas . . . here is truly "such stuff as dreams are made on . . ."

IN BRINGING to a close the adventures of my friend Sherlock Holmes I am perforce reminded that he never, save on the occasion which, as you will now hear, brought his singular career to an end, consented to act in any mystery which was concerned with persons who made a livelihood by their pen. "I am not particular about the people I mix among for business purposes," he would say, "but at literary characters I draw the line."

We were in our rooms in Baker Street one evening. I was (I remember) by the centre table writing out *The Adventure of the Man without a Cork Leg* (which had so puzzled the Royal Society and all the other scientific bodies of Europe), and Holmes was amusing himself with a little revolver practice. It was his custom of a summer evening to fire round my head, just shaving my face, until he had made a photograph of me on the opposite wall, and it is a slight proof of his skill that many of these portraits in pistol shots are considered admirable likenesses.

I happened to look out of the window, and perceiving two gentlemen advancing rapidly along Baker Street asked him who they were. He immediately lit his pipe, and, twisting himself on a chair into the figure 8, replied:

"They are two collaborators in comic opera, and their play has not been a triumph."

I sprang from my chair to the ceiling in amazement, and he then explained:

"My dear Watson, they are obviously men who follow some low calling. That much even you should be able to read in their faces. Those little pieces of blue paper which they fling angrily from them are Durrant's Press Notices. Of these they have obviously hundreds about their person (see how their pockets bulge). They would not dance on them if they were pleasant reading."

I again sprang to the ceiling (which is much dented), and shouted: "Amazing! But they may be mere authors."

"No," said Holmes, "for mere authors only get one press notice a week. Only criminals, dramatists and actors get them by the hundred."

"Then they may be actors."

"No, actors would come in a carriage."

"Can you tell me anything else about them?"

"A great deal. From the mud on the boots of the tall one I perceive that he comes from South Norwood. The other is as obviously a Scotch author."

"How can you tell that?"

"He is carrying in his pocket a book called (I clearly see) *Auld Licht Something*. Would anyone but the author be likely to carry about a book with such a title?"

I had to confess that this was improbable.

It was now evident that the two men (if such they can be called) were seeking our lodgings. I have said (often) that my friend Holmes seldom gave way to emotion of any kind, but he now turned livid with passion. Presently this gave place to a strange look of triumph.

"Watson," he said, "that big fellow has for years taken the credit for my most remarkable doings, but at last I have him — at last!"

Up I went to the ceiling, and when I returned the strangers were in the room.

"I perceive, gentlemen," said Mr. Sherlock Holmes, "that you are at present afflicted by an extraordinary novelty."

The handsomer of our visitors asked in amazement how he knew this, but the big one only scowled.

"You forget that you wear a ring on your fourth finger," replied Mr. Holmes calmly.

I was about to jump to the ceiling when the big brute interposed.

"That tommy-rot is all very well for the public, Holmes," said he, "but you can drop it before me. And, Watson, if you go up to the ceiling again I shall make you stay there."

Here I observed a curious phenomenon. My friend Sherlock Holmes *shrank*. He became small before my eyes. I looked longingly at the ceiling, but dared not.

"Let us cut the first four pages," said the big man, "and proceed to business. I want to know why —"

"Allow me," said Mr. Holmes, with some of his old courage. "You want to know why the public does not go to your opera."

"Exactly," said the other ironically, "as you perceive by my shirt stud." He added more gravely, "And as you can only find out in one way I must insist on your witnessing an entire performance of the piece."

It was an anxious moment for me. I shuddered, for I knew that if Holmes went I should have to go with him. But my friend had a heart of gold.

"Never," he cried fiercely, "I will do anything for you save that."

"Your continued existence depends on it," said the big man menacingly.

"I would rather melt into air," replied Holmes, proudly taking another chair. "But I can tell you why the public don't go to your piece without sitting the thing out myself."

"Why?"

"Because," replied Holmes calmly, "they prefer to stay away."

A dead silence followed that extraordinary remark. For a moment the two intruders gazed with awe upon the man who had unravelled their mystery so wonderfully. Then drawing their knives —

Holmes grew less and less, until nothing was left save a ring of smoke which slowly circled to the ceiling.

The last words of great men are often noteworthy. These were the last words of Sherlock Holmes: "Fool, fool! I have kept you in luxury for years. By my help you have ridden extensively in cabs, where no author was ever seen before. *Henceforth you will ride in buses!*"

The brute sunk into a chair aghast.

The other author did not turn a hair.

To A. Conan Doyle,
from his friend
J. M. Barrie

A DOUBLE-BARRELLED DETECTIVE STORY

by MARK TWAIN

It's amazing how often stories by Mark Twain, despite his Brobdingnagian reputation as a humorist, have been taken seriously. Mark Twain was responsible for some of the funniest literary hoaxes ever foisted on an unsuspecting public.

Consider his story of the Petrified Man of Gravelly Ford. In the original journalistic squib he started out by describing the scene in "patient belief-compelling detail" — the impressive solitude, the majesty of the figure, and so on. Quite casually he mentioned that the thumb of the Petrified Man's right hand rested "against the side of his nose." Then after more serious description, he observed that "the fingers of the right hand were spread apart." More dignified exposition, then the incidental remark that "the thumb of the left hand was hooked into the little finger of the right." Still more rambling about something else and by and by Mark Twain drifted back and commented that "the fingers of the left hand were spread out like those of the right."

It was so cleverly written that the great majority of readers completely missed the point (no pun intended); in fact, many people believed the hoax with such credulity that they actually looked for the Petrified Man in the region where Mark Twain, as a Nevada newspaper editor, claimed to have located it. Eventually it was "exalted to the grand chief place in the list of genuine marvels Nevada had produced."

In the same way Mark Twain's "A Double-Barrelled Detective Story" has been judged from much too serious a critical viewpoint. The simple truth is that this story was intended as an elaborate burlesque of detective fiction — that and no more. Of course some of the melodramatic passages are written so

dead-pan that it is difficult for the naive to detect the deception — a joke that always tickled Mark Twain hugely.

But now that you have been tipped off, you will enjoy with even greater relish such scenes as Sherlock Holmes being watched in the process of thinking — the special Sherlockian private brand of thinking, of course. Mark Twain's treatment is admittedly broad — but all the funnier when you realize that this is "gorjus" tongue-in-cheek tomfoolery.

Sherlock Holmes, affectionately called the "Extraordinary Man," makes his appearance in this slightly condensed version of "A Double-Barrelled Detective Story" just before the halfway mark. His true role in the murder investigation and in the events leading up to the tragedy is — to say the least — extraordinary.

CHAPTER I

THE FIRST scene is in the country, in Virginia; the time, 1880. There has been a wedding, between a handsome young man of slender means and a rich young girl — a case of love at first sight and a precipitate marriage; a marriage bitterly opposed by the girl's widowed father.

Jacob Fuller, the bridegroom, is twenty-six years old, is of an old but unconsidered family which had by compulsion emigrated from Sedgemoor, and for King James's purse's profit, so everybody said — some maliciously, the rest merely because they believed it. The bride is nineteen and beautiful. She is intense, high-strung, romantic, immeasurably proud of her Cavalier blood, and passionate in her love for her young husband. For its sake she braved her father's displeasure, endured his reproaches, listened with loyalty unshaken to his warning predictions, and went from his house without his blessing, proud and happy in the proofs she was thus giving of the quality of the affection which had made its home in her heart.

The morning after the marriage there was a sad surprise for her. Her husband put aside her proffered caresses, and said:

"Sit down. I have something to say to you. I loved you. That was

before I asked your father to give you to me. His refusal is not my grievance—I could have endured that. But the things he said of me to you—that is a different matter. There—you needn't speak; I know quite well what they were; I got them from authentic sources. Among other things he said that my character was written in my face; that I was treacherous, a dissembler, a coward, and a brute without sense of pity or compassion: the 'Sedgemoor trade-mark,' he called it—and 'white-sleeve badge.' Any other man in my place would have gone to his house and shot him down like a dog. I wanted to do it, and was minded to do it, but a better thought came to me: to put him to shame; to break his heart; to kill him by inches. How to do it? Through my treatment of you, his idol! I would marry you; and then—Have patience. You will see."

From that moment onward, for three months, the young wife suffered all the humiliations, all the insults, all the miseries that the diligent and inventive mind of the husband could contrive, save physical injuries only. Her strong pride stood by her, and she kept the secret of her troubles. Now and then the husband said, "Why don't you go to your father and tell him?" Then he invented new tortures, applied them, and asked again. She always answered, "He shall never know by my mouth," and taunted him with his origin; said she was the lawful slave of a scion of slaves, and must obey, and would—up to that point, but no further; he could kill her if he liked, but he could not break her; it was not in the Sedgemoor breed to do it. At the end of the three months he said, with a dark significance in his manner, "I have tried all things but one"—and waited for her reply. "Try that," she said, and curled her lip in mockery.

That night he rose at midnight and put on his clothes, then said to her:

"Get up and dress!"

She obeyed—as always, without a word. He led her half a mile from the house, and proceeded to lash her to a tree by the side of the public road; and succeeded, she screaming and struggling. He gagged her then, struck her across the face with his cowhide, and set his bloodhounds on her. They tore the clothes off her, and she was naked. He called the dogs off, and said:

"You will be found — by the passing public. They will be dropping along about three hours from now, and will spread the news — do you hear? Good-by. You have seen the last of me."

He went away then. She moaned to herself:

"I shall bear a child — to *him*! God grant it may be a boy!"

The farmers released her by and by — and spread the news, which was natural. They raised the country with lynching intentions, but the bird had flown. The young wife shut herself up in her father's house; he shut himself up with her, and thenceforth would see no one. His pride was broken, and his heart; so he wasted away, day by day, and even his daughter rejoiced when death relieved him.

Then she sold the estate and disappeared.

CHAPTER II

In 1886 a young woman was living in a modest house near a secluded New England village, with no company but a little boy about five years old. She did her own work, she discouraged acquaintanceships, and had none. The butcher, the baker, and the others who served her could tell the villagers nothing about her further than that her name was Stillman, and that she called the child Archy. Whence she came they had not been able to find out, but they said she talked like a Southerner. The child had no playmates and no comrade, and no teacher but the mother. She taught him diligently and intelligently, and was satisfied with the results — even a little proud of them. One day Archy said:

"Mamma, am I different from other children?"

"Well, I suppose not. Why?"

"There was a child going along out there and asked me if the postman had been by and I said yes, and she said how long since I saw him and I said I hadn't seen him at all, and she said how did I know he'd been by, then, and I said because I smelt his track on the sidewalk, and she said I was a dum fool and made a mouth at me. What did she do that for?"

The young woman turned white, and said to herself, "It's a birth-mark! The gift of the bloodhound is in him." She snatched the boy to her breast and hugged him passionately, saying, "God has appointed the way!" Her eyes were burning with a fierce light, and her breath came short and quick with excitement. She said to her-

self: "The puzzle is solved now; many a time it has been a mystery to me, the impossible things the child has done in the dark, but it is all clear to me now."

She set him in his small chair, and said:

"Wait a little till I come, dear; then we will talk about the matter."

She went up to her room and took from her dressing table several small articles and put them out of sight: a nail file on the floor under the bed; a pair of nail scissors under the bureau; a small ivory paper knife under the wardrobe. Then she returned, and said:

"There! I have left some things which I ought to have brought down." She named them, and said, "Run up and bring them, dear."

The child hurried away on his errand and was soon back again with the things.

"Did you have any difficulty, dear?"

"No, Mamma; I only went where you went."

During his absence she had stepped to the bookcase, taken several books from the bottom shelf, opened each, passed her hand over a page, noting its number in her memory, then restored them to their places. Now she said:

"I have been doing something while you have been gone, Archy. Do you think you can find out what it was?"

The boy went to the bookcase and got out the books that had been touched, and opened them at the pages which had been stroked.

The mother took him in her lap, and said:

"I will answer your question now, dear. I have found out that in one way you are quite different from other people. You can see in the dark, you can smell what other people cannot, you have the talents of a bloodhound. They are good and valuable things to have, but you must keep the matter a secret. If people found it out, they would speak of you as an odd child, a strange child, and children would be disagreeable to you, and give you nicknames. In this world one must be like everybody else if he doesn't want to provoke scorn or envy or jealousy. It is a great and fine distinction which has been born to you, and I am glad; but you will keep it a secret, for Mamma's sake, won't you?"

The child promised, without understanding.

All the rest of the day the mother's brain was busy with excited thinkings; with plans, projects, schemes, each and all of them un-

canny, grim, and dark. Yet they lit up her face; lit it with a fell light of their own; lit it with vague fires of hell. She was in a fever of unrest; she could not sit, stand, read, sew; there was no relief for her but in movement. She tested her boy's gift in twenty ways, and kept saying to herself all the time, with her mind in the past: "He broke my father's heart, and night and day all these years I have tried, and all in vain, to think out a way to break his. I have found it now — I have found it now."

When night fell, the demon of unrest still possessed her. She went on with her tests; with a candle she traversed the house from garret to cellar, hiding pins, needles, thimbles, spools, under pillows, under carpets, in cracks in the walls, under the coal in the bin; then sent the little fellow in the dark to find them; which he did, and was happy and proud when she praised him and smothered him with caresses.

From this time forward life took on a new complexion for her. She said, "The future is secure — I can wait, and enjoy the waiting." The most of her lost interests revived. She took up music again, and languages, drawing, painting, and the other long-discarded delights of her maidenhood. She was happy once more, and felt again the zest of life. As the years drifted by she watched the development of her boy, and was contented with it. Not altogether, but nearly that. The soft side of his heart was larger than the other side of it. It was his only defect, in her eyes. But she considered that his love for her and worship of her made up for it. He was a good hater — that was well; but it was a question if the materials of his hatreds were of as tough and enduring a quality as those of his friendships — and that was not so well.

The years drifted on. Archy was become a handsome, shapely, athletic youth, courteous, dignified, companionable, pleasant in his ways, and looking perhaps a trifle older than he was, which was sixteen. One evening his mother said she had something of grave importance to say to him, adding that he was old enough to hear it now, and old enough and possessed of character enough and stability enough to carry out a stern plan which she had been for years contriving and maturing. Then she told him her bitter story, in all its naked atrociousness. For a while the boy was paralyzed; then he said:

"I understand. We are Southerners; and by our custom and nature here is but one atonement. I will search him out and kill him."

"Kill him? No! Death is release, emancipation; death is a favor. Do I owe him favors? You must not hurt a hair of his head."

The boy was lost in thought awhile; then he said:

"You are all the world to me, and your desire is my law and my pleasure. Tell me what to do and I will do it."

The mother's eyes beamed with satisfaction, and she said:

"You will go and find him. I have known his hiding place for eleven years; it cost me five years and more of inquiry, and much money, to locate it. He is a quartz miner in Colorado, and well-to-do. He lives in Denver. His name is Jacob Fuller. There—it is the first time I have spoken it since that unforgettable night. Think! That name could have been yours if I had not saved you that shame and furnished you a cleaner one. You will drive him from that place; you will hunt him down and drive him again; and yet again, and again, and again, persistently, relentlessly, poisoning his life, filling it with mysterious terrors, loading it with weariness and misery, making him wish for death, and that he had a suicide's courage; you will make of him another Wandering Jew; he shall know no rest any more, no peace of mind, no placid sleep; you shall shadow him, cling to him, persecute him, till you break his heart, as he broke my father's and mine."

"I will obey, Mother."

"I believe it, my child. The preparations are all made; everything is ready. Here is a letter of credit; spend freely, there is no lack of money. At times you may need disguises. I have provided them; also some other conveniences." She took from the drawer of the typewriter table several squares of paper. They all bore these typewritten words:

\$10,000 REWARD

It is believed that a certain man who is wanted in an eastern state is sojourning here. In 1880, in the night, he tied his young wife to a tree by the public road, cut her across the face with a cowhide, and made his dogs tear her clothes from her, leaving her naked. He left her there, and fled the country. A blood relative of hers has searched for him for seventeen years. Address,, Post office. The above reward will be paid in cash to the person who

will furnish the seeker, in a personal interview, the criminal's address.

"When you have found him and acquainted yourself with his scent, you will go in the night and placard one of these upon the building he occupies, and another one upon the post office or in some other prominent place. It will be the talk of the region. At first you must give him several days in which to force a sale of his belongings at something approaching their value. We will ruin him by and by, but gradually; we must not impoverish him at once, for that could bring him to despair and injure his health, possibly kill him."

She took three or four more typewritten forms from the drawer — duplicates — and read one:

....., 18 ..

To Jacob Fuller:

You have days in which to settle your affairs. You will not be disturbed during that limit, which will expire at M., on the of You must then **MOVE ON**. If you are still in the place after the named hour, I will placard you on all the dead walls, detailing your crime once more, and adding the date, also the scene of it, with all names concerned, including your own. Have no fear of bodily injury — it will in no circumstances ever be inflicted upon you. You brought misery upon an old man, and ruined his life and broke his heart. What he suffered, you are to suffer.

"You will add no signature. He must receive this before he learns of the reward placard — before he rises in the morning — lest he lose his head and fly the place penniless."

"I shall not forget."

"You will need to use these forms only in the beginning — once may be enough. Afterward, when you are ready for him to vanish out of a place, see that he gets a copy of *this* form, which merely says:

MOVE ON. You have days.

"He will obey. That is sure."

CHAPTER III

Extracts from letters to the mother:

DENVER, April 3, 1897

I have now been living several days in the same hotel with Jacob Fuller. I have his scent; I could track him through ten divisions of infantry and find him. I have often been near him and heard him talk. He owns a good mine, and has a fair income from it; but he is not rich. He learned mining in a good way — by working at it for wages. He is a cheerful creature, and his forty-three years sit lightly upon him; he could pass for a younger man — say thirty-six or thirty-seven. He has never married again — passes himself off for a widower. He stands well, is liked, is popular, and has many friends. Even I feel a drawing toward him — the paternal blood in me making its claim. How blind and unreasoning and arbitrary are some of the laws of nature — the most of them, in fact! My task is become hard now — you realize it? you comprehend, and make allowances? — and the fire of it has cooled, more than I like to confess to myself. But I will carry it out. Even with the pleasure paled, the duty remains, and I will not spare him.

And for my help, a sharp resentment rises in me when I reflect that he who committed that odious crime is the only one who has not suffered by it. The lesson of it has manifestly reformed his character, and in the change he is happy. He, the guilty party, is absolved from all suffering; you, the innocent, are borne down with it. But be comforted — he shall harvest his share.

SILVER GULCH, May 19

I placarded Form No. 1 at midnight of April 3; an hour later I slipped Form No. 2 under his chamber door, notifying him to leave Denver at or before 11.50 the night of the 14th.

Some late bird of a reporter stole one of my placards, then hunted the town over and found the other one, and stole that. In this manner he accomplished what the profession call a "scoop" — that is, he got a valuable item, and saw to it that no other paper got it. And so his paper — the principal one in the town — had it in glaring type on the editorial page in the morning, followed by a Vesuvian opinion of our wretch a column long, which wound up by adding a thousand dollars to our reward on the *paper's* account! The journals out here know how to do the noble thing — when there's business in it.

At breakfast I occupied my usual seat — selected because it afforded a view of Papa Fuller's face, and was near enough for me to hear the talk that went on at his table. Seventy-five or a hundred people were in the room, and all discussing that item, and saying

they hoped the seeker would find that rascal and remove the pollution of his presence from the town — with a rail, or a bullet, or something.

When Fuller came in he had the Notice to Leave — folded up — in one hand, and the newspaper in the other; and it gave me more than half a pang to see him. His cheerfulness was all gone, and he looked old and pinched and ashy. And then — only think of the things he had to listen to! Mamma, he heard his own unsuspecting friends describe him with epithets and characterizations drawn from the very dictionaries and phrase books of Satan's own authorized editions down below. And more than that, he had to *agree* with the verdicts and applaud them. His applause tasted bitter in his mouth, though; he could not disguise that from me; and it was observable that his appetite was gone; he only nibbled; he couldn't eat. Finally a man said:

"It is quite likely that that relative is in the room and hearing what this town thinks of that unspeakable scoundrel. I hope so."

Ah, dear, it was pitiful the way Fuller winced, and glanced around scared! He couldn't endure any more, and got up and left.

During several days he gave out that he had bought a mine in Mexico, and wanted to sell out and go down there as soon as he could, and give the property his personal attention. He played his cards well; said he would take \$40,000 — a quarter in cash, the rest in safe notes; but that as he greatly needed money on account of his new purchase, he would diminish his terms for cash in full. He sold out for \$30,000. And then, what do you think he did? He asked for *greenbacks*, and took them, saying the man in Mexico was a New Englander, with a head full of crotchets, and preferred greenbacks to gold or drafts. People thought it queer, since a draft on New York could produce greenbacks quite conveniently. There was talk of this odd thing, but only for a day; that is as long as any topic lasts in Denver.

I was watching, all the time. As soon as the sale was completed and the money paid — which was on the 11th — I began to stick to Fuller's track without dropping it for a moment. That night — no, 12th, for it was a little past midnight — I tracked him to his room, which was four doors from mine in the same hall; then I went back and put on my muddy day-laborer disguise, darkened my complexion, and sat down in my room in the gloom, with a grip-sack handy, with a change in it, and my door ajar. For I suspected that the bird would take wing now. In half an hour an old woman passed by, carrying a grip: I caught the familiar whiff, and followed

with my grip, for it was Fuller. He left the hotel by a side entrance, and at the corner he turned up an unfrequented street and walked three blocks in a light rain and a heavy darkness, and got into a two-horse hack, which of course was waiting for him by appointment. I took a seat (uninvited) on the trunk platform behind, and we drove briskly off. We drove ten miles, and the hack stopped at a way station and was discharged. Fuller got out and took a seat on a barrow under the awning, as far as he could get from the light; I went inside, and watched the ticket office. Fuller bought no ticket; I bought none. Presently the train came along, and he boarded a car; I entered the same car at the other end, and came down the aisle and took the seat behind him. When he paid the conductor and named his objective point, I dropped back several seats, while the conductor was changing a bill, and when he came to me I paid to the same place — about a hundred miles westward.

From that time for a week on end he led me a dance. He traveled here and there and yonder — always on a general westward trend — but he was not a woman after the first day. He was a laborer, like myself, and wore bushy false whiskers. His outfit was perfect, and he could do the character without thinking about it, for he had served the trade for wages. His nearest friend could not have recognized him. At last he located himself here, the obscurest little mountain camp in Montana; he has a shanty, and goes out prospecting daily; is gone all day, and avoids society. I am living at a miner's boardinghouse, and it is an awful place: the bunks, the food, the dirt — everything.

We have been here four weeks, and in that time I have seen him but once; but every night I go over his track and post myself. As soon as he engaged a shanty here I went to a town fifty miles away and telegraphed that Denver hotel to keep my baggage till I should send for it. I need nothing here but a change of army shirts, and I brought that with me.

SILVER GULCH, JUNE 12

The Denver episode has never found its way here, I think. I know the most of the men in camp, and they have never referred to it, at least in my hearing. Fuller doubtless feels quite safe in these conditions. He has located a claim, two miles away, in an out-of-the-way place in the mountains; it promises very well, and he is working it diligently. Ah, but the change in him! He never smiles, and he keeps quite to himself, consorting with no one — he who was so fond of company and so cheery only two months ago. I have seen him pass-

ing along several times recently — drooping, forlorn, the spring gone from his step, a pathetic figure. He calls himself David Wilson.

I can trust him to remain here until we disturb him. Since you insist, I will banish him again, but I do not see how he can be unhappier than he already is. I will go back to Denver and treat myself to a little season of comfort, and edible food, and endurable beds, and bodily decency; then I will fetch my things, and notify poor Papa Wilson to move on.

DENVER, June 19

They miss him here. They all hope he is prospering in Mexico, and they do not say it just with their mouths, but out of their hearts. You know you can always tell. I am loitering here overlong, I confess it. But if you were in my place you would have charity for me. Yes, I know what you will say, and you are right: if I were in *your* place, and carried your scalding memories in my heart —

I will take the night train back tomorrow.

DENVER, June 20

God forgive us, Mother, we are hunting the *wrong man*! I have not slept any all night. I am now waiting, at dawn, for the *morning* train — and how the minutes drag, how they drag!

This Jacob Fuller is a *cousin* of the guilty one. How stupid we have been not to reflect that the guilty one would never again wear his own name after that fiendish deed! The Denver Fuller is four years younger than the other one; he came here a young widower in '79, aged twenty-one — a year before you were married; and the documents to prove it are innumerable. Last night I talked with familiar friends of his who have known him from the day of his arrival. I said nothing, but a few days from now I will land him in this town again, with the loss upon his mine made good; and there will be a banquet, and a torchlight procession, and there will not be any expense on anybody but me. Do you call this "gush"? I am only a boy, as you well know; it is my privilege. By and by I shall not be a boy any more.

SILVER GULCH, July 3

Mother, he is gone! Gone, and left no trace. The scent was cold when I came. Today I am out of bed for the first time since. I wish I were not a boy; then I could stand shocks better. They all think he went west. I start tonight, in a wagon — two or three hours of that, then I get a train. I don't know where I'm going, but I must go; to try to keep still would be torture.

Of course he has effaced himself with a new name and a disguise. This means that *I may have to search the whole globe to find him*. Indeed it is what I expect. Do you see, Mother? It is *I* that am the Wandering Jew. The irony of it! We arranged that for another.

Think of the difficulties! And there would be none if I only could advertise for him. But if there is any way to do it that would not frighten him, I have not been able to think it out, and I have tried till my brains are addled. "If the gentleman who lately bought a mine in Mexico and sold one in Denver will send his address to" (to whom, Mother!), "it will be explained to him that it was all a mistake; his forgiveness will be asked, and full reparation made for a loss which he sustained in a certain matter." Do you see? He would think it a trap. Well, anyone would. If I should say, "It is now known that he was not the man wanted, but another man — a man who once bore the same name, but discarded it for good reasons" — would that answer? But the Denver people would wake up then and say "Oho!" and they would remember about the suspicious greenbacks, and say, "Why did he run away if he wasn't the right man? — it is too thin." If I failed to find him he would be ruined there — there where there is no taint upon him now. You have a better head than mine. Help me.

I have one clue, and only one. I know his handwriting. If he puts his new false name upon a hotel register and does not disguise it too much, it will be valuable to me if I ever run across it.

SAN FRANCISCO, June 28, 1898

You already know how well I have searched the states from Colorado to the Pacific, and how nearly I came to getting him once. Well, I have had another close miss. It was here, yesterday. I struck his trail, *hot*, on the street, and followed it on a run to a cheap hotel. That was a costly mistake; a dog would have gone the other way. But I am only part dog, and can get very humanly stupid when excited. He had been stopping in that house ten days; I almost know, now, that he stops long nowhere, the past six or eight months, but is restless and has to keep moving. I understand that feeling! and I know what it is to feel it. He still uses the name he had registered when I came so near catching him nine months ago — "James Walker"; doubtless the same he adopted when he fled from Silver Gulch. An unpretending man, and has small taste for fancy names. I recognized the hand easily, through its slight disguise. A square man, and not good at shams and pretenses.

They said he was just gone, on a journey; left no address; didn't

say where he was going; looked frightened when asked to leave his address; had no baggage but a cheap valise; carried it off on foot — a “stingy old person, and not much loss to the house.” “*Old!*” I suppose he is, now. I hardly heard; I was there but a moment. I rushed along his trail, and it led me to a wharf. Mother, the smoke of the steamer he had taken was just fading out on the horizon! I should have saved half an hour if I had gone in the right direction at first. I could have taken a fast tug, and should have stood a chance of catching that vessel. She is bound for Melbourne.

HOPE CAÑON, CALIFORNIA, October 3, 1900

You have a right to complain. “A letter a year” is a paucity; I freely acknowledge it; but how can one write when there is nothing to write about but failures? No one can keep it up; it breaks the heart.

I told you — it seems ages ago, now — how I missed him at Melbourne, and then chased him all over Australasia for months on end.

Well, then, after that I followed him to India; almost *saw* him in Bombay; traced him all around — to Baroda, Rawal-Pindi, Lucknow, Lahore, Cawnpore, Allahabad, Calcutta, Madras — oh, everywhere; week after week, month after month, through the dust and swelter — always approximately on his track, sometimes close upon him, yet never catching him. And down to Ceylon, and then to — Never mind; by and by I will write it all out.

I chased him home to California, and down to Mexico, and back again to California. Since then I have been hunting him about the state from the first of last January down to a month ago. I feel almost sure he is not far from Hope Cañon; I traced him to a point thirty miles from here, but there I lost the trail; someone gave him a lift in a wagon, I suppose.

I am taking a rest, now — modified by searchings for the lost trail. I was tired to death, Mother, and low-spirited, and sometimes coming uncomfortably near to losing hope; but the miners in this little camp are good fellows, and I am used to their sort this long time back; and their breezy ways freshen a person up and make him forget his troubles. I have been here a month. I am cabining with a young fellow named “Sammy” Hillyer, about twenty-five, the only son of his mother — like me — and loves her dearly, and writes to her every week — part of which is like me. He is a timid body, and in the matter of intellect — well, he cannot be depended upon to set a river on fire; but no matter, he is well liked; he is good and fine, and it is meat and bread and rest and luxury to sit and talk with him and have a comradeship again. I wish “James Walker” could

have it. He had friends; he liked company. That brings up that picture of him, the time that I saw him last. The pathos of it! It comes before me often and often. At that very time, poor thing, I was girding up my conscience to make him move on again!

Hillyer's heart is better than mine, better than anybody's in the community, I suppose, for he is the one friend of the black sheep of the camp — Flint Buckner — and the only man Flint ever talks with or allows to talk with him. He says he knows Flint's history, and that it is trouble that has made him what he is, and so one ought to be as charitable toward him as one can. Now none but a pretty large heart could find space to accommodate a lodger like Flint Buckner, from all I hear about him outside. I think that this one detail will give you a better idea of Sammy's character than any labored-out description I could furnish you of him. In one of our talks he said something about like this: "Flint is a kinsman of mine, and he pours out all his troubles to me — empties his breast from time to time, or I reckon it would burst. There couldn't be any unhappier man, Archy Stillman; his life had been made up of misery of mind — he isn't near as old as he looks. He has lost the feel of reposefulness and peace — oh, years and years ago! He doesn't know what good luck is — never has had any; often says he wishes he was in the other hell, he is so tired of this one."

CHAPTER IV

October is the time — 1900; Hope Cañon is the place, a silver-mining camp away down in the Esmeralda region. It is a secluded spot, high and remote; recent as to discovery; thought by its occupants to be rich in metal — a year or two's prospecting will decide that matter one way or the other. For inhabitants, the camp has about two hundred miners, one white woman and child, several Chinese washermen, five squaws, and a dozen vagrant buck Indians in rabbitskin robes, battered plug hats, and tin-can necklaces. There are no mills as yet; no church, no newspaper. The camp has existed but two years; it has made no big strike; the world is ignorant of its name and place.

On both sides of the cañon the mountains rise wall-like, three thousand feet, and the long spiral of straggling huts down in its narrow bottom gets a kiss from the sun only once a day, when he sails over at noon. The village is a couple of miles long; the cabins stand well apart from each other. The tavern is the only "frame"

house — the only house, one might say. It occupies a central position, and is the evening resort of the population. They drink there, and play seven-up and dominoes; also billiards, for there is a table, crossed all over with torn places repaired with court plaster; there are some cues, but no leathers; some chipped balls which clatter when they run, and do not slow up gradually, but stop suddenly and sit down; there is a part of a cube of chalk, with a projecting jag of flint in it; and the man who can score six on a single break can set up the drinks at the bar's expense.

Flint Buckner's cabin was the last one of the village, going south; his silver claim was at the other end of the village, northward, and a little beyond the last hut in that direction. He was a sour creature, unsociable, and had no companionships. People who had tried to get acquainted with him had regretted it and dropped him. His history was not known. Some believed that Sammy Hillyer knew it; others said no. If asked, Hillyer said no, he was not acquainted with it. Flint had a meek English youth of sixteen or seventeen with him, whom he treated roughly, both in public and in private; and of course this lad was applied to for information, but with no success. Fetlock Jones — name of the youth — said that Flint picked him up on a prospecting tramp, and as he had neither home nor friends in America, he had found it wise to stay and take Buckner's hard usage for the sake of the salary, which was bacon and beans. Further than this he could offer no testimony.

Fetlock had been in this slavery for a month now, and under his meek exterior he was slowly consuming to a cinder with the insults and humiliations which his master had put upon him. For the meek suffer bitterly from these hurts; more bitterly, perhaps, than do the manlier sort, who can burst out and get relief with words or blows when the limit of endurance has been reached. Goodhearted people wanted to help Fetlock out of his trouble, and tried to get him to leave Buckner; but the boy showed fright at the thought, and said he "dasn't." Pat Riley urged him, and said:

"You leave the damned hunks and come with me; don't you be afraid. I'll take care of *him*."

The boy thanked him with tears in his eyes, but shuddered and said he "dasn't risk it"; he said Flint would catch him alone, some-

time, in the night, and then — “Oh, it makes me sick, Mr. Riley, to think of it.”

Others said, “Run away from him; we’ll stake you; skip out for the coast some night.” But all these suggestions failed; he said Flint would hunt him down and fetch him back, just for meanness.

The people could not understand this. The boy’s miseries went steadily on, week after week. It is quite likely that the people would have understood if they had known how he was employing his spare time. He slept in an out-cabin near Flint’s; and there, nights, he nursed his bruises and his humiliations, and studied and studied over a single problem — how he could murder Flint Buckner and not be found out. It was the only joy he had in life; these hours were the only ones in the twenty-four which he looked forward to with eagerness and spent in happiness.

He thought of poison. No — that would not serve; the inquest would reveal where it was procured and who had procured it. He thought of a shot in the back in a lonely place when Flint would be homeward bound at midnight — his unvarying hour for the trip. No — somebody might be near, and catch him. He thought of stabbing him in his sleep. No — he might strike an inefficient blow, and Flint would seize him. He examined a hundred different ways — none of them would answer; for in even the very obscurest and secretest of them there was always the fatal defect of a *risk*, a chance, a possibility that he might be found out. He would have none of that.

But he was patient, endlessly patient. There was no hurry, he said to himself. He would never leave Flint till he left him a corpse; there was no hurry — he would find the way. It was somewhere, and he would endure shame and pain and misery until he found it. Yes, somewhere there was a way which would leave not a trace, not even the faintest clue to the murderer — there was no hurry — he would find that way, and then — oh, then, it would just be good to be alive! Meantime he would diligently keep up his reputation for meekness; and also, as always theretofore, he would allow no one to hear him say a resentful or offensive thing about his oppressor.

Two days before the before-mentioned October morning Flint had bought some things, and he and Fetlock had brought them home to Flint’s cabin: a fresh box of candles, which they put in the corner;

a tin can of blasting powder, which they placed upon the candle box; a keg of blasting powder, which they placed under Flint's bunk; a huge coil of fuse, which they hung on a peg. Fetlock reasoned that Flint's mining operations had outgrown the pick, and that blasting was about to begin now. He had seen blasting done, and he had a notion of the process, but he had never helped in it. His conjecture was right — blasting time had come. In the morning the pair carried fuse, drills, and the powder can to the shaft; it was now eight feet deep, and to get into it and out of it a short ladder was used. They descended, and by command Fetlock held the drill — without any instructions as to the right way to hold it — and Flint proceeded to strike. The sledge came down; the drill sprang out of Fetlock's hand, almost as a matter of course.

"You mangy son of a — , is that any way to hold a drill? Pick it up! Stand it up! There — hold fast. *I'll* teach you!"

At the end of an hour the drilling was finished.

"Now, then, charge it."

The boy started to pour in the powder.

"Idiot!"

A heavy bat on the jaw laid the lad out.

"Get up! You can't lie sniveling there. Now, then, stick in the fuse *first*. *Now* put in the powder. Hold on, hold on! Are you going to fill the hole *all* up? Of all the sap-headed milksops I — Put in some dirt! Put in some gravel! Tamp it down! Hold on, hold on! Oh, great Scott! Get out of the way!" He snatched the iron and tamped the charge himself, meantime cursing and blaspheming like a fiend. Then he fired the fuse, climbed out of the shaft, and ran fifty yards away, Fetlock following. They stood waiting a few minutes, then a great volume of smoke and rocks burst high into the air with a thunderous explosion; after a little there was a shower of descending stones; then all was serene again.

"I wish to God you'd been in it!" remarked the master.

They went down the shaft, cleaned it out, drilled another hole, and put in another charge.

"Look here! How much fuse are you proposing to waste? Don't you know how to time a fuse?"

"No, sir."

"You *don't*! Well, if you don't beat anything *I* ever saw!"

He climbed out of the shaft and spoke down:

"Well, idiot, are you going to be all day? Cut the fuse and light it!"

The trembling creature began:

"If you please, sir, I —"

"You talk back to *me*? Cut it and light it!"

The boy cut and lit.

"Ger-reat Scott! A one-minute fuse! I wish you were in . . ."

In his rage he snatched the ladder out of the shaft and ran. The boy was aghast.

"Oh, my God! Help! Help! Save me!" he implored.

He backed against the wall as tightly as he could; the sputtering fuse frightened the voice out of him; his breath stood still; he stood gazing and impotent; in two seconds, three seconds, four he would be flying toward the sky torn to fragments. Then he had an inspiration. He sprang at the fuse; severed the inch of it that was left above ground, and was saved.

He sank down limp and half lifeless with fright, his strength gone; but he muttered with a deep joy:

"He has learnt me! I knew there was a way, if I would wait."

After a matter of five minutes Buckner stole to the shaft, looking worried and uneasy, and peered down into it. He took in the situation; he saw what had happened. He lowered the ladder, and the boy dragged himself weakly up it. He was very white. His appearance added something to Buckner's uncomfortable state, and he said, with a show of regret and sympathy which sat upon him awkwardly from lack of practice:

"It was an accident, you know. Don't say anything about it to anybody; I was excited, and didn't notice what I was doing. You're not looking well; you've worked enough for today; go down to my cabin and eat what you want, and rest. It's just an accident, you know, on account of my being excited."

"It scared me," said the lad, as he started away, "but I learnt something, so I don't mind it."

"Damned easy to please!" muttered Buckner, following him with his eye. "I wonder if he'll tell. Mightn't he? . . . I wish it *had* killed him."

The boy took no advantage of his holiday in the matter of resting; he employed it in work, eager and feverish and happy work. A

thick growth of chaparral extended down the mountainside clear to Flint's cabin; the most of Fetlock's labor was done in the dark intricacies of that stubborn growth; the rest of it was done in his own shanty. At last all was complete, and he said:

"If he's got any suspicions that I'm going to tell on him, he won't keep them long, tomorrow. He will see that I am the same milksop as I always was — all day and the next. And the day after tomorrow night there'll be an end of him; nobody will ever guess who finished him up nor how it was done. He dropped me the idea his own self, and that's odd."

CHAPTER V

Two afternoons later the village was electrified with an immense sensation. A grave and dignified foreigner of distinguished bearing and appearance had arrived at the tavern, and entered this formidable name upon the register:

Sherlock Holmes

The news buzzed from cabin to cabin, from claim to claim; tools were dropped, and the town swarmed toward the center of interest. A man passing out at the northern end of the village shouted it to Pat Riley, whose claim was the next one to Flint Buckner's. At that time Fetlock Jones seemed to turn sick. He muttered to himself:

"Uncle *Sherlock*! The mean luck of it! — that *he* should come just when . . ." He dropped into a reverie, and presently said to himself: "But what's the use of being afraid of *him*? Anybody that knows him the way I do knows he can't detect a crime except where he plans it all out beforehand and arranges the clues and hires some fellow to commit it according to instructions. . . . Now there ain't going to *be* any clues this time — so, what show has he got? None at all. No, sir; everything's ready. If I was to risk putting it off — No, I won't run any risk like that. Flint Buckner goes out of this world tonight, for sure." Then another trouble presented itself. "Uncle *Sherlock*'ll be wanting to talk home matters with me this evening, and how am I going to get rid of him, for I've *got* to be at my cabin for a minute or two about eight o'clock?" This was an awkward matter, and cost him much thought. But he found a way to beat the difficulty. "We'll go for a walk, and I'll leave him in the road a

minute, so that he won't see what it is I do; the best way to throw a detective off the track, anyway, is to have him along when you are preparing the thing. Yes, that's the safest — I'll take him with me."

Meantime the road in front of the tavern was blocked with villagers waiting and hoping for a glimpse of the great man. But he kept his room, and did not appear. None but Wells-Fargo's man, Ferguson, Jake Parker the blacksmith, and Ham Sandwich the miner had any luck. These enthusiastic admirers of the great scientific detective hired the tavern's detained-baggage lockup, which looked into the detective's room across a little alleyway ten or twelve feet wide, ambushed themselves in it, and cut some peepholes in the window blind. Mr. Holmes's blinds were down; but by and by he raised them. It gave the spies a hair-lifting but pleasurable thrill to find themselves face to face with the Extraordinary Man who had filled the world with the fame of his more than human ingenuities. There he sat — not a myth, not a shadow, but real, alive, compact of substance, and almost within touching distance with the hand.

"Look at that head!" said Ferguson, in an awed voice. "By gracious, *that's* a head!"

"You bet!" said the blacksmith, with deep reverence. "Look at his nose! Look at his eyes! Intellect? Just a battery of it!"

"And that paleness," said Ham Sandwich. "Comes from thought — that's what it comes from. Hell! Duffers like us don't know what real thought *is*."

"No more we don't," said Ferguson. "What we take for thinking is just blubber and slush."

"Right you are, Wells-Fargo. And look at that frown — that's *deep* thinking — away down, down, forty fathom into the bowels of things. He's on the track of something."

"Well, he is, and don't you forget it. Say — look at that awful gravity — look at that pallid solemnness — there ain't any corpse can lay over it."

"No, sir, not for dollars! And it's his'n by hereditary rights, too; he's been dead four times a'ready, and there's history for it. Three times natural, once by accident. I've heard say he smells damp and cold, like a grave. And he —"

"Sh! Watch him! There — he's got his thumb on the bump on the near corner of his forehead, and his forefinger on the off one.

His think-works is just a *grinding* now, you bet your other shirt."

"That's so. And now he's gazing up toward heaven and stroking his mustache slow, and —"

"Now he has rose up standing, and is putting his clues together on his left fingers with his right finger. See? He touches the forefinger — now middle finger — now ring finger —"

"Stuck!"

"Look at him scowl! He can't seem to make out *that* clue. So he —"

"See him smile — like a tiger — and tally off the other fingers like nothing! He's got it, boys; he's got it sure!"

"Well, I should *say*! I'd hate to be in that man's place that he's after."

Mr. Holmes drew a table to the window, sat down with his back to the spies, and proceeded to write. The spies withdrew their eyes from the peepholes, lit their pipes, and settled themselves for a comfortable smoke and talk. Ferguson said, with conviction:

"Boys, it's no use talking, he's a wonder! He's got the signs of it all over him."

"You hain't ever said a truer word than that, Wells-Fargo," said Jake Parker.

Ferguson sat silently, then he murmured, with a deep awe in his voice:

"I wonder if God made him."

There was no response for a moment; then Ham Sandwich said, reverently:

"Not all at one time, I reckon."

CHAPTER VI

At eight o'clock that evening two persons were groping their way past Flint Buckner's cabin in the frosty gloom. They were Sherlock Holmes and his nephew.

"Stop here in the road a moment, Uncle," said Fetlock, "while I run to my cabin; I won't be gone a minute."

He asked for something — the uncle furnished it — then he disappeared in the darkness, but soon returned, and the talking walk was resumed. By nine o'clock they had wandered back to the tavern. They worked their way through the billiard room, where a crowd had gathered in the hope of getting a glimpse of the Extraordinary Man.

A royal cheer was raised. Mr. Holmes acknowledged the compliment with a series of courtly bows, and as he was passing out his nephew said to the assemblage:

"Uncle Sherlock's got some work to do, gentlemen, that'll keep him till twelve or one; but he'll be down again then, or earlier if he can, and hopes some of you'll be left to take a drink with him."

"By George, he's just a duke, boys! Three cheers for Sherlock Holmes, the greatest man that ever lived!" shouted Ferguson. "Hip, hip, hip —"

"Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah! Tiger!"

The uproar shook the building, so hearty was the feeling the boys put into their welcome. Upstairs the uncle reproached the nephew gently, saying:

"What did you get me into that engagement for?"

"I reckon you don't want to be unpopular, do you, Uncle? Well, then, don't you put on any exclusiveness in a mining camp, that's all. The boys admire you; but if you was to leave without taking a drink with them, they'd set you down for a snob. And besides, you said you had home talk enough in stock to keep us up and at it half the night."

The boy was right, and wise — the uncle acknowledged it. The boy was wise in another detail which he did not mention — except to himself: "Uncle and the others will come handy — in the way of nailing an *alibi* where it can't be budged."

He and his uncle talked diligently about three hours. Then, about midnight, Fetlock stepped downstairs and took a position in the dark a dozen steps from the tavern, and waited. Five minutes later Flint Buckner came rocking out of the billiard room and almost brushed him as he passed.

"I've got him!" muttered the boy. He continued to himself, looking after the shadowy form: "Good-by — good-by for good, Flint Buckner; you called my mother a — well, never mind what: it's all right, now; you're taking your last walk, friend."

He went musing back into the tavern. "From now till one is an hour. We'll spend it with the boys: it's good for the *alibi*."

He brought Sherlock Holmes to the billiard room, which was jammed with eager and admiring miners; the guest called the drinks, and the fun began. Everybody was happy; everybody was compli-

mentary; the ice was soon broken, songs, anecdotes, and more drinks followed, and the pregnant minutes flew. At six minutes to one, when the jollity was at its highest —

Boom!

There was silence instantly. The deep sound came rolling and rumbling from peak to peak up the gorge, then died down, and ceased. The spell broke, then, and the men made a rush for the door, saying:

"Something's blown up!"

Outside, a voice in the darkness said, "It's away down the gorge; I saw the flash."

The crowd poured down the cañon — Holmes, Fetlock, Archy Stillman, everybody. They made the mile in a few minutes. By the light of a lantern they found the smooth and solid dirt floor of Flint Buckner's cabin; of the cabin itself not a vestige remained, not a rag nor a splinter. Nor any sign of Flint. Search parties sought here and there and yonder, and presently a cry went up.

"Here he is!"

It was true. Fifty yards down the gulch they had found him — that is, they had found a crushed and lifeless mass which represented him. Fetlock Jones hurried thither with the others and looked.

The inquest was a fifteen-minute affair. Ham Sandwich, foreman of the jury, handed up the verdict, which was phrased with a certain unstudied literary grace, and closed with this finding, to wit: that "deceased came to his death by his own act or some other person or persons unknown to this jury not leaving any family or similar effects behind but his cabin which was blown away and God have mercy on his soul amen."

Then the impatient jury rejoined the main crowd, for the storm-center of interest was there — Sherlock Holmes. The miners stood silent and reverent in a half-circle, inclosing a large vacant space which included the front exposure of the site of the late premises. In this considerable space the Extraordinary Man was moving about, attended by his nephew with a lantern. With a tape he took measurements of the cabin site; of the distance from the wall of chaparral to the road; of the height of the chaparral bushes; also various other measurements. He gathered a rag here, a splinter there, and a pinch of earth yonder, inspected them profoundly, and preserved them. He

took the "lay" of the place with a pocket-compass, allowing two seconds for magnetic variation. He took the time (Pacific) by his watch, correcting it for local time. He paced off the distance from the cabin site to the corpse, and corrected that for tidal differentiation. He took the altitude with a pocket aneroid, and the temperature with a pocket thermometer. Finally he said, with a stately bow:

"It is finished. Shall we return, gentlemen?"

He took up the line of march for the tavern, and the crowd fell into his wake, earnestly discussing and admiring the Extraordinary Man, and interlarding guesses as to the origin of the tragedy and who the author of it might be.

"My, but it's grand luck having him here—hey, boys?" said Ferguson.

"It's the biggest thing of the century," said Ham Sandwich. "It'll go all over the world; you mark my words."

"*You* bet!" said Jake Parker, the blacksmith. "It'll boom this camp. Ain't it so, Wells-Fargo?"

"Well, as you want my opinion—if it's any sign of how *I* think about it, I can tell you this: yesterday I was holding the Straight Flush claim at two dollars a foot; I'd like to see the man that can get it at sixteen today."

"Right you are, Wells-Fargo! It's the grandest luck a new camp ever struck. Say, did you see him collar them little rags and dirt and things? What an eye! He just can't overlook a clue—'tain't *in* him."

"That's so. And they wouldn't mean a thing to anybody else; but to him, why, they're just a book—large print at that."

"Sure's you're born! Them odds and ends have got their little old secret, and they think there ain't anybody can pull it; but, land! when he sets his grip there they've got to squeal, and don't you forget it."

"Say, boys, who do you reckon done it?"

That was a difficult question, and brought out a world of unsatisfying conjecture. Various men were mentioned as possibilities, but one by one they were discarded as not being eligible. No one but young Hillyer had been intimate with Flint Buckner; no one had really had a quarrel with him; he had affronted every man who had tried to make up to him, although not quite offensively enough to require bloodshed. There was one name that was upon every tongue

from the start, but it was the last to get utterance — Fetlock Jones's. It was Pat Riley that mentioned it.

"Oh, well," the boys said, "of course we've all thought of him, because he had a million rights to kill Flint Buckner, and it was just his plain duty to do it. But all the same there's two things we can't get around: for one thing, he hasn't got the sand; and for another, he wasn't anywhere near the place when it happened."

"I know it," said Pat. "He was there in the billiard room with us when it happened."

"Yes, and was there all the time for an hour *before* it happened."

"It's so. And lucky for him, too. He'd have been suspected in a minute if it hadn't been for that."

CHAPTER VII

The tavern dining room had been cleared of all its furniture save one six-foot pine table and a chair. This table was against one end of the room; the chair was on it; Sherlock Holmes, stately, imposing, impressive, sat in the chair. The public stood. The room was full. The tobacco smoke was dense, the stillness profound.

The Extraordinary Man raised his hand to command additional silence; held it in the air a few moments; then, in brief, crisp terms he put forward question after question, and noted the answers with "Um-ums," nods of the head, and so on. By this process he learned all about Flint Buckner, his character, conduct, and habits, that the people were able to tell him. It thus transpired that the Extraordinary Man's nephew was the only person in the camp who had a killing-grudge against Flint Buckner. Mr. Holmes smiled compassionately upon the witness, and asked, languidly:

"Do any of you gentlemen chance to know where the lad Fetlock Jones was at the time of the explosion?"

A thunderous response followed:

"In the billiard room of this house!"

"Ah. And had he just come in?"

"Been there all of an hour!"

"Ah. It is about — about — well, about how far might it be to the scene of the explosion?"

"All of a mile!"

"Ah. It isn't *much* of an alibi, 'tis true, but —"

A storm-burst of laughter, mingled with shouts of "By Jimminy, but he's chain lightning!" and "Ain't you sorry you spoke, Sandy?" shut off the rest of the sentence, and the crushed witness drooped his blushing face in pathetic shame. The inquisitor resumed:

"The lad Jones's somewhat *distant* connection with the case" (*laughter*) "having been disposed of, let us now call the *eye-witnesses* of the tragedy, and listen to what they have to say."

He got out his fragmentary clues and arranged them on a sheet of cardboard on his knee. The house held its breath and watched.

"We have the longitude and the latitude, corrected for magnetic variation, and this gives us the exact location of the tragedy. We have the altitude, the temperature, and the degree of humidity prevailing — inestimably valuable, since they enable us to estimate with precision the degree of influence which they would exercise upon the mood and disposition of the assassin at that time of the night."

(*Buzz of admiration; muttered remark, "By George, but he's deep!"*) He fingered his clues. "And now let us ask these mute witnesses to speak to us.

"Here we have an empty linen shot-bag. What is its message? This: that robbery was the motive, not revenge. What is its further message? This: that the assassin was of inferior intelligence — shall we say light-witted, or perhaps approaching that? How do we know this? Because a person of sound intelligence would not have proposed to rob the man Buckner, who never had much money with him. But the assassin might have been a stranger? Let the bag speak again. I take from it this article. It is a bit of silver-bearing quartz. It is peculiar. Examine it, please — you — and you — and you. Now pass it back, please. There is but one lode on this coast which produces just that character and color of quartz; and that is a lode which crops out for nearly two miles on a stretch, and in my opinion is destined, at no distant day, to confer upon its locality a globe-girdling celebrity, and upon its two hundred owners riches beyond the dreams of avarice. Name that lode, please."

"The Consolidated Christian Science and Mary Ann!" was the prompt response.

A wild crash of hurrahs followed, and every man reached for his

neighbor's hand and wrung it, with tears in his eyes; and Wells-Fargo Ferguson shouted, "The Straight Flush is on the lode, and up she goes to a hundred and fifty a foot — you hear *me!*"

When quiet fell, Mr. Holmes resumed:

"We perceive, then, that three facts are established, to wit: the assassin was approximately light-witted; he was not a stranger; his motive was robbery, not revenge. Let us proceed. I hold in my hand a small fragment of fuse, with the recent smell of fire upon it. What is its testimony? Taken with the corroborative evidence of the quartz, it reveals to us that the assassin was a miner. What does it tell us further? This, gentlemen: that the assassination was consummated by means of an explosive. What else does it say? This: that the explosive was located against the side of the cabin nearest the road — the front side — for within six feet of that spot I found it.

"I hold in my fingers a burnt Swedish match — the kind one rubs on a safety box. I found it in the road, six hundred and twenty-two feet from the abolished cabin. What does it say? This: that the train was fired from that point. What further does it tell us? This: that the assassin was left-handed. How do I know this? I should not be able to explain to you, gentlemen, how I know it, the signs being so subtle that only long experience and deep study can enable one to detect them. But the signs are here, and they are reinforced by a fact which you must have often noticed in the great detective narratives — that *all* assassins are left-handed."

"By Jackson, *that's* so!" said Ham Sandwich, bringing his great hand down with a resounding slap upon his thigh. "Blamed if I ever thought of it before."

"Nor I!" "Nor I!" cried several. "Oh, there can't anything escape *him* — look at his eye!"

"Gentlemen, distant as the murderer was from his doomed victim, he did not wholly escape injury. This fragment of wood which I now exhibit to you struck him. It drew blood. Wherever he is, he bears the telltale mark. I picked it up where he stood when he fired the fatal train." He looked out over the house from his high perch, and his countenance began to darken; he slowly raised his hand, and pointed:

"There stands the assassin!"

For a moment the house was paralyzed with amazement; then twenty voices burst out with:

"Sammy Hillyer? Oh, *hell*, no! *Him*? It's pure foolishness!"

"Take care, gentlemen — be not hasty. Observe — he has the blood-mark on his brow."

Hillyer turned white with fright. He was near to crying. He turned this way and that, appealing to every face for help and sympathy; and held out his supplicating hands toward Holmes and began to plead:

"*Don't*, oh, don't! I never did it; I give my word I never did it. The way I got this hurt on my forehead was —"

"Arrest him, Constable!" cried Holmes. "I will swear out the warrant."

The constable moved reluctantly forward — hesitated — stopped. Hillyer broke out with another appeal. "Oh, Archy, don't let them do it; it would kill Mother! *You* know how I got the hurt. Tell them, and save me, Archy; save me!"

Stillman worked his way to the front, and said:

"Yes, I'll save you. Don't be afraid." Then he said to the house, "Never mind how he got the hurt; it hasn't anything to do with this case, and isn't of any consequence."

"God bless you, Archy, for a true friend!"

"Hurrah for Archy! Go in, boy, and play 'em a knock-down flush to their two pair 'n' a jack!" shouted the house, pride in their home talent and a patriotic sentiment of loyalty to it rising suddenly in the public heart and changing the whole attitude of the situation.

Young Stillman waited for the noise to cease; then he said:

"I will ask Tom Jeffries to stand by that door yonder, and Constable Harris to stand by the other one here, and not let anybody leave the room."

"Said and done. Go on, old man!"

"The criminal is present, I believe. I will show him to you before long, in case I am right in my guess. Now I will tell you all about the tragedy, from start to finish. The motive *wasn't* robbery; it was revenge. The murderer *wasn't* light-witted. He *didn't* stand six hundred and twenty-two feet away. He *didn't* get hit with a piece of wood. He *didn't* place the explosive against the cabin. He *didn't* bring a shot-bag with him, and he *wasn't* left-handed. With the

exception of these errors, the distinguished guest's statement of the case is substantially correct."

A comfortable laugh rippled over the house; friend nodded to friend, as much as to say, "That's the word, with the bark *on* it. Good lad, good boy. *He* ain't lowering his flag any!"

The guest's serenity was not disturbed. Stillman resumed:

"I also have some witnesses; and I will presently tell you where you can find some more." He held up a piece of coarse wire; the crowd craned their necks to see. "It has a smooth coating of melted tallow on it. And here is a candle which is burned halfway down. The remaining half of it has marks cut upon it an inch apart. Soon I will tell you where I found these things. I will now put aside reasonings, guesses, the impressive hitchings of odds and ends of clues together, and the other showy theatricals of the detective trade, and tell you in a plain, straightforward way just how this dismal thing happened."

He paused a moment, for effect — to allow silence and suspense to intensify and concentrate the house's interest; then he went on:

"The assassin studied out his plan with a good deal of pains. It was a good plan, very ingenious, and showed an intelligent mind, not a feeble one. It was a plan which was well calculated to ward off all suspicion from its inventor. In the first place, he marked a candle into spaces an inch apart, and lit it and timed it. He found it took three hours to burn four inches of it. I tried it myself for half an hour, awhile ago, upstairs here, while the inquiry into Flint Buckner's character and ways was being conducted in this room, and I arrived in that way at the rate of a candle's consumption when sheltered from the wind. Having proved his trial candle's rate, he blew it out — I have already shown it to you — and put his inch marks on a fresh one.

"He put the fresh one into a tin candlestick. Then at the five-hour mark he bored a hole through the candle with a red-hot wire. I have already shown you the wire, with a smooth coat of tallow on it — tallow that had been melted and had cooled.

"With labor — very hard labor, I should say — he struggled up through the stiff chaparral that clothes the steep hillside back of Flint Buckner's place, tugging an empty flour barrel with him. He placed it in that absolutely secure hiding place, and in the bottom

of it he set the candlestick. Then he measured off about thirty-five feet of fuse — the barrel's distance from the back of the cabin. He bored a hole in the side of the barrel — here is the large gimlet he did it with. He went on and finished his work; and when it was done, one end of the fuse was in Buckner's cabin, and the other end, with a notch chipped in it to expose the powder, was in the hole in the candle — timed to blow the place up at one o'clock this morning, provided the candle was lit about eight o'clock yesterday evening — which I am betting it was — and provided there was an explosive in the cabin and connected with that end of the fuse — which I am also betting there was, though I can't prove it. Boys, the barrel is there in the chaparral, the candle's remains are in it in the tin stick; the burnt-out fuse is in the gimlet hole, the other end is down the hill where the late cabin stood. I saw them all an hour or two ago, when the professor here was measuring off unimplicated vacancies and collecting relics that hadn't anything to do with the case."

He paused. The house drew a long, deep breath, shook its strained cords and muscles free and burst into cheers. "Dang him!" said Ham Sandwich, "that's why he was snooping around in the chaparral, instead of picking up points out of the p'fessor's game. Looky here — *he* ain't no fool, boys."

"No, sir! Why, great Scott —"

But Stillman was resuming:

"While we were out yonder an hour or two ago, the owner of the gimlet and the trial candle took them from a place where he had concealed them — it was not a good place — and carried them to what he probably thought was a better one, two hundred yards up in the pinewoods, and hid them there, covering them over with pine needles. It was there that I found them. The gimlet exactly fits the hole in the barrel. And now —"

The Extraordinary Man interrupted him. He said, sarcastically: "We have had a very pretty fairy tale, gentlemen — very pretty indeed. Now I would like to ask this young man a question or two."

Some of the boys winced, and Ferguson said.

"I'm afraid Archy's going to catch it now."

The others lost their smiles and sobered down. Mr. Holmes said:

"Let us proceed to examine into this fairy tale in a consecutive and orderly way — by geometrical progression, so to speak — linking

detail to detail in a steadily advancing and remorselessly consistent and unassailable march upon this tinsel toy fortress of error, the dream fabric of a callow imagination. To begin with, young sir, I desire to ask you but three questions at present — *at present*. Did I understand you to say it was your opinion that the supposititious candle was lighted at about eight o'clock yesterday evening?"

"Yes, sir — about eight."

"Could you say exactly eight?"

"Well, no, I couldn't be that exact."

"Um. If a person had been passing along there just about that time, he would have been almost sure to encounter that assassin, do you think?"

"Yes, I should think so."

"Thank you, that is all. For the present. I say, all *for the present*."

"Dern him! He's laying for Archy," said Ferguson.

"It's so," said Ham Sandwich. "I don't like the look of it."

Stillman said, glancing at the guest, "I was along there myself at half-past eight — no, about nine."

"In-deed? This is interesting — this is very interesting. Perhaps you encountered the assassin?"

"No, I encountered no one."

"Ah. Then — if you will excuse the remark — I do not quite see the relevancy of the information."

"It has none. At present. I say it has none — at present."

He paused. Presently he resumed: "I did not encounter the assassin, but I am on his track, I am sure, for I believe he is in this room. I will ask you all to pass one by one in front of me — here, where there is a good light — so that I can see your feet."

A buzz of excitement swept the place, and the march began, the guest looking on with an iron attempt at gravity which was not an unqualified success. Stillman stooped, shaded his eyes with his hand, and gazed down intently at each pair of feet as it passed. Fifty men tramped monotonously by — with no result. Sixty. Seventy. The thing was beginning to look absurd. The guest remarked, with suave irony:

"Assassins appear to be scarce this evening."

The house saw the humor of it, and refreshed itself with a cordial laugh. Ten or twelve more candidates tramped by — no, *danced* by,

with airy and ridiculous capers which convulsed the spectators — then suddenly Stillman put out his hand and said:

"This is the assassin!"

"Fetlock Jones, by the Great Sanhedrim!" roared the crowd; and at once let fly a pyrotechnic explosion and dazzle and confusion of stirring remarks inspired by the situation.

At the height of the turmoil the guest stretched out his hand, commanding peace. The authority of a great name and a great personality laid its mysterious compulsion upon the house, and it obeyed. Out of the panting calm which succeeded, the guest spoke, saying, with dignity and feeling:

"*This* is serious. It strikes at an innocent life. Innocent beyond suspicion! Innocent beyond peradventure! Hear me *prove* it; observe how simple a fact can brush out of existence this witless lie. Listen. My friends, that lad was never out of my sight yesterday evening at *any* time!"

It made a deep impression. Men turned their eyes upon Stillman with grave inquiry in them. His face brightened, and he said:

"I *knew* there was another one!" He stepped briskly to the table and glanced at the guest's feet, then up at his face, and said: "You were *with* him! You were not fifty steps from him when he lit the candle that by and by fired the powder!" (*Sensation.*) "And what is more, you furnished the matches yourself!"

Plainly the guest seemed hit; it looked so to the public. He opened his mouth to speak; the words did not come freely.

"This — er — this is insanity — this —"

Stillman pressed his evident advantage home. He held up a charred match.

"Here is one of them. I found it in the barrel — and there's *another* one there."

The guest found his voice at once.

"Yes — and put them there yourself!"

It was recognized a good shot. Stillman retorted:

"It is *wax* — a breed unknown to this camp. I am ready to be searched for the box. Are you?"

The guest was staggered this time — the dullest eye could see it. He fumbled with his hands; once or twice his lips moved, but the words did not come. The house waited and watched, in tense sus-

pense, the stillness adding effect to the situation. Presently Stillman said, gently:

"We are waiting for your decision."

There was silence again during several moments; then the guest answered, in a low voice:

"I refuse to be searched."

There was no noisy demonstration, but all about the house one voice after another muttered:

"That settles it! He's Archy's meat."

What to do now? Nobody seemed to know. It was an embarrassing situation for the moment — merely, of course, because matters had taken such a sudden and unexpected turn that these unpractised minds were not prepared for it, and had come to a standstill, like a stopped clock, under the shock. But after a little the machinery began to work again, tentatively, and by twos and threes the men put their heads together and privately buzzed over this and that and the other proposition. One of these propositions met with much favor; it was, to confer upon the assassin a vote of thanks for removing Flint Buckner, and let him go. But the cooler heads opposed it, pointing out that addled brains in the eastern states would pronounce it a scandal, and make no end of foolish noise about it. Finally the cool heads got the upper hand, and obtained general consent to a proposition of their own; their leader then called the house to order and stated it — to this effect: that Fetlock Jones be jailed and put upon trial.

The motion was carried. Apparently there was nothing further to do now, and the people were glad, for, privately, they were impatient to get out and rush to the scene of the tragedy, and see whether that barrel and the other things were really there or not.

But no — the breakup got a check. The surprises were not over yet. For a while Fetlock Jones had been silently sobbing, unnoticed in the absorbing excitements which had been following one another so persistently for some time; but when his arrest and trial were decreed, he broke out despairingly, and said:

"No! It's no use. I don't want any jail, I don't want any trial; I've had all the hard luck I want, and all the miseries. Hang me now, and let me out! It would all come out, anyway — there couldn't anything save me. He has told it all, just as if he'd been with me and seen it

—I don't know how he found out; and you'll find the barrel and things, and then I wouldn't have any chance any more. I killed him; and *you'd* have done it too, if he'd treated you like a dog, and you only a boy, and weak and poor, and not a friend to help you."

"And served him damned well right!" broke in Ham Sandwich. "Looky here, boys—"

From the constable: "Order! Order, gentlemen!"

A voice: "Did your uncle know what you was up to?"

"No, he didn't."

"Did he give you the matches, sure enough?"

"Yes, he did; but he didn't know what I wanted them for."

"When you was out on such a business as that, how did you venture to risk having him along—and him a *detective*? How's that?"

The boy hesitated, fumbled with his buttons in an embarrassed way, then said, shyly:

"I know about detectives, on account of having them in the family; and if you don't want them to find out about a thing, it's best to have them around when you do it."

The cyclone of laughter which greeted this naïve discharge of wisdom did not modify the poor little waif's embarrassment in any large degree.

CHAPTER VIII

From a letter to Mrs. Stillman, dated merely "Tuesday."

Fetlock Jones was put under lock and key in an unoccupied log cabin, and left there to await his trial. Constable Harris provided him with a couple of days' rations, instructed him to keep a good guard over himself, and promised to look in on him as soon as further supplies should be due.

Next morning a score of us went with Hillyer, out of friendship, and helped him bury his late relative, the unlamented Buckner, and I acted as first assistant pallbearer, Hillyer acting as chief. Just as we had finished our labors a ragged and melancholy stranger, carrying an old handbag, limped by with his head down, and I caught the scent I had chased around the globe! It was the odor of paradise to my perishing hope!

In a moment I was at his side and had laid a gentle hand upon his shoulder. He slumped to the ground as if a stroke of lightning had

withered him in his tracks; and as the boys came running he struggled to his knees and put up his pleading hands to me, and out of his chattering jaws he begged me to persecute him no more, and said:

"You have hunted me around the world, Sherlock Holmes, yet God is my witness I have never done any man harm!"

A glance at his wild eyes showed us that he was insane. That was my work, Mother! The tidings of your death can someday repeat the misery I felt in that moment, but nothing else can ever do it. The boys lifted him up, and gathered about him, and were full of pity of him, and said the gentlest and touchiest things to him, and said cheer up and don't be troubled, he was among friends now, and they would take care of him, and protect him, and hang any man that laid a hand on him. They are just like so many mothers, the rough mining-camp boys are, when you wake up the south side of their hearts; yes, and just like so many reckless and unreasoning children when you wake up the opposite of that muscle. They did everything they could think of to comfort him, but nothing succeeded until Wells-Fargo Ferguson, who is a clever strategist, said:

"If it's only Sherlock Holmes that's troubling you, you needn't worry any more."

"Why?" asked the forlorn lunatic, eagerly.

"Because he's dead again."

"Dead! Dead! Oh, don't trifle with a poor wreck like me. *Is* he dead? On honor, now — is he telling me true, boys?"

"True as you're standing there!" said Ham Sandwich, and they all backed up the statement in a body.

"They hung him in San Bernardino last week," added Ferguson, clinching the matter, "whilst he was searching around after you. Mistook him for another man. They're sorry, but they can't help it now."

"They're a-building him a monument," said Ham Sandwich, with the air of a person who had contributed to it, and knew.

"James Walker" drew a deep sigh — evidently a sigh of relief — and said nothing; but his eyes lost something of their wildness, his countenance cleared visibly, and its drawn look relaxed a little. We all went to our cabin, and the boys cooked him the best dinner the camp could furnish the materials for, and while they were about it Hillyer and I outfitted him from hat to shoe leather with new clothes of ours, and made a comely and presentable old gentleman of him. "Old" is the right word, and a pity, too: old by the droop of him, and the frost upon his hair, and the marks which sorrow and distress have left upon his face; though he is only in his prime in the

matter of years. While he ate, we smoked and chatted; and when he was finishing he found his voice at last, and of his own accord broke out with his personal history. I cannot furnish his exact words, but I will come as near it as I can.

THE "WRONG MAN'S" STORY

It happened like this: I was in Denver. I had been there many years; sometimes I remember how many, sometimes I don't — but it isn't any matter. All of a sudden I got a notice to leave, or I would be exposed for a horrible crime committed long before — years and years before — in the East.

I knew about that crime, but I was not the criminal; it was a cousin of mine of the same name. What should I better do? My head was all disordered by fear, and I didn't know. I was allowed very little time — only one day, I think it was. I would be ruined if I was published, and the people would lynch me, and not believe what I said. It is always the way with lynchings: when they find out it is a mistake they are sorry, but it is too late — the same as it was with Mr. Holmes, you see. So I said I would sell out and get money to live on, and run away until it blew over and I could come back with my proofs. Then I escaped in the night and went a long way off in the mountains somewhere, and lived disguised and had a false name.

I got more and more troubled and worried, and my troubles made me see spirits and hear voices, and I could not think straight and clear on any subject, but got confused and involved and had to give it up, because my head hurt so. It got to be worse and worse; more spirits and more voices. They were about me all the time; at first only in the night, then in the day too. They were always whispering around my bed and plotting against me, and it broke my sleep and kept me fagged out, because I got no good rest.

And then came the worst. One night the whispers said, "We'll never manage, because we can't *see* him, and so can't point him out to the people."

They sighed; then one said: "We must bring Sherlock Holmes. He can be here in twelve days."

They all agreed, and whispered and jibbered with joy. But my heart broke; for I had read about that man, and knew what it would be to have him upon my track, with his superhuman penetration and tireless energies.

The spirits went away to fetch him, and I got up at once in the middle of the night and fled away, carrying nothing but the hand-bag that had my money in it — thirty thousand dollars; two-thirds

of it are in the bag there yet. It was forty days before that man caught up on my track. I just escaped. From habit he had written his real name on a tavern register, but had scratched it out and written *Dagget Barclay* in the place of it. But fear gives you a watchful eye and keen, and I read the true name through the scratches, and fled like a deer.

He has hunted me all over this world for three years and a half — the Pacific states, Australasia, India — everywhere you can think of; then back to Mexico and up to California again, giving me hardly any rest; but that name on the registers always saved me, and what is left of me is alive yet. And I am *so* tired! A cruel time he has given me, yet I give you my honor I have never harmed him nor any man.

That was the end of the story, and it stirred those boys to blood heat, be sure of it. As for me — each word burnt a hole in me where it struck.

We voted that the old man should bunk with us, and be my guest and Hillyer's. I shall keep my own counsel, naturally; but as soon as he is well rested and nourished, I shall take him to Denver and rehabilitate his fortunes.

The boys gave the old fellow the bone-smashing goodfellowship handshake of the mines, and then scattered away to spread the news.

At dawn next morning Wells-Fargo Ferguson and Ham Sandwich called us softly out, and said, privately:

"That news about the way that old stranger has been treated has spread all around, and the camps are up. They are piling in from everywhere, and are going to lynch the p'fessor. Constable Harris is in a dead funk, and has telephoned the sheriff. Come along!"

We started on a run. The others were privileged to feel as they chose, but in my heart's privacy I hoped the sheriff would arrive in time; for I had small desire that Sherlock Holmes should hang for my deeds, as you can easily believe. I had heard a good deal about the sheriff, but for reassurance's sake I asked:

"Can he stop a mob?"

"Can *he* stop a mob! Can Jack *Fairfax* stop a mob! Well, I should smile! Ex-desperado — nineteen scalps on his string. Can *he*! Oh, I say!"

As we tore up the gulch, distant cries and shouts and yells rose faintly on the still air, and grew steadily in strength as we raced along. Roar after roar burst out, stronger and stronger, nearer and nearer; and at last, when we closed up upon the multitude massed

in the open area in front of the tavern, the crash of sound was deafening. Some brutal roughs from Daly's gorge had Holmes in their grip, and he was calmest man there; a contemptuous smile played about his lips, and if any fear of death was in his British heart, his iron personality was master of it and no sign of it was allowed to appear.

"Come to a vote, men!" This from one of the Daly gang, Shadbelly Higgins. "Quick! Is it hang, or shoot?"

"Neither!" shouted one of his comrades. "He'd be alive again in a week; burning's the only permanency for *him*."

The gangs from all the outlying camps burst out in a thunder crash of approval, and went struggling and surging toward the prisoner, and closed about him, shouting, "Fire! Fire's the ticket!" They dragged him to the horse post, backed him against it, chained him to it, and piled wood and pine cones around him waist-deep. Still the strong face did not blench, and still the scornful smile played about the thin lips.

"A match! Fetch a match!"

Shadbelly struck it, shaded it with his hand, stooped, and held it under a pine cone. A deep silence fell upon the mob. The cone caught, a tiny flame flickered about it a moment or two. I seemed to catch the sound of distant hoofs — it grew more distinct — still more and more distinct, more and more definite, but the absorbed crowd did not appear to notice it. The match went out. The man struck another, stooped, and again the flame rose; this time it took hold and began to spread — here and there men turned away their faces. The executioner stood with the charred match in his fingers, watching his work. The hoof-beats turned a projecting crag, and now they came thundering down upon us. Almost the next moment there was a shout:

"The sheriff!"

And straightway he came tearing into the midst, stood his horse almost on his hind feet, and said:

"Fall back, you gutter-snipes!"

He was obeyed. By all but the leader. He stood his ground, and his hand went to his revolver. The sheriff covered him promptly, and said:

"Drop your hand, you parlor desperado. Kick the fire away. Now unchain the stranger."

The parlor desperado obeyed. Then the sheriff made a speech; sitting his horse at martial ease, and not warming his words with any

touch of fire, but delivering them in a measured and deliberate way, and in a tone which harmonized with their character and made them impressively disrespectful.

"You're a nice lot — now ain't you? Just about eligible to travel with this bilk here — Shadbelly Higgins — this loud-mouthed sneak that shoots people in the back and calls himself a desperado. If there's anything I do particularly despise, it's a lynching mob; I've never seen one that had a man in it. It has to tally up a hundred against one before it can pump up pluck enough to tackle a sick tailor. It's made up of cowards, and so is the community that breeds it; and ninety-nine times out of a hundred the sheriff's another one." He paused — apparently to turn that last idea over in his mind and taste the juice of it — then he went on: "The sheriff that lets a mob take a prisoner away from him is the lowest-down coward there is. By the statistics there was a hundred and eighty-two of them drawing sneak pay in America last year. By the way it's going, pretty soon there'll be a new disease in the doctor-books — *sheriff complaint!*" That idea pleased him — anyone could see it. "People will say, 'Sheriff sick again?' 'Yes; got the same old thing.' And next there'll be a new title. People won't say, 'He's running for sheriff of Rapaho County,' for instance; they'll say, 'He's running for Coward of Rapaho.' Lord, the idea of a grown-up person being afraid of a lynch mob!"

He turned an eye on the captive, and said, "Stranger, who are you, and what have you been doing?"

"My name is Sherlock Holmes, and I have not been doing anything."

It was wonderful, the impression which the sound of that name made on the sheriff, notwithstanding he must have come posted. He spoke up with feeling, and said it was a blot on the country that a man whose marvelous exploits had filled the world with their fame and their ingenuity, and whose histories of them had won every reader's heart by the brilliancy and charm of their literary setting, should be visited under the Stars and Stripes by an outrage like this. He apologized in the name of the whole nation, and made Holmes a most handsome bow, and told Constable Harris to see him to his quarters, and hold himself personally responsible if he was molested again. Then he turned to the mob and said:

"Hunt your holes, you scum!" which they did; then he said: "Follow me, Shadbelly; I'll take care of your case myself. No — keep your pop-gun; whenever I see the day that I'll be afraid to have you behind me with that thing, it'll be time for me to join last year's

hundred and eighty-two"; and he rode off in a walk, Shadbelly following.

When we were on our way back to our cabin, toward breakfast time, we ran upon the news that Fetlock Jones had escaped from his lockup in the night and is gone! Nobody is sorry. Let his uncle track him out if he likes; it is in his line; the camp is not interested.

CHAPTER IX

Ten days later:

"James Walker" is all right in body now, and his mind shows improvement too. I start with him for Denver tomorrow morning.

NEXT NIGHT. BRIEF NOTE, MAILED AT A WAY STATION

As we were starting, this morning, Hillyer whispered to me: "Keep this news from Walker until you think it safe and not likely to disturb his mind and check his improvement: the ancient crime he spoke of was really committed — and by his cousin, as he said. *We buried the real criminal* the other day — the unhappiest man that has lived in a century — Flint Buckner. His real name was Jacob Fuller!" There, Mother, by help of me, an unwitting mourner, your husband and my father is in his grave. Let him rest.

THE STOLEN CIGAR CASE

by BRET HARTE

Bret Harte's famous burlesque, from CONDENSED NOVELS: Second Series (London, Chatto & Windus, 1902; Boston, Houghton, Mifflin, 1902), is one of the most devastating parodies ever perpetrated on The Great Man. Consider the opening two sentences: "I found Hemlock Jones in the old Brook Street lodgings, musing before the fire. With the freedom of an old friend I at once threw myself in my usual familiar attitude at his feet, and gently caressed his boot."

Bret Harte was a shrewd parodist. He was not content with mere exaggeration. He backboneed his satire with a novel plot-idea. For in this tale Hemlock Jones, The Great Detective, is himself the victim of a crime! Yes, "The Terror of Peculators" has himself been robbed!

But trust Hemlock to avenge his humiliated honor. Fearlessly Hemlock takes the matter in his own hands and, as the narrator points out so irrefutably, "Where could you find better?" After all, Hemlock Jones represents the "absolute concatenation of inductive and deductive ratiocination."

The Editors wish to call your attention to a critical facet of this parody which, so far as your Editors know, has never before been exposed. It will come as a great shock to some of you. In 1926 Agatha Christie created a furore, among addicts and dabblers alike, when she unmasked the murderer of Roger Ackroyd as the most least-likely of all least-likely suspects. But Bret Harte, through the "superhuman insight" of Hemlock Jones, anticipated Miss Christie's exact device by no less than twenty-four years!

There are differences and discrepancies, of course, but in the spirit of good fun your Editors are prepared to defend the basic accuracy of this "revelation."

I FOUND HEMLOCK JONES in the old Brook Street lodgings, musing before the fire. With the freedom of an old friend I at once threw myself in my usual familiar attitude at his feet, and gently caressed his boot. I was induced to do this for two reasons: one, that it enabled me to get a good look at his bent, concentrated face, and the other, that it seemed to indicate my reverence for his superhuman insight. So absorbed was he even then, in tracking some mysterious clue, that he did not seem to notice me. But therein I was wrong — as I always was in my attempt to understand that powerful intellect.

"It is raining," he said, without lifting his head.

"You have been out, then?" I said quickly.

"No. But I see that your umbrella is wet, and that your overcoat has drops of water on it."

I sat aghast at his penetration. After a pause he said carelessly, as if dismissing the subject: "Besides, I hear the rain on the window. Listen."

I listened. I could scarcely credit my ears, but there was the soft pattering of drops on the panes. It was evident there was no deceiving this man!

"Have you been busy lately?" I asked, changing the subject. "What new problem — given up by Scotland Yard as inscrutable — has occupied that gigantic intellect?"

He drew back his foot slightly, and seemed to hesitate ere he returned it to its original position. Then he answered wearily: "Mere trifles — nothing to speak of. The Prince Kupoli has been here to get my advice regarding the disappearance of certain rubies from the Kremlin; the Rajah of Pootibad, after vainly beheading his entire bodyguard, has been obliged to seek my assistance to recover a jeweled sword. The Grand Duchess of Pretzel-Brauntswig is desirous of discovering where her husband was on the night of February 14; and last night —" he lowered his voice slightly — "a lodger in this very house, meeting me on the stairs, wanted to know why they didn't answer his bell."

I could not help smiling — until I saw a frown gathering on his inscrutable forehead.

"Pray remember," he said coldly, "that it was through just such an

apparently trivial question that I found out Why Paul Ferroll Killed His Wife, and What Happened to Jones!"

I became dumb at once. He paused for a moment, and then suddenly changing back to his usual pitiless, analytical style, he said: "When I say these are trifles, they are so in comparison to an affair that is now before me. A crime has been committed — and, singularly enough, against myself. You start," he said. "You wonder who would have dared to attempt it. So did I; nevertheless, it has been done. *I* have been *robbed!*"

"You robbed! You, Hemlock Jones, the Terror of Peculators!" I gasped in amazement, arising and gripping the table as I faced him.

"Yes! Listen. I would confess it to no other. But *you* who have followed my career, who know my methods; you, for whom I have partly lifted the veil that conceals my plans from ordinary humanity — you, who have for years rapturously accepted my confidences, passionately admired my inductions and inferences, placed yourself at my beck and call, become my slave, groveled at my feet, given up your practice except those few unremunerative and rapidly decreasing patients to whom, in moments of abstraction over *my* problems, you have administered strychnine for quinine and arsenic for Epsom salts; you, who have sacrificed anything and everybody to me — *you* I make my confidant!"

I arose and embraced him warmly, yet he was already so engrossed in thought that at the same moment he mechanically placed his hand upon his watch chain as if to consult the time. "Sit down," he said. "Have a cigar?"

"I have given up cigar smoking," I said.

"Why?" he asked.

I hesitated, and perhaps colored. I had really given it up because, with my diminished practice, it was too expensive. I could afford only a pipe. "I prefer a pipe," I said laughingly. "But tell me of this robbery. What have you lost?"

He arose, and planting himself before the fire with his hands under his coat-tails, looked down upon me reflectively for a moment. "Do you remember the cigar case presented to me by the Turkish ambassador for discovering the missing favorite of the Grand Vizier in the fifth chorus girl at the Hilarity Theater? It was that one. I mean the cigar case. It was incrustated with diamonds."

"And the largest one had been supplanted by paste," I said.

"Ah," he said, with a reflective smile, "you know that?"

"You told me yourself. I remember considering it a proof of your extraordinary perception. But, by Jove, you don't mean to say you have lost it?"

He was silent for a moment. "No: it has been stolen, it is true, but I shall still find it. And by myself alone! In your profession, my dear fellow, when a member is seriously ill, he does not prescribe for himself, but calls in a brother doctor. Therein we differ. I shall take this matter in my own hands."

"And where could you find better?" I said enthusiastically. "I should say the cigar case is as good as recovered already."

"I shall remind you of that again," he said lightly. "And now, to show you my confidence in your judgment, in spite of my determination to pursue this alone, I am willing to listen to any suggestions from you."

He drew a memorandum book from his pocket and, with a grave smile, took up his pencil.

I could scarcely believe my senses. He, the great Hemlock Jones, accepting suggestions from a humble individual like myself! I kissed his hand reverently, and began in a joyous tone:

"First, I should advertise, offering a reward; I should give the same intimation in handbills, distributed at the 'pubs' and the pastry cooks'. I should next visit the different pawnbrokers; I should give notice at the police station. I should examine the servants. I should thoroughly search the house and my own pockets. I speak relatively," I added, with a laugh. "Of course I mean *your* own."

He gravely made an entry of these details.

"Perhaps," I added, "you have already done this?"

"Perhaps," he returned enigmatically. "Now, my dear friend," he continued, putting the notebook in his pocket and rising, "would you excuse me for a few moments? Make yourself perfectly at home until I return; there may be some things," he added with a sweep of his hand toward his heterogeneously filled shelves, "that may interest you and while away the time. There are pipes and tobacco in that corner."

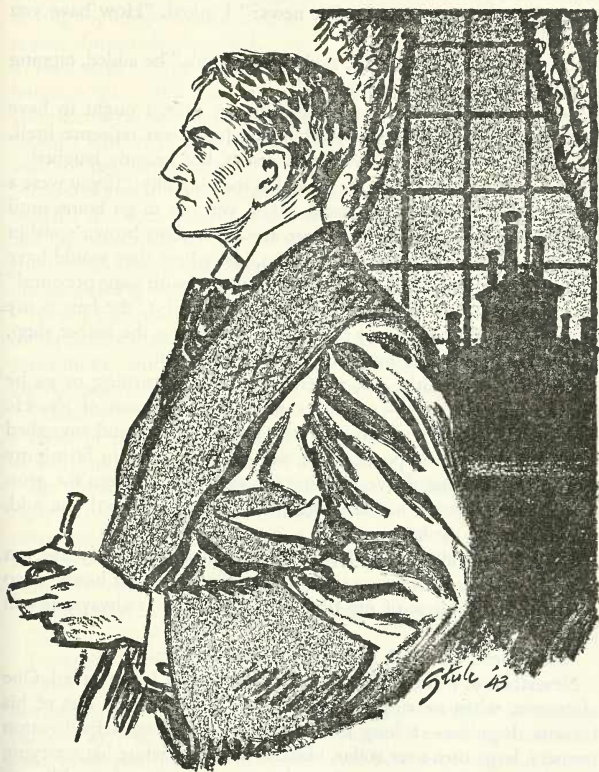
Then nodding to me with the same inscrutable face he left the room. I was too well accustomed to his methods to think much of

his unceremonious withdrawal, and made no doubt he was off to investigate some clue which had suddenly occurred to his active intelligence.

Left to myself I cast a cursory glance over his shelves. There were a number of small glass jars containing earthy substances, labeled PAVEMENT AND ROAD SWEEPINGS, from the principal thoroughfares and suburbs of London, with the subdirections FOR IDENTIFYING FOOT TRACKS. There were several other jars, labeled FLUFF FROM OMNIBUS AND ROAD-CAR SEATS, COCONUT FIBER AND ROPE STRANDS FROM MATTINGS IN PUBLIC PLACES, CIGARETTE STUMPS AND MATCH ENDS FROM FLOOR OF PALACE THEATRE, ROW A, 1 TO 50. Everywhere were evidences of this wonderful man's system and perspicacity.

I was thus engaged when I heard the slight creaking of a door, and I looked up as a stranger entered. He was a rough-looking man, with a shabby overcoat and a still more disreputable muffler around his throat and the lower part of his face. Considerably annoyed at his intrusion, I turned upon him rather sharply, when, with a mumbled, growling apology for mistaking the room, he shuffled out again and closed the door. I followed him quickly to the landing and saw that he disappeared down the stairs. With my mind full of the robbery, the incident made a singular impression upon me. I knew my friend's habit of hasty absences from his room in his moments of deep inspiration; it was only too probable that, with his powerful intellect and magnificent perceptive genius concentrated on one subject, he should be careless of his own belongings, and no doubt even forget to take the ordinary precaution of locking up his drawers. I tried one or two and found that I was right, although for some reason I was unable to open one to its fullest extent. The handles were sticky, as if someone had opened it with dirty fingers. Knowing Hemlock's fastidious cleanliness, I resolved to inform him of this circumstance, but I forgot it, alas! until — but I am anticipating my story.

His absence was strangely prolonged. I at last seated myself by the fire and, lulled by warmth and the patter of the rain, fell asleep. I may have dreamt, for during my sleep I had a vague semiconsciousness as of hands being softly pressed on my pockets — no doubt induced by the story of the robbery. When I came fully to my senses, I found Hemlock Jones sitting on the other side of the hearth, his deeply concentrated gaze fixed on the fire.



"I found you so comfortably asleep that I could not bear to awaken you," he said, with a smile.

I rubbed my eyes. "And what news?" I asked. "How have you succeeded?"

"Better than I expected," he said, "and I think," he added, tapping his notebook, "I owe much to *you*."

Deeply gratified, I awaited more. But in vain. I ought to have remembered that in his moods Hemlock Jones was reticence itself. I told him simply of the strange intrusion, but he only laughed.

Later, when I arose to go, he looked at me playfully. "If you were a married man," he said, "I would advise you not to go home until you had brushed your sleeve. There are a few short brown sealskin hairs on the inner side of your forearm, just where they would have adhered if your arm had encircled a sealskin coat with some pressure!"

"For once you are at fault," I said triumphantly; "the hair is my own, as you will perceive; I have just had it cut at the barber shop, and no doubt this arm projected beyond the apron."

He frowned slightly, yet, nevertheless, on my turning to go he embraced me warmly — a rare exhibition in that man of ice. He even helped me on with my overcoat and pulled out and smoothed down the flaps of my pockets. He was particular, too, in fitting my arm in my overcoat sleeve, shaking the sleeve down from the arm-hole to the cuff with his deft fingers. "Come again soon!" he said, clapping me on the back.

"At any and all times," I said enthusiastically; "I only ask ten minutes twice a day to eat a crust at my office, and four hours' sleep at night, and the rest of my time is devoted to you always, as you know."

"It is indeed," he said, with his impenetrable smile.

Nevertheless, I did not find him at home when I next called. One afternoon, when nearing my own home, I met him in one of his favorite disguises — a long blue swallow-tailed coat, striped cotton trousers, large turn-over collar, blacked face, and white hat, carrying a tambourine. Of course to others the disguise was perfect, although it was known to myself, and I passed him — according to an old understanding between us — without the slightest recognition, trusting to a later explanation. At another time, as I was making a professional visit to the wife of a publican at the East End, I saw him, in

the disguise of a broken-down artisan, looking into the window of an adjacent pawnshop. I was delighted to see that he was evidently following my suggestions, and in my joy I ventured to tip him a wink; it was abstractedly returned.

Two days later I received a note appointing a meeting at his lodgings that night. That meeting, alas! was the one memorable occurrence of my life, and the last meeting I ever had with Hemlock Jones! I will try to set it down calmly, though my pulses still throb with the recollection of it.

I found him standing before the fire, with that look upon his face which I had seen only once or twice — a look which I may call an absolute concatenation of inductive and deductive ratiocination — from which all that was human, tender, or sympathetic was absolutely discharged. He was simply an icy algebraic symbol!

After I had entered he locked the doors, fastened the window, and even placed a chair before the chimney. As I watched these significant precautions with absorbing interest, he suddenly drew a revolver and, presenting it to my temple, said in low, icy tones:

“Hand over that cigar case!”

Even in my bewilderment my reply was truthful, spontaneous, and involuntary. “I haven’t got it,” I said.

He smiled bitterly, and threw down his revolver. “I expected that reply! Then let me now confront you with something more awful, more deadly, more relentless and convincing than that mere lethal weapon — the damning inductive and deductive proofs of your guilt!” He drew from his pocket a roll of paper and a notebook.

“But surely,” I gasped, “you are joking! You could not believe —”

“Silence! Sit down!”

I obeyed.

“You have condemned yourself,” he went on pitilessly. “Condemned yourself on my processes — processes familiar to you, applauded by you, accepted by you for years! We will go back to the time when you first saw the cigar case. Your expressions,” he said in cold, deliberate tones, consulting his paper, “were, ‘How beautiful! I wish it were mine.’ This was your first step in crime — and my first indication. From ‘I *wish* it were mine’ to ‘I *will* have it mine.’ and the mere detail, ‘*How can* I make it mine?’ the advance was obvious. Silence! But as in my methods it was necessary that there

should be an overwhelming inducement to the crime, that unholy admiration of yours for the mere trinket itself was not enough. You are a smoker of cigars."

"But," I burst out passionately, "I told you I had given up smoking cigars."

"Fool!" he said coldly. "That is the *second* time you have committed yourself. Of course you told me! What more natural than for you to blazon forth that prepared and unsolicited statement to *prevent* accusation. Yet, as I said before, even that wretched attempt to cover up your tracks was not enough. I still had to find that overwhelming, impelling motive necessary to affect a man like you. That motive I found in the strongest of all impulses — love, I suppose you would call it —" he added bitterly — "that night you called! You had brought the most conclusive proofs of it on your sleeve."

"But —" I almost screamed.

"Silence!" he thundered. "I know what you would say. You would say that even if you had embraced some Young Person in a sealskin coat, what had that to do with the robbery? Let me tell you, then, that that sealskin coat represented the quality and character of your fatal entanglement! You bartered your honor for it — that stolen cigar case was the purchaser of the sealskin coat!

"Silence! Having thoroughly established your motive, I now proceed to the commission of the crime itself. Ordinary people would have begun with that — with an attempt to discover the whereabouts of the missing object. These are not *my* methods."

So overpowering was his penetration that, although I knew myself innocent, I licked my lips with avidity to hear the further details of this lucid exposition of my crime.

"You committed that theft the night I showed you the cigar case, and after I had carelessly thrown it in that drawer. You were sitting in that chair, and I had arisen to take something from that shelf. In that instant you secured your booty without rising. Silence! Do you remember when I helped you on with your overcoat the other night? I was particular about fitting your arm in. While doing so I measured your arm with a spring tape measure, from the shoulder to the cuff. A later visit to your tailor confirmed that measurement. It proved to be *the exact distance between your chair and that drawer!*" I sat stunned.

"The rest are mere corroborative details! You were again tampering with the drawer when I discovered you doing so! Do not start! The stranger that blundered into the room with a muffler on — was myself! More, I had placed a little soap on the drawer handles when I purposely left you alone. The soap was on your hand when I shook it at parting. I softly felt your pockets, when you were asleep, for further developments. I embraced you when you left — that I might feel if you had the cigar case or any other articles hidden on your body. This confirmed me in the belief that you had already disposed of it in the manner and for the purpose I have shown you. As I still believed you capable of remorse and confession, I twice allowed you to see I was on your track: once in the garb of an itinerant Negro minstrel, and the second time as a workman looking in the window of the pawnshop where you pledged your booty.

"But," I burst out, "if you had asked the pawnbroker, you would have seen how unjust —"

"Fool!" he hissed. "Do you suppose I followed any of your suggestions, the suggestions of the thief? On the contrary, they told me what to avoid."

"And I suppose," I said bitterly, "you have not even searched your drawer."

"No," he said calmly.

I was for the first time really vexed. I went to the nearest drawer and pulled it out sharply. It stuck as it had before, leaving a section of the drawer unopened. By working it, however, I discovered that it was impeded by some obstacle that had slipped to the upper part of the drawer, and held it firmly fast. Inserting my hand, I pulled out the impeding object. It was the missing cigar case! I turned to him with a cry of joy.

But I was appalled at his expression. A look of contempt was now added to his acute, penetrating gaze. "I have been mistaken," he said slowly. "I had not allowed for your weakness and cowardice! I thought too highly of you even in your guilt! But I see now why you tampered with that drawer the other night. By some inexplicable means — possibly another theft — you took the cigar case out of pawn and, liked a whipped hound, restored it to me in this feeble, clumsy fashion. You thought to deceive me, Hemlock Jones! More, you thought to destroy my infallibility. Go! I give you your liberty. I

shall not summon the three policemen who wait in the adjoining room—but out of my sight forever!”

As I stood once more dazed and petrified, he took me firmly by the ear and led me into the hall, closing the door behind him. This reopened presently, wide enough to permit him to thrust out my hat, overcoat, umbrella, and overshoes, and then closed against me forever!

I never saw him again. I am bound to say, however, that thereafter my business increased, I recovered much of my old practice, and a few of my patients recovered also. I became rich. I had a brougham and a house in the West End. But I often wondered, if, in some lapse of consciousness, I had not really stolen his cigar case!

THE ADVENTURES OF
SHAMROCK JOLNESby O. HENRY

O. Henry wrote two waggish parodies of Sherlock Holmes — “The Sleuths” and “The Adventures of Shamrock Jolnes,” both to be found in *SIXES AND SEVENS* (Garden City, Doubleday, Page, 1911). The great Shamrock appeared briefly in a third story, “The Detective Detector,” in *WAIFS AND STRAYS* (Garden City, Doubleday, Page, 1917), but this tale was a parody of *The Master Criminal* rather than of *The Master Detective*.

Your Editors have chosen “The Adventures of Shamrock Jolnes” because it presents Shamrock at his deductive best. In “The Sleuths” Jolnes shares the spotlight with — worse, actually yields it to — another detective named Juggins; and in “The Detective Detector” Jolnes plays second fiddle to a one-man Murder, Inc. named Avery Knight. Since this anthology is dedicated to the One and Only, with rivalry of any sort firmly excommunicated, we cannot permit so nondescript a pair of interlopers as Juggins and Knight to trespass upon the sacred precincts.

O. Henry’s invention of the name Shamrock is surely an appealing conceit. The more you think of it, the more it grows on you. But delicious as it is, it does not represent the author’s major effort in the field of parody names. O. Henry wrote two other detective-story burlesques, caricaturing the famous Vidocq. They are included in *ROLLING STONES* (Garden City, Doubleday, Page, 1912) and the parody name for Vidocq is positively inspired. It is le nom juste, the paragon of paronomasia, the ne plus ultra of neology — in a word, Tictocq.

I AM so fortunate as to count Shamrock Jolnes, the great New York detective, among my muster of friends. Jolnes is what is called the "inside man" of the city detective force. He is an expert in the use of the typewriter, and it is his duty, whenever there is a "murder mystery" to be solved, to sit at a desk telephone at Headquarters and take down the messages of "cranks" who phone in their confessions to having committed the crime.

But on certain "off" days when confessions are coming in slowly and three or four newspapers have run to earth as many different guilty persons, Jolnes will knock about the town with me, exhibiting, to my great delight and instruction, his marvelous powers of observation and deduction.

The other day I dropped in at Headquarters and found the great detective gazing thoughtfully at a string that was tied tightly around his little finger.

"Good morning, Whatsup," he said, without turning his head. "I'm glad to notice that you've had your house fitted up with electric lights at last."

"Will you please tell me," I said, in surprise, "how you knew that? I am sure that I never mentioned the fact to anyone, and the wiring was a rush order not completed until this morning."

"Nothing easier," said Jolnes, genially. "As you came in I caught the odor of the cigar you are smoking. I know an expensive cigar; and I know that not more than three men in New York can afford to smoke cigars and pay gas bills too at the present time. That was an easy one. But I am working just now on a little problem of my own."

"Why have you that string on your finger?" I asked.

"That's the problem," said Jolnes. "My wife tied that on this morning to remind me of something I was to send up to the house. Sit down, Whatsup, and excuse me for a few moments."

The distinguished detective went to a wall telephone, and stood with the receiver to his ear for probably ten minutes.

"Were you listening to a confession?" I asked, when he had returned to his chair.

"Perhaps," said Jolnes, with a smile, "it might be called something

of the sort. To be frank with you, Whatsup, I've cut out the dope. I've been increasing the quantity for so long that morphine doesn't have much effect on me any more. I've got to have something more powerful. That telephone I just went to is connected with a room in the Waldorf where there's an author's reading in progress. Now, to get at the solution of this string."

After five minutes of silent pondering, Jolnes looked at me, with a smile, and nodded his head.

"Wonderful man!" I exclaimed. "Already?"

"It is quite simple," he said, holding up his finger. "You see that knot? That is to prevent my forgetting. It is, therefore, a forget-me-knot. A forget-me-not is a flower. It was a sack of flour that I was to send home!"

"Beautiful!" I could not help crying out in admiration.

"Suppose we go out for a ramble," suggested Jolnes.

"There is only one case of importance on hand just now. Old man McCarty, one hundred and four years old, died from eating too many bananas. The evidence points so strongly to the Mafia that the police have surrounded the Second Avenue Katzenjammer Gambrinus Club No. 2, and the capture of the assassin is only the matter of a few hours. The detective force has not yet been called on for assistance."

Jolnes and I went out and up the street toward the corner, where we were to catch a surface car.

Halfway up the block we met Rheingelder, an acquaintance of ours, who held a City Hall position.

"Good morning, Rheingelder," said Jolnes, halting. "Nice breakfast that was you had this morning."

Always on the lookout for the detective's remarkable feats of deduction, I saw Jolnes's eyes flash for an instant upon a long yellow splash on the shirt bosom and a smaller one upon the chin of Rheingelder — both undoubtedly made by the yolk of an egg.

"Oh, dot is some of your detectiveness," said Rheingelder, shaking all over with a smile. "Vell, I pet you trinks und cigars all round dot you cannot tell vot I haf eaten for breakfast."

"Done," said Jolnes. "Sausage, pumpernickel and coffee."

Rheingelder admitted the correctness of the surmise and paid the bet. When we had proceeded on our way I said to Jolnes:

"I thought you looked at the egg spilled on his chin and shirt front."

"I did," said Jolnes. "That is where I began my deduction. Rheingelder is a very economical, saving man. Yesterday eggs dropped in the market to twenty-eight cents per dozen. Today they are quoted at forty-two. Rheingelder ate eggs yesterday, and today he went back to his usual fare. A little thing like this isn't anything, Whatsup; it belongs to the primary arithmetic class."

When we boarded the streetcar we found the seats all occupied — principally by ladies. Jolnes and I stood on the rear platform.

About the middle of the car there sat an elderly man with a short gray beard, who looked to be the typical well-dressed New Yorker. At successive corners other ladies climbed aboard, and soon three or four of them were standing over the man, clinging to straps and glaring meaningly at the man who occupied the coveted seat. But he resolutely retained his place.

"We New Yorkers," I remarked to Jolnes, "have about lost our manners, as far as the exercise of them in public goes."

"Perhaps so," said Jolnes, lightly, "but the man you evidently refer to happens to be a very chivalrous and courteous gentleman from Old Virginia. He is spending a few days in New York with his wife and two daughters, and he leaves for the South tonight."

"You know him, then?" I said, in amazement.

"I never saw him before we stepped on the car," declared the detective, smilingly.

"By the gold tooth of the Witch of Endor," I cried, "if you can construe all that from his appearance you are dealing in nothing else than black art."

"The habit of observation — nothing more," said Jolnes. "If the old gentleman gets off the car before we do, I think I can demonstrate to you the accuracy of my deduction."

Three blocks farther along the gentleman rose to leave the car. Jolnes addressed him at the door:

"Pardon me, sir, but are you not Colonel Hunter, of Norfolk, Virginia?"

"No, suh," was the extremely courteous answer. "My name, suh, is Ellison — Major Winfield R. Ellison, from Fairfax County, in the same state. I know a good many people, suh, in Norfolk — the Good-

riches, the Tollivers, and the Crabtrees, suh, but I never had the pleasure of meeting yo' friend Colonel Hunter. I am happy to say, suh, that I am going back to Virginia tonight, after having spent a week in yo' city with my wife and three daughters. I shall be in Norfolk in about ten days, and if you will give me yo' name, suh, I will take pleasure in looking up Colonel Hunter and telling him that you inquired after him, suh."

"Thank you," said Jolnes. "Tell him that Reynolds sent his regards, if you will be so kind."

I glanced at the great New York detective and saw that a look of intense chagrin had come upon his clear-cut features. Failure in the slightest point always galled Shamrock Jolnes.

"Did you say your *three* daughters?" he asked of the Virginia gentleman.

"Yes, suh, my three daughters, all as fine girls as there are in Fairfax County," was the answer.

With that Major Ellison stopped the car and began to descend the step.

Shamrock Jolnes clutched his arm.

"One moment, sir — " he begged, in an urbane voice in which I alone detected the anxiety — "am I not right in believing that one of the young ladies is an *adopted* daughter?"

"You are, suh," admitted the major, from the ground, "but how the devil you knew it, suh, is mo' than I can tell."

"And mo' than I can tell, too," I said, as the car went on.

Jolnes was restored to his calm, observant serenity by having wrested victory from his apparent failure; so after we got off the car he invited me into a café, promising to reveal the process of his latest wonderful feat.

"In the first place," he began after we were comfortably seated, "I knew the gentleman was no New Yorker because he was flushed and uneasy and restless on account of the ladies that were standing, although he did not rise and give them his seat. I decided from his appearance that he was a Southerner rather than a Westerner.

"Next I began to figure out his reason for not relinquishing his seat to a lady when he evidently felt strongly, but not overpoweringly, impelled to do so. I very quickly decided upon that. I noticed that one of his eyes had received a severe jab in one corner, which was

red and inflamed, and that all over his face were tiny round marks about the size of the end of an uncut lead pencil. Also upon both of his patent-leather shoes were a number of deep imprints shaped like ovals cut off square at one end.

"Now, there is only one district in New York City where a man is bound to receive scars and wounds and indentations of that sort — and that is along the sidewalks of Twenty-third Street and a portion of Sixth Avenue south of there. I knew from the imprints of trampling French heels on his feet and the marks of countless jabs in the face from umbrellas and parasols carried by women in the shopping district that he had been in conflict with the Amazonian troops. And as he was a man of intelligent appearance, I knew he would not have braved such dangers unless he had been dragged thither by his own womenfolk. Therefore, when he got on the car his anger at the treatment he had received was sufficient to make him keep his seat in spite of his traditions of Southern chivalry."

"That is all very well," I said, "but why did you insist upon daughters — and especially two daughters? Why couldn't a wife alone have taken him shopping?"

"There had to be daughters," said Jolnes, calmly. "If he had only a wife, and she near his own age, he could have bluffed her into going alone. If he had a young wife she would prefer to go alone. So there you are."

"I'll admit that," I said; "but, now, why two daughters? And how, in the name of all the prophets, did you guess that one was adopted when he told you he had three?"

"Don't say guess," said Jolnes, with a touch of pride in his air; "there is no such word in the lexicon of ratiocination. In Major Ellison's buttonhole there was a carnation and a rosebud backed by a geranium leaf. No woman ever combined a carnation and a rosebud into a boutonnière. Close your eyes, Whatsup, and give the logic of your imagination a chance. Cannot you see the lovely Adele fastening the carnation to the lapel so that Papa may be gay upon the street? And then the romping Edith May dancing up with sisterly jealousy to add her rosebud to the adornment?"

"And then," I cried, beginning to feel enthusiasm, "when he declared that he had three daughters —"

"I could see," said Jolnes, "one in the background who added no flower; and I knew that she must be —"

"Adopted!" I broke in. "I give you every credit; but how did you know he was leaving for the South tonight?"

"In his breast pocket," said the great detective, "something large and oval made a protuberance. Good liquor is scarce on trains, and it is a long journey from New York to Fairfax County."

"Again I must bow to you," I said. "And tell me this, so that my last shred of doubt will be cleared away; why did you decide that he was from Virginia?"

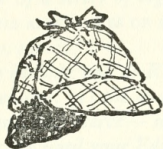
"It was very faint, I admit," answered Shamrock Jolnes, "but no trained observer could have failed to detect the odor of mint in the car."

PART THREE:

BY HUMORISTS

"That Extraordinary Man."

— MARK TWAIN



THE UMBROSA BURGLARY

by R. C. LEHMANN

This early parody appeared first in "Punch," issue of November 4, 1893. It was one of a series of eight published in book form under the title THE ADVENTURES OF PICKLOCK HOLES (London, Bradbury, Agnew, 1901).

We have decided to include one of R. C. Lehmann's series for no less than four reasons: [1] the book, THE ADVENTURES OF PICKLOCK HOLES, is unusually scarce — so scarce that Vincent Starrett could find no copy until your Editors, after many years of hunting, located a duplicate copy and presented it to an elated Mr. Starrett; [2] when the Picklock Holes adventures appeared in "Punch," they were signed as by "Cunnin Toil" — a pun of the name Conan Doyle that is much cleverer than seems on first reading; [3] the parody name of Picklock Holes is surely one of the most imaginative distortions ever invented; and [4] Mr. Lehmann offers a candid and singularly convincing explanation for Picklock Holes's "infallibility" as a great detective — an explanation that has as curious a note of realism as ever crept into the last paragraph of a burlesque.

DURING one of my short summer holidays I happened to be spending a few days at the delightful riverside residence of my friend James Silver, the extent of whose hospitality is only to be measured by the excellence of the fare that he sets before his guests, or by the varied amusements that he provides for them. The beauties of Umbrosa (for that is the attractive name of his house) are known to all those who during the summer months pass up (or down) the winding reaches of the Upper Thames. It was there that I witnessed a

series of startling events which threw the whole county into a temporary turmoil. Had it not been for the unparalleled coolness and sagacity of Picklock Holes the results might have been fraught with disaster to many distinguished families, but the acumen of Holes saved the situation and the family plate, and restored the peace of mind of one of the best fellows in the world.

The party at Umbrosa consisted of the various members of the Silver family, including, besides Mr. and Mrs. Silver, three high-spirited and unmarried youths and two charming girls. Picklock Holes was of course one of the guests. In fact, it had long since come to be an understood thing that wherever I went Holes should accompany me in the character of a professional detective on the lookout for business; and James Silver, though he may have at first resented the calm unmuscularity of my marvellous friend's immovable face, would have been the last man in the world to spoil any chance of sport or excitement by refraining from offering a cordial invitation to Holes. The party was completed by Peter Bowman, a lad of eighteen, who to an extraordinary capacity for mischief added an imperturbable cheerfulness of manner. He was generally known as Shockheaded Peter, in allusion to the brush-like appearance of his delicate auburn hair, but his intimate friends sometimes addressed him as Venus, a nickname which he thoroughly deserved by the almost classic irregularity of his Saxon features.

We were all sitting, I remember, on the riverbank, watching the countless craft go past, and enjoying that pleasant industrious indolence which is one of the chief charms of life on the Thames. A punt had just skimmed by, propelled by an athletic young fellow in boating costume. Suddenly Holes spoke.

"It is strange," he said, "that the man should be still at large."

"What man? Where? How?" we all exclaimed breathlessly.

"The young puntsman," said Holes, with an almost aggravating coolness. "He is a bigamist, and has murdered his great aunt."

"It cannot be," said Mr. Silver, with evident distress. "I know the lad well, and a better fellow never breathed."

"I speak the truth," said Holes, unemotionally. "The induction is perfect. He is wearing a red tie. That tie was not always red. It was, therefore, stained by something. Blood is red. It was, therefore, stained by blood. Now it is well known that the blood of great aunts is of a

lighter shade, and the colour of that tie has a lighter shade. The blood that stained it was, therefore, the blood of his great aunt. As for the bigamy, you will have noticed that as he passed he blew two rings of cigarette smoke, and they both floated in the air *at the same time*. A ring is a symbol of matrimony. Two rings together mean bigamy. He is, therefore, a bigamist."

For a moment we were silent, struck with horror at this dreadful, this convincing revelation of criminal infamy. Then I broke out:

"Holes," I said, "you deserve the thanks of the whole community. You will of course communicate with the police."

"No," said Holes, "they are fools, and I do not care to mix myself up with them. Besides, I have other fish to fry."

Saying this, he led me to a secluded part of the grounds, and whispered in my ear.

"Not a word of what I am about to tell you. There will be a burglary here to-night."

"But Holes," I said, startled in spite of myself at the calm omniscience of my friend, "had we not better do something; arm the servants, warn the police, bolt the doors and bar the windows, and sit up with blunderbusses — anything would be better than this state of dreadful expectancy. May I not tell Mr. Silver?"

"Potson, you are amiable, but you will never learn my methods." And with that enigmatic reply I had to be content in the meantime.

The evening had passed as pleasantly as evenings at Umbrosa always pass. There had been music; the Umbrosa choir, composed of members of the family and guests, had performed in the drawing-room, and Peter had drawn tears from the eyes of every one by his touching rendering of the well-known songs of "The Dutiful Son" and "The Cartridge-bearer." Shortly afterwards, the ladies retired to bed, and the gentlemen, after the customary interval in the smoking-room, followed. We were in high good-humour, and had made many plans for the morrow. Only Holes seemed preoccupied.

I had been sleeping for about an hour, when I was suddenly awakened with a start. In the passage outside I heard the voices of the youngest Silver boy and of Peter.

"Peter, old chap," said Johnny Silver, "I believe there's burglars in the house. Isn't it a lark?"

"Ripping," said Peter. "Have you told your people?"

"Oh, it's no use waking the governor and the mater; we'll do the job ourselves. I told the girls, and they've all locked themselves in and got under their beds, so they're safe. Are you ready?"

"Yes."

"Come on then."

With that they went along the passage and down the stairs. My mind was made up, and my trousers and boots were on in less time than it takes to tell it. I went to Holes's room and entered. He was lying on his bed, fully awake, dressed in his best detective suit, with his fingers meditatively extended, and touching one another.

"They're here," I said.

"Who?"

"The burglars."

"As I thought," said Holes, selecting his best basket-hilted life-preserver from a heap in the middle of the room. "Follow me silently."

I did so. No sooner had we reached the landing, however, than the silence was broken by a series of blood-curdling screams.

"Good heavens!" was all I could say.

"Hush," said Holes. I obeyed him. The screams subsided, and I heard the voices of my two young friends, evidently in great triumph.

"Lie still, you brute," said Peter, "or I'll punch your blooming head. Give the rope another twist, Johnny. That's it. Now you cut and tell your governor and old Holes that we've nabbed the beggar."

By this time the household was thoroughly roused. Agitated females and inquisitive males streamed downstairs. Lights were lit, and a remarkable sight met our eyes. In the middle of the drawing-room lay an undersized burglar, securely bound, with Peter sitting on his head.

"Johnny and I collared the beggar," said Peter, "and bowled him over. Thanks, I think I could do a ginger-beer."

The man was of course tried and convicted, and Holes received the thanks of the County Council.

"That fellow," said the great detective to me, "was the best and cleverest of my tame team of country-house burglars. Through him and his associates I have fostered and foiled more thefts than I care to count. Those infernal boys nearly spoilt everything. Potson, take

my advice, never attempt a master-stroke in a houseful of boys. They can't understand scientific induction. Had they not interfered I should have caught the fellow myself. He had wired to tell me where I should find him."

THE STRANGER UNRAVELS A MYSTERY

by JOHN KENDRICK BANGS

Here is one of the earliest — if not actually the earliest — American parodies of Sherlock Holmes. It is really the first two chapters in THE PURSUIT OF THE HOUSE-BOAT (New York, Harper, 1897).

In this parody you will meet Sherlock Holmes in Hades — a justifiable address when you remember that Holmes was supposed to have died in 1893, at the end of "The Adventure of the Final Problem"¹ — that is, four years prior to the publication of Mr. Bangs's book. How was Mr. Bangs to foresee that Holmes would be resurrected six years after he — and the whole grief-stricken world — had accepted with "heavy heart" the Watsonian obituary? How was Mr. Bangs to know six years in advance that Holmes would "return" to the pages of "The Strand Magazine" in October 1903, when neither Dr. Watson nor Conan Doyle himself had the slightest suspicion of so colossal an event?

On the other hand, granting Mr. Bangs's right to assume in 1897 that the report of Holmes's death had not been exaggerated, was Hades really a justifiable address? There are those who would hold out for Heaven — or at the least, Valhalla . . .

Be as it may, you will find Holmes in company with other great and glittering personages — The Associated Shades, [Ltd.], including Sir Walter Raleigh, Socrates, Dr. Livingstone, Confucius, Shakespeare, Noah, Dr. Samuel Johnson and Boswell, Solomon, Caesar, Napoleon, among others equally famous, all involved in a truly "hellish" mystery.

Mr. Bangs was one of our finest parodists. At his best he skillfully blended pure burlesque with cunningly conceived plot

¹ MEMOIRS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES; New York, Harper, 1894; London, Newnes, 1894.

details. *The Holmes saga proved a veritable bonanza to him and he mined it lustily. If you wish to pursue the further parody-adventures of Sherlock, as recorded by John (Watson) Bangs, gather the following nuggets:*

"The Mystery of Pinkham's Diamond Stud" — Chapter X in THE DREAMERS: A CLUB (New York, Harper, 1899)

"Sherlock Holmes Again" — Chapter IX in THE ENCHANTED TYPE-WRITER (New York, Harper, 1899)

"Shylock Homes: His Posthumous Memoirs" — a series syndicated in U.S. newspapers in 1903, but never published in book form; see the next story in this anthology — the first Shylock Homes memoir ever to appear between covers

R. HOLMES & CO. (New York, Harper, 1906) — the burlesque escapades of Mr. Raffles Holmes, the "son" of Sherlock and the "grandson" of A. J. Raffles²

"A Pragmatic Enigma" — the fourth story in POTTED FICTION (New York, Doubleday, Page, 1908)

THE HOUSEBOAT of the Associated Shades, formerly located upon the River Styx, as the reader may possibly remember, had been torn from its moorings and navigated out into unknown seas by that vengeful pirate Captain Kidd, aided and abetted by some of the most ruffianly inhabitants of Hades. Like a thief in the night had they come, and for no better reason than that the captain had been unanimously voted a shade too shady to associate with self-respecting spirits had they made off with the happy floating clubhouse of their betters; and worst of all, with them, by force of circumstances over which they had no control, had sailed also the fair Queen Elizabeth,

² If you are a student of literary genetics, you'll realize that this is perfectly possible. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, sire of Sherlock, and E. W. Hornung, progenitor of Raffles, were in real life brothers-in-law! Of course John Kendrick Bangs knew this vital fact — Hornung married Doyle's sister in 1893, thirteen years before Bangs "produced" Raffles Holmes. The only discrepancy — an amazing one, it's true — is the matter of Raffles Holmes's age. Surely Raffles Holmes, to judge merely from the illustrations in the book, was more than twelve years old!

the spirited Xanthippe, and every other strong-minded and beautiful woman of Erebean society, whereby the men thereof were rendered desolate.

"I can't stand it!" cried Raleigh, desperately, as with his accustomed grace he presided over a special meeting of the club, called on the bank of the inky Stygian stream, at the point where the missing boat had been moored. "Think of it, gentlemen, Elizabeth of England, Calpurnia of Rome, Ophelia of Denmark, and every precious jewel in our social diadem gone, vanished completely; and with whom? Kidd, of all men in the universe! Kidd, the pirate, the ruffian —"

"Don't take on so, my dear Sir Walter," said Socrates, cheerfully. "What's the use of going into hysterics? You are not a woman, and should eschew that luxury. Xanthippe is with them, and I'll warrant you that when that cherished spouse of mine has recovered from the effects of the sea, say the third day out, Kidd and his crew will be walking the plank, and voluntarily at that."

"But the Houseboat itself," murmured Noah, sadly. "That was my delight. It reminded me in some respects of the Ark."

"The law of compensation enters in there, my dear Commodore," retorted Socrates. "For me, with Xanthippe abroad I do not need a club to go to; I can stay at home and take my hemlock in peace and straight. Xanthippe always compelled me to dilute it at the rate of one quart of water to the finger."

"Well, we didn't all marry Xanthippe," put in Caesar, firmly, "therefore we are not all satisfied with the situation. I, for one, quite agree with Sir Walter that something must be done, and quickly. Are we to sit here and do nothing, allowing that fiend to kidnap our wives with impunity?"

"Not at all," interposed Bonaparte. "The time for action has arrived. All things considered he is welcome to Marie Louise, but the idea of Josephine going off on a cruise of that kind breaks my heart."

"No question about it," observed Dr. Johnson. "We've got to do something if it is only for the sake of appearances. The question really is, what shall be done first?"

"I am in favor of taking a drink as the first step, and considering the matter of further action afterwards," suggested Shakespeare, and it was this suggestion that made the members unanimous upon the necessity for immediate action, for when the assembled spirits called

for their various favorite beverages it was found that there were none to be had, it being Sunday, and all the establishments wherein liquid refreshments were licensed to be sold being closed — for at the time of writing the local government of Hades was in the hands of the reform party.

"What!" cried Socrates. "Nothing but Styx water and vitriol, Sundays? Then the Houseboat must be recovered whether Xanthippe comes with it or not. Sir Walter, I am for immediate action, after all. This ruffian should be captured at once and made an example of."

"Excuse me, Socrates," put in Lindley Murray, "but, ah — pray speak in Greek hereafter, will you, please? When you attempt English you have a beastly way of working up to climactic prepositions which are offensive to the ear of a purist."

"This is no time to discuss style, Murray," interposed Sir Walter. "Socrates may speak and spell like Chaucer if he pleases; he may even part his infinitives in the middle, for all I care. We have affairs of greater moment in hand."

"We must ransack the earth," cried Socrates, "until we find that boat. I'm dry as a fish."

"There he goes again!" growled Murray. "Dry as a fish! What fish I'd like to know is dry?"

"Red herrings," retorted Socrates; and there was a great laugh at the expense of the purist, in which even Hamlet, who had grown more and more melancholy and morbid since the abduction of Ophelia, joined.

"Then it is settled," said Raleigh; "something must be done. And now the point is, what?"

"Relief expeditions have a way of finding things," suggested Dr. Livingstone. "Or rather of being found by the things they go out to relieve. I propose that we send out a number of them. I will take Africa; Bonaparte can lead an expedition into Europe; General Washington may have North America; and —"

"I beg pardon," put in Dr. Johnson, "but have you any idea, Dr. Livingstone, that Captain Kidd has put wheels on this Houseboat of ours and is having it dragged across the Sahara by mules or camels?"

"No such absurd idea ever entered my head," retorted the doctor.

"Do you then believe that he has put runners on it, and is engaged

in the pleasurable pastime of taking the ladies tobogganing down the Alps?" persisted the philosopher.

"Not at all. Why do you ask?" queried the African explorer, irritably.

"Because I wish to know," said Johnson. "That is always my motive in asking questions. You propose to go looking for a houseboat in Central Africa; you suggest that Bonaparte lead an expedition in search of it through Europe — all of which strikes me as nonsense. This search is the work of sea dogs, not of landlubbers. You might as well ask Confucius to look for it in the heart of China. What earthly use there is in ransacking the earth I fail to see. What we need is a naval expedition to scour the sea, unless it is pretty well understood in advance that we believe Kidd has hauled the boat out of the water, and is now using it for a roller-skating rink or a bicycle academy in Ohio, or for some other purpose for which neither he nor it was designed."

"Dr. Johnson's point is well taken," said a stranger who had been sitting upon the stringpiece of the pier, quietly, but with very evident interest, listening to the discussion. He was a tall and excessively slender shade, "like a spirt of steam out of a teapot," as Johnson put it afterwards, so slight he seemed. "I have not the honor of being a member of this association," the stranger continued, "but, like all well-ordered shades, I aspire to the distinction, and I hold myself and my talents at the disposal of this club. I fancy it will not take us long to establish our initial point, which is that the gross person who has so foully appropriated your property to his own base uses does not contemplate removing it from its keel and placing it somewhere inland. All the evidence in hand points to a radically different conclusion, which is my sole reason for doubting the value of that conclusion. Captain Kidd is a seafarer by instinct, not a landsman. The Houseboat is not a house, but a boat; therefore the place to look for it is not, as Dr. Johnson so well says, in the Sahara Desert, or on the Alps, or in the State of Ohio, but upon the high sea, or upon the water front of some one of the world's great cities."

"And what, then, would be your plan?" asked Sir Walter, impressed by the stranger's manner as well as by the very manifest reason in all that he had said.

"The chartering of a suitable vessel, fully armed and equipped

for the purpose of pursuit. Ascertain whither the Houseboat has sailed, for what port, and start at once. Have you a model of the Houseboat within reach?" returned the stranger.

"I think not; we have the architect's plans, however," said the chairman.

"We had, Mr. Chairman," said Demosthenes, who was secretary of the House Committee, rising, "but they are gone with the Houseboat itself. They were kept in the safe in the hold."

A look of annoyance came into the face of the stranger.

"That's too bad," he said. "It was a most important part of my plan that we should know about how fast the Houseboat was."

"Humph!" ejaculated Socrates, with ill-concealed sarcasm. "If you'll take Xanthippe's word for it, the Houseboat was the fastest yacht afloat."

"I refer to the matter of speed in sailing," returned the stranger, quietly. "The question of its ethical speed has nothing to do with it."

"The designer of the craft is here," said Sir Walter, fixing his eyes upon Sir Christopher Wren. "It is possible that he may be of assistance in settling that point."

"What has all this got to do with the question, anyhow, Mr. Chairman?" asked Solomon, rising impatiently and addressing Sir Walter. "We aren't preparing for a yacht race that I know of. Nobody's after a cup, or a championship of any kind. What we do want is to get our wives back. The captain hasn't taken more than half of mine along with him, but I am interested none the less. The Queen of Sheba is on board, and I am somewhat interested in her fate. So I ask you what earthly or unearthly use there is in discussing this question of speed in the Houseboat. It strikes me as a woeful waste of time, and rather unprecedented too, that we should suspend all rules and listen to the talk of an entire stranger."

"I do not venture to doubt the wisdom of Solomon," said Johnson, dryly, "but I must say that the gentleman's remarks rather interest me."

"Of course they do," ejaculated Solomon. "He agreed with you. That ought to make him interesting to everybody. Freaks usually are."

"That is not the reason at all," retorted Dr. Johnson. "Cold water agrees with me, but it doesn't interest me. What I do think, however,

is that our unknown friend seems to have a grasp on the situation by which we are confronted, and he's going at the matter in hand in a very comprehensive fashion. I move, therefore, that Solomon be laid on the table, and that the privileges of the — ah — of the wharf be extended indefinitely to our friend on the stringpiece."

The motion, having been seconded, was duly carried, and the stranger resumed.

"I will explain for the benefit of his Majesty King Solomon, whose wisdom I have always admired, and whose endurance as the husband of three hundred wives has filled me with wonder," he said, "that before starting in pursuit of the stolen vessel we must select a craft of some sort for the purpose, and that in selecting the pursuer it is quite essential that we should choose a vessel of greater speed than the one we desire to overtake. It would hardly be proper, I think, if the Houseboat can sail four knots an hour, to attempt to overhaul her with a launch, or other nautical craft, with a maximum speed of two knots an hour."

"Hear! Hear!" ejaculated Caesar.

"That is my reason, your Majesty, for inquiring as to the speed of your late clubhouse," said the stranger, bowing courteously to Solomon. "Now if Sir Christopher Wren can give me her measurements, we can very soon determine at about what rate she is leaving us behind under favorable circumstances."

"'Tisn't necessary for Sir Christopher to do anything of the sort," said Noah, rising and manifesting somewhat more heat than the occasion seemed to require. "As long as we are discussing the question I will take the liberty of stating what I have never mentioned before, that the designer of the Houseboat merely appropriated the lines of the Ark. Shem, Ham, and Japheth will bear testimony to the truth of that statement."

"There can be no quarrel on that score, Mr. Chairman," assented Sir Christopher, with cutting frigidity. "I am perfectly willing to admit that practically the two vessels were built on the same lines, but with modifications which would enable my boat to sail twenty miles to windward and back in six days less time than it would have taken the Ark to cover the same distance, and it could have taken all the wash of the excursion steamers into the bargain."

"Bosh!" ejaculated Noah, angrily. "Strip your old tub down to a

flying balloon jib and a marline spike, and ballast the Ark with elephants until every inch of her reeked with ivory and peanuts, and she'd outfoot you on every leg, in a cyclone or a zephyr. Give me the Ark and a breeze, and your Houseboat wouldn't be within hailing distance of her five minutes after the start if she had forty thousand square yards of canvas spread before a gale."

"This discussion is waxing very unprofitable," observed Confucius. "If these gentlemen cannot be made to confine themselves to the subject that is agitating this body, I move we call in the authorities and have them confined in the bottomless pit."

"I did not precipitate the quarrel," said Noah. "I was merely trying to assist our friend on the stringpiece. I was going to say that as the Ark was probably a hundred times faster than Sir Christopher Wren's — tub, which he himself says can take care of all the wash of the excursion boats, thereby becoming on his own admission a wash-tub —"

"Order! Order!" cried Sir Christopher.

"I was going to say that this wash-tub could be overhauled by a launch or any other craft with a speed of thirty knots a month," continued Noah, ignoring the interruption.

"Took him forty days to get to Mount Ararat!" sneered Sir Christopher.

"Well, your boat would have got there two weeks sooner, I'll admit," retorted Noah, "if she'd sprung a leak at the right time."

"Granting the truth of Noah's statement —" said Sir Walter, motioning to the angry architect to be quiet — "not that we take any side in the issue between the two gentlemen, but merely for the sake of argument — I wish to ask the stranger who has been good enough to interest himself in our trouble what he proposes to do — how can you establish your course in case a boat were provided?"

"Oh," laughed the stranger, "that is a simple matter. Captain Kidd has gone to London."

"To London!" cried several members at once. "How do you know that?"

"By this," said the stranger, holding up the tiny stub end of a cigar.

"Tut-tut!" ejaculated Solomon. "What child's play this is!"

"No, your Majesty," observed the stranger, "it is not child's play;

it is fact. That cigar end was thrown aside here on the wharf by Captain Kidd just before he stepped on board the Houseboat."

"How do you know that?" demanded Raleigh. "And granting the truth of the assertion, what does it prove?"

"I will tell you," said the stranger. And he at once proceeded as follows.

"I have made a hobby of the study of cigar ends," said the stranger, as the Associated Shades settled back to hear his account of himself. "From my earliest youth, when I used surreptitiously to remove the unsmoked ends of my father's cigars and break them up, and, in hiding, smoke them in an old clay pipe which I had presented to me by an ancient sea captain of my acquaintance, I have been interested in tobacco in all forms, even including these self-same despised unsmoked ends; for they convey to my mind messages, sentiments, farces, comedies, and tragedies which to your minds would never become manifest through their agency."

The company drew closer together and formed themselves in a more compact mass about the speaker. It was evident that they were beginning to feel an unusual interest in this extraordinary person, who had come among them unheralded and unknown.

"Do you mean to tell us," demanded Shakespeare, "that the unsmoked stub of a cigar will suggest the story of him who smoked it to your mind?"

"I do," replied the stranger, with a confident smile. "Take this one, for instance, that I have picked up here upon the wharf; it tells me the whole story of the intentions of Captain Kidd at the moment when, in utter disregard of your rights, he stepped aboard your Houseboat, and, in his usual piratical fashion, made off with it into unknown seas."

"But how do you know he smoked it?" asked Solomon, who deemed it the part of wisdom to be suspicious of the stranger.

"There are two curious indentations in it which prove that. The marks of two teeth, with a hiatus between, which you will see if you look closely," said the stranger, handing the small bit of tobacco to Sir Walter, "make that point evident beyond peradventure. The Captain lost an eyetooth in one of his later raids; it was knocked out by a marline spike which had been hurled at him by one of the crew of the treasure ship he and his followers had attacked. The

adjacent teeth were broken, but not removed. The cigar end bears the marks of those two jagged molars, with the hiatus, which, as I have indicated, is due to the destruction of the eyetooth between them. It is not likely that there was another man in the pirate's crew with teeth exactly like the commander's, therefore I say there can be no doubt that the cigar end was that of the Captain himself."

"Very interesting indeed," observed Blackstone, removing his wig and fanning himself with it; "but I must confess, Mr. Chairman, that in any properly constituted law court this evidence would long since have been ruled out as irrelevant and absurd. The idea of two or three hundred dignified spirits like ourselves, gathered together to devise a means for the recovery of our property and the rescue of our wives, yielding the floor to the delivering of a lecture by an entire stranger on 'Cigar Ends He Has Met,' strikes me as ridiculous in the extreme. Of what earthly interest is it to us to know that this or that cigar was smoked by Captain Kidd?"

"Merely that it will help us on, your honor, to discover the whereabouts of the said Kidd," interposed the stranger. "It is by trifles, seeming trifles, that the greatest detective work is done. My friends Lecoq, Hawkshaw, and Old Sleuth will bear me out in this, I think, however much in other respects our methods may have differed. They left no stone unturned in the pursuit of a criminal; no detail, however trifling, uncared for. No more should we in the present instance overlook the minutest bit of evidence, however irrelevant and absurd at first blush it may appear to be. The truth of what I say was very effectually proven in the strange case of the Brokedale tiara, in which I figured somewhat conspicuously, but which I have never made public, because it involves a secret affecting the integrity of one of the noblest families in the British Empire. I really believe that mystery was solved easily and at once because I happened to remember that the number of my watch was 86507B. How trivial a thing, and yet how important it was, as the event transpired, you will realize when I tell you the incident."

The stranger's manner was so impressive that there was a unanimous and simultaneous movement upon the part of all present to get up closer, so as the more readily to hear what he said, as a result of which poor old Boswell was pushed overboard, and fell with a loud splash into the Styx. Fortunately, however, one of Charon's

pleasure boats was close at hand, and in a short while the dripping, sputtering spirit was drawn into it, wrung out, and sent home to dry. The excitement attending this diversion having subsided, Solomon asked:

"What was the incident of the lost tiara?"

"I am about to tell you," returned the stranger; "and it must be understood that you are told in the strictest confidence, for, as I say, the incident involves a state secret of great magnitude. In life — in the mortal life — gentlemen, I was a detective by profession, and, if I do say it, who perhaps should not, I was one of the most interesting for purely literary purposes that has ever been known. I did not find it necessary to go about saying 'Ha! ha!' as M. Lecoq was accustomed to do to advertise his cleverness; neither did I disguise myself as a drum-major and hide under a kitchen table for the purpose of solving a mystery involving the abduction of a parlor stove, after the manner of the talented Hawkshaw. By mental concentration alone, without fireworks or orchestral accompaniment of any sort whatsoever, did I go about my business, and for that very reason many of my fellow sleuths were forced to go out of real detective work into that line of the business with which the stage has familiarized the most of us — a line in which nothing but stupidity, luck, and a yellow wig is required of him who pursues it."

"This man is an impostor," whispered Lecoq to Hawkshaw.

"I've known that all along by the mole on his left wrist," returned Hawkshaw, contemptuously.

"I suspected it the minute I saw he was not disguised," returned Lecoq, knowingly. "I have observed that the greatest villains latterly have discarded disguises, as being too easily penetrated, and therefore of no avail, and merely a useless expense."

"Silence!" cried Confucius, impatiently. "How can the gentleman proceed, with all this conversation going on in the rear?"

Hawkshaw and Lecoq immediately subsided, and the stranger went on.

"It was in this way that I treated the strange case of the lost tiara," resumed the stranger. "Mental concentration upon seemingly insignificant details alone enabled me to bring about the desired results in that instance. A brief outline of the case is as follows: It was late one evening in the early spring of 1894. The London season was at

its height. Dances, fetes of all kinds, opera, and the theaters were in full blast, when all of a sudden society was paralyzed by a most audacious robbery. A diamond tiara valued at £50,000 sterling had been stolen from the Duchess of Brokedale, and under circumstances which threw society itself and every individual in it under suspicion—even his Royal Highness the Prince himself, for he had danced frequently with the Duchess, and was known to be a great admirer of her tiara. It was at half-past eleven o'clock at night that the news of the robbery first came to my ears. I had been spending the evening alone in my library making notes for a second volume of my memoirs, and, feeling somewhat depressed, I was on the point of going out for my usual midnight walk on Hampstead Heath, when one of my servants, hastily entering, informed me of the robbery. I changed my mind in respect to my midnight walk immediately upon receipt of the news, for I knew that before one o'clock someone would call upon me at my lodgings with reference to this robbery. It could not be otherwise. Any mystery of such magnitude could no more be taken to another bureau than elephants could fly —

"They used to," said Adam. "I once had a whole aviary full of winged elephants. They flew from flower to flower, and thrusting their probabilities deep into —"

"Their what?" queried Johnson, with a frown.

"Probabilities — isn't that the word? Their trunks," said Adam.

"Probosces, I imagine you mean," suggested Johnson.

"Yes — that was it. Their probosces," said Adam. "They were great honey gatherers, those elephants — far better than the bees, because they could make so much more of it in a given time."

Munchausen shook his head sadly. "I'm afraid I'm outclassed by these antediluvians," he said.

"Gentlemen! Gentlemen!" cried Sir Walter. "These interruptions are inexcusable!"

"That's what I think," said the stranger, with some asperity. "I'm having about as hard a time getting this story out as I would if it were a serial. Of course, if you gentlemen do not wish to hear it, I can stop; but it must be understood that when I do stop I stop finally, once and for all, because the tale has not a sufficiency of dramatic climaxes to warrant its prolongation over the usual magazine period of twelve months."

"Go on! go on!" cried some.

"Shut up!" cried others — addressing the interrupting members, of course.

"As I was saying," resumed the stranger, "I felt confident that within an hour, in some way or other, that case would be placed in my hands. It would be mine either positively or negatively — that is to say, either the person robbed would employ me to ferret out the mystery and recover the diamonds, or the robber himself, actuated by motives of self-preservation, would endeavor to direct my energies into other channels until he should have the time to dispose of his ill-gotten booty. A mental discussion of the probabilities inclined me to believe that the latter would be the case. I reasoned in this fashion: The person robbed is of exalted rank. She cannot move rapidly because she is so. Great bodies move slowly. It is probable that it will be a week before, according to the etiquette by which she is hedged about, she can communicate with me. In the first place, she must inform one of her attendants that she has been robbed. He must communicate the news to the functionary in charge of her residence, who will communicate with the Home Secretary, and from him will issue the orders to the police, who, baffled at every step, will finally address themselves to me. 'I'll give that side two weeks,' I said. On the other hand, the robber: will he allow himself to be lulled into a false sense of security by counting on this delay, or will he not, noting my habit of occasionally entering upon detective enterprises of this nature of my own volition, come to me at once and set me to work ferreting out some crime that has never been committed? My feeling was that this would happen, and I pulled out my watch to see if it were not nearly time for him to arrive. The robbery had taken place at a state ball at the Buckingham Palace. 'H'm!' I mused. 'He has had an hour and forty minutes to get here. It is now twelve-twenty. He should be here by twelve-forty-five. I will wait.' And hastily swallowing a cocaine tablet to nerve myself up for the meeting, I sat down and began to read my Schopenhauer. Hardly had I perused a page when there came a tap upon my door. I rose with a smile, for I thought I knew what was to happen, opened the door, and there stood, much to my surprise, the husband of the lady whose tiara was missing. It was the Duke of Brokedale himself. It is true he was disguised. His beard was powdered until

it looked like snow, and he wore a wig and a pair of green goggles; but I recognized him at once by his lack of manners, which is an unmistakable sign of nobility. As I opened the door, he began:

"'You are Mr. —'

"'I am,' I replied. 'Come in. You have come to see me about your stolen watch. It is a gold hunting-case watch with a Swiss movement; loses five minutes a day; stem winder; and the back cover, which does not bear any inscription, has upon it the indentations made by the molars of your son Willie when that interesting youth was cutting his teeth upon it.'"

"Wonderful!" cried Johnson.

"May I ask how you knew all that?" asked Solomon, deeply impressed. "Such penetration strikes me as marvelous."

"I didn't know it," replied the stranger, with a smile. "What I said was intended to be jocular, and to put Brokedale at his ease. The Americans present, with their usual astuteness, would term it bluff. It was. I merely rattled on. I simply did not wish to offend the gentleman by letting him know that I had penetrated his disguise. Imagine my surprise, however, when his eye brightened as I spoke, and he entered my room with such alacrity that half the powder which he thought disguised his beard was shaken off onto the floor. Sitting down in the chair I had just vacated, he quietly remarked:

"'You are a wonderful man, sir. How did you know that I had lost my watch?'

"For a moment I was nonplused; more than that, I was completely staggered. I had expected him to say at once that he had not lost his watch, but had come to see me about the tiara; and to have him take my words seriously was entirely unexpected and overwhelmingly surprising. However, in view of his rank, I deemed it well to fall in with his humor. 'Oh, as for that,' I replied, 'that is a part of my business. It is the detective's place to know everything; and generally, if he reveals the machinery by means of which he reaches his conclusions, he is a fool, since his method is his secret, and his secret his stock in trade. I do not mind telling you, however, that I knew your watch was stolen by your anxious glance at my clock, which showed that you wished to know the time. Now most rich Americans have watches for that purpose, and have no hesitation about showing them. If you'd had a watch, you'd have looked at it, not at my clock.'

"My visitor laughed, and repeated what he had said about my being a wonderful man.

"And the dents which my son made cutting his teeth?" he added.

"Invariably go with an American's watch. Rubber or ivory rings aren't good enough for American babies to chew on," said I. "They must have gold watches or nothing."

"And finally, how did you know I was a rich American?" he asked.

"Because no other can afford to stop at hotels like the Savoy in the height of the season," I replied, thinking that the jest would end there, and that he would now reveal his identity and speak of the tiara. To my surprise, however, he did nothing of the sort.

"You have an almost supernatural gift," he said. "My name is Bunker. I *am* stopping at the Savoy. I *am* an American. I *was* rich when I arrived here, but I'm not quite so bloated with wealth as I was, now that I have paid my first week's bill. I *have* lost my watch; such a watch, too, as you describe, even to the dents. Your only mistake was that the dents were made by my son John, and not Willie; but even there I cannot but wonder at you, for John and Willie are twins, and so much alike that it sometimes baffles even their mother to tell them apart. The watch has no very great value intrinsically, but the associations are such that I want it back, and I will pay £200 for its recovery. I have no clue as to who took it. It was numbered —"

"Here a happy thought struck me. In all my description of the watch I had merely described my own, a very cheap affair which I had won at a raffle. My visitor was deceiving me, though for what purpose I did not on the instant divine. No one would like to suspect him of having purloined his wife's tiara. Why should I not deceive him, and at the same time get rid of my poor chronometer for a sum that exceeded its value a hundredfold?"

"Good business!" cried Shylock.

The stranger smiled and bowed.

"Excellent," he said. "I took the words right out of his mouth. 'It was numbered 86507B!' I cried, giving, of course, the number of my own watch.

"He gazed at me narrowly for a moment, and then he smiled. 'You grow more marvelous at every step. That was indeed the number. Are you a demon?'

"No," I replied. "Only something of a mind reader."

"Well, to be brief, the bargain was struck. I was to look for a watch that I knew he hadn't lost, and was to receive £200 if I found it. It seemed to him to be a very good bargain, as, indeed, it was, from his point of view, feeling, as he did, that there never having been any such watch, it could not be recovered, and little suspecting that two could play at his little game of deception, and that under any circumstances I could foist a ten-shilling watch upon him for two hundred pounds. This business concluded, he started to go.

"Won't you have a little Scotch?" I asked, as he started, feeling, with all that prospective profit in view, I could well afford the expense. 'It is a stormy night.'

"Thanks, I will," said he, returning and seating himself by my table — still, to my surprise, keeping his hat on.

"Let me take your hat," I said, little thinking that my courtesy would reveal the true state of affairs. The mere mention of the word hat brought about a terrible change in my visitor; his knees trembled, his face grew ghastly, and he clutched the brim of his beaver until it cracked. He then nervously removed it, and I noticed a dull red mark running about his forehead, just as there would be on the forehead of a man whose hat fitted too tightly; and that mark, gentlemen, had the undulating outline of nothing more nor less than a tiara, and on the apex of the uppermost extremity was a deep indentation about the size of a shilling, that could have been made only by some adamantine substance! The mystery was solved! The robber of the Duchess of Brokedale stood before me."

A suppressed murmur of excitement went through the assembled spirits, and even Messrs. Hawkshaw and Lecoq were silent in the presence of such genius.

"My plan of action was immediately formulated. The man was completely at my mercy. He had stolen the tiara, and had it concealed in the lining of his hat. I rose and locked the door. My visitor sank with a groan into my chair.

"Why did you do that?" he stammered, as I turned the key in the lock.

"To keep my Scotch whisky from evaporating," I said, dryly. "Now, my lord," I added, "it will pay your Grace to let me have your hat. I know who you are. You are the Duke of Brokedale. The

Duchess of Brokedale has lost a valuable tiara of diamonds, and you have not lost your watch. Somebody has stolen the diamonds, and it may be that somewhere there is a Bunker who has lost such a watch as I have described. The queer part of it all is — ' I continued, handing him the decanter, and taking a couple of loaded six-shooters out of my escritoire — 'the queer part of it all is that I have the watch and you have the tiara. We'll swap the swag. Hand over the bauble, please.'

"'But — ' he began.

"'We won't have any butting, your Grace,' said I. 'I'll give you the watch, and you needn't mind the £200; and you must give me the tiara, or I'll accompany you forthwith to the police, and have a search made of your hat. It won't pay you to defy me. Give it up.'

"He gave up the hat at once, and, as I suspected, there lay the tiara, snugly stowed away behind the head-band.

"'You are a great fellow,' said I, as I held the tiara up to the light and watched with pleasure the flashing brilliance of its gems.

"'I beg you'll not expose me,' he moaned. 'I was driven to it by necessity.'

"'Not I,' I replied. 'As long as you play fair it will be all right. I'm not going to keep this thing. I'm not married, and so have no use for such a trifle; but what I do intend is simply to wait until your wife retains me to find it, and then I'll find it and get the reward. If you keep perfectly still, I'll have it found in such a fashion that you'll never be suspected. If, on the other hand, you say a word about to-night's events, I'll hand you over to the police.'

"'Humph!' he said. 'You couldn't prove a case against me.'

"'I can prove any case against anybody,' I retorted. 'If you don't believe it, read my book,' I added, and I handed him a copy of my memoirs.

"'I've read it,' he answered, 'and I ought to have known better than to come here. I thought you were only a literary success.' And with a deep-drawn sigh he took the watch and went out. Ten days later I was retained by the Duchess, and after a pretended search of ten days more I found the tiara, restored it to the noble lady, and received the £5000 reward. The Duke kept perfectly quiet about our little encounter, and afterwards we became stanch friends; for he was a good fellow, and was driven to his desperate deed only by the demands

of his creditors, and the following Christmas he sent me the watch I had given him, with the best wishes of the season.

"So, you see, gentlemen, in a moment, by quick wit and a mental concentration of no mean order, combined with strict observance of the pettiest details, I ferreted out what bade fair to become a great diamond mystery."

"Hear! Hear!" cried Raleigh, growing tumultuous with enthusiasm.

"Your name? Your name?" came from all parts of the wharf.

The stranger, putting his hand into the folds of his coat, drew forth a bundle of business cards, which he tossed, as the prestidigitator tosses playing cards, out among the audience, and on each of them was found printed the words:

SHERLOCK HOLMES

DETECTIVE

—
FERRETING DONE HERE

Plots for Sale

SHYLOCK HOMES:
HIS POSTHUMOUS MEMOIRS

Mr. Homes Solves a Question of Authorship

by JOHN KENDRICK BANGS

John Kendrick Bangs wrote a series of parodies which were syndicated in American newspapers in 1903 under the title "Shylock Homes: His Posthumous Memoirs." Your Editors have tracked down eight of this series—but certain curious evidence exists indicating there may have been more. At the time of this writing, however, all efforts to smoke out the "missing memoirs" have failed.

For some unknown reason this series was never published in book form. As a result Shylock Homes is "lost" today—almost completely forgotten except by a handful of oldtimers with long white memories. It is a special privilege, therefore, to memorialize one of Shylock Homes's cases between covers for the first time.

In this adventure Homes acts in behalf of three famous and/or infamous ladies—Lucretia Borgia, Mme. du Barry, and Portia. He reveals to them his great powers as a cipherologist, and in solving one of the most baffling mysteries of all time, Homes proves himself not only a detective but a literary detective to boot!

THERE had been some acrimonious discussion at the last session of the Cimmerian Branch of Sorosis over the authorship of the works of William Shakespeare. Cleopatra had read a paper of some cleverness which proved to its fair author, at least, that the plays that have come down to us from the Golden Age of Letters were from the pen

of a syndicate, of which Shakespeare was the managing director. Xanthippe, in a satirical philippic, demonstrated beyond peradventure that they were written by Guy Fawkes; Queen Elizabeth was strong in the debate in the affirmation of Bacon's responsibility for the works; Mrs. Noah proved an alibi for her husband, and Anne Hathaway, when called upon to speak, observed that she had never heard of them at all. The discussion waxed so fast and furious that in order to prevent the disruption of the society a committee of three, consisting of Lucretia Borgia, Mme. du Barry and Portia, was appointed to wait upon myself with the request that I solve the mystery on behalf of the club, promising to abide by whatever decision I might render in the matter. The ladies mentioned did me the honor to call at my office, where they laid the whole question before me.

"We shall be glad to lay before you any evidence at our disposal," said Portia. "I for one have worked out a cipher which seems to me conclusively to prove Bacon's authorship, but, of course, you can take it or reject it, just as you please."

Thereupon she handed me a slip of paper, upon which the following was written:

Two Gentlemen o	F	Verona	14
Hen	R	y V	4
Merch	A	nt of Venice	6
Much Ado About	N	othing	13
Ri	C	hard III	3
K	I	ng John	2
A	S	You Like It	2
Mac	B	eth	4
T	A	ming of the Shrew	2
	C	omedy of Errors	1
Cori	O	lanus	5
Timo	N	of Athens	5
Total			61

I glanced the acrostic over with interest, and then I asked:

"But what does this prove?"

"Bacon was born in '61," replied Portia, "which number is the sum total of the letters that spell out his name in the plays I have put

down there. Certainly such a coincidence, Mr. Homes, is not without significance."

Lucretia Borgia sneered.

Foreseeing a quarrel of stupendous proportions, I quickly intervened. "Now," I said, "I'm something of a cipherologist myself, and I should like to see what I could prove to you in the same line. Suppose we try this arrangement," and I wrote out the following:

Ti	M	on of Athens	3
Me	R	chant of Venice	3
Much A	D	o About Nothing	6
King J	O	hn	6
C	O	riolanus	2
Ju	L	ius Caesar	3
Rom	E	o and Juliet	4
Henr	Y	V	<u>5</u>
Total			32

"Well," sneered Portia, in that freezing tone of hers, "what of it?"

"Only that the numbered letters of the cipher foot up to thirty-two, which is Mr. Dooley's age, his books are all 32mos and for two years he has been getting thirty-two cents a word for all he writes," I explained. "My dear ladies," I added, rising, "these things are interesting, but they prove nothing. By them you can prove that almost anybody, except Sienkiewicz, wrote Shakespeare's plays — aye, even Hall Caine and Marie Corelli."

"Why not Sienkiewicz?" asked Portia, icily.

"Because, as you will observe from a glance at the backs of the immortal bard's works, there is no 'z' in any of Shakespeare's titles, madam," I replied.

"How about 'Julius Caesar'?" she demanded, hastily.

"A good play, madam," I replied promptly, "but spelled with an 's.'"

And then I entered upon the enterprise, which, I must confess, startled even myself in the manner of its ending. The first thing I did was to call upon Sir Francis Bacon. He received me in the library of his villa at Noxmere, and I found him a most interesting personage.

"What can I do for Mr. Shylock Homes?" he asked, after we had exchanged the civilities of the moment.

"Well, Sir Francis," I replied, "I have a somewhat delicate mission. I would like to make use of your keenly critical mind to solve a disputed authorship."

"Aha!" he cried, betraying no little nervousness. "You are not taking up literary detection, I hope?"

"Yes, I am, Sir Francis," I answered, "and my reputation is at stake. I wish to save it —"

"And cause me to lose mine by so doing!" he cried, impetuously, rising and pacing the room like a caged tiger.

"I don't understand you, Sir Francis," I said. "I certainly would not have you lose your reputation to save my own. Are you under suspicion in any literary controversy?" I added, innocently.

Bacon eyed me narrowly, and then sat down.

"Not that I am aware of," he said, with a sigh of relief, "although — well, never mind. What is the mystery you wish to solve?"

The action had begun sooner than I had expected. It was clear that His Lordship was much perturbed at the intrusion of myself into his affairs, and so, to throw him off the scent, instead of asking him frankly the question, "Did you or did you not write Shakespeare's plays?" as I had come to do, I answered, choosing my words by the merest chance, "That of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde."

If I had thrown a bomb into the middle of the library the effect could not have been more dramatic. Bacon jumped up as if he had been shot, but I paid no attention, going on with my question calmly.

"Was that story romance or realism?"

"You have the subtlety of the serpent, Mr. Shylock Homes," he answered, with difficulty regaining his composure. "Why do you ask me, of all men, that question?"

"Because," said I, a great light dawning upon my mind, "I thought you, of all men, could tell me."

"But why? Why? Why? Why?" he cried, the reiterated "whys" rising in inflection until they ended in a shriek.

Unconsciously I had struck a vein of rich ore, and my future course revealed itself to me on the instant.

"Because," I said, "because you, of all men, should know — having tried the same scheme yourself."

The pallor that spread over his countenance was deadly, and he

sank back limp in his chair, but, as with a sudden resolve, he straightened up again and became strong.

"Great heavens, Homes, where have you heard this?" he implored.

"Oh, just a little coterie to which I belonged in London used to take that theory," I lied, "and it found so general an acceptance among us and our friends and our friends' friends that I had supposed that by this time it was all over."

"You are retained by?" he queried.

"Sorosis," said I.

"And your fee — I will double it, Mr. Shylock Homes, if you will call off."

"I am incorruptible, Sir Francis," said I, rising with a mock show of anger, "and I bid you good evening."

"Don't leave me in anger, Mr. Homes," he pleaded, holding out his hand. "I have long admired you and your work, and was frankly delighted when I received your card. My unfortunate suggestion as to your fee I deeply regret. I, of course, know that you could not be corrupted, but I so deprecate the prolongation of the controversy as to my connection with — er — Shakespeare's works, that I forgot myself."

"Don't mention it, Sir Francis," I replied, accepting his proffered hand. "I understand. And to show you that I have no ill feelings, I wish you would take luncheon with me next Wednesday."

He fell into the trap at once. "I shall be delighted," he said.

"And to set forever at rest this absurd theory as to you and Shakespeare being another case of Jekyll and Hyde I'll ask him, too. If you are both there you cannot, of course, be the same man, you see."

Bacon tottered and almost fell as I spoke, but he soon recovered his equilibrium.

"I — I will see that he accepts," he said, huskily.

"Thank you," said I, and took my departure.

Upon my return to my office I despatched a note to Shakespeare bidding him to the feast of Wednesday, and was somewhat taken aback, in view of my theory, to receive an immediate acceptance. When I left Lord Bacon I was morally convinced that I had fallen upon the right solution of the mystery, but if this were so how could both Shakespeare and Bacon be present at my luncheon simultaneously?

It perplexed me much, and, seeing no way out of the mystery, I dismissed the whole matter from my mind, and sat down to await developments. Wednesday came, and, at the appointed hour, both guests arrived, walking in arm in arm, and chatting away as amiably as if there had never been a fierce battle raging between their followers for the greatest literary honors the world has to bestow. I was more than ever puzzled, when I shook them by the hand and made them welcome at my table, but it was none the less clear that there was some mystery to which they were both a party, for Bacon was excessively nervous all through the luncheon, and Shakespeare perspired as freely as though he were Damocles sitting beneath a suspended sword. Moreover, Bacon was loath to let Shakespeare open his mouth, save to take in food and drink. He talked incessantly, and, at times, so vagariously that I wondered if he were in his right mind. Nor was there about Shakespeare any of the bonhomie that I had heard was so characteristic of the man, and, when the luncheon was over, instead of feeling that I had known him all my life, I really felt as if I knew him less well than when we had first sat down at table. Still, there they were, both of them, and my theory must fall in the face of the fact, unless — Ah! That unless! It saved the day for Shylock Homes, for it bade me pursue the same line of inquiry even in the face of certain defeat.

Turning the conversation upon certain political schemers and their plans, I ventured the Shakespearean quotation:

“Excellent! I smell a device!”

Bacon was about to respond, when Shakespeare growled forth:

“You don’t smell advice, do you, Mr. Homes? Your English is so — ”

Bacon upset his coffee in Shakespeare’s lap to divert the bard and set his tongue wagging on other lines, with which subterfuge I fell in most readily, but it was too late. Evidently there was something wrong with this Shakespeare, who protested against his own periods and ventured the beginnings of an assault upon his own language. I did, indeed, smell a device, but for the moment pursued it no further.

“I must lull them into a sense of security,” I thought, “and maybe then all will become clear.”

How well I did so is evidenced by the fact that when we parted it was with the distinct promise that Shakespeare and I were to spend

the following Sunday at Noxmere with Bacon. I was glad indeed of the invitation, for my suspicions were becoming so great that all the powers of Hades could not now have diverted me from the mystery I had undertaken to solve. Entirely apart from the interest I was beginning to take in it, it would never do, even from a professional point of view, to give up now or let Bacon deceive me, as he appeared to be trying to do, and, as I looked back upon the luncheon and recalled several seemingly insignificant little details, I felt pretty certain that there was something very strange about Shakespeare. He preferred absinthe to ale, for one thing; he questioned the use of terms in one of his own phrases; had no good stories to tell and was very far from being the roistering companion his friends had cracked him up to be. A day in the country might reveal the true inwardness of certain things that just now baffled me, and I accepted with alacrity. Not so Shakespeare, who betrayed considerable reluctance to be one of the party, but partly by persuasion and partly, I could see, by intimidation he was won over.

The next day I called upon my friend Henry Jekyll, with whom I had been on intimate relations in London the year he and I sprang almost simultaneously into our enviable notoriety. I told him frankly the position in which I was placed, and what I suspected, and adjured him, if he were my friend, to give me the prescription by which he transformed himself into Hyde, and then from Hyde back to Jekyll again. At first he refused me point blank.

"You'll use it on yourself, Homes, and if you do it will ruin you," he said.

"I swear to you that I will not, Jekyll," I replied. "You know the value of my word."

"But —" he persisted.

"Do you want me to be made the laughing stock of all Hades?" I cried. "As I surely shall be if I fail in this enterprise."

"I know, Homes," said he. "But —"

"It is the only favor I have ever asked of you, Henry Jekyll," said I. "And I beg to recall to your mind that I knew the truth of your double existence in London when Hyde murdered Sir Danvers Carew. Did I betray you when your betrayal would have made my fortune?"

"It is yours," he cried, as, seizing a prescription blank from the table, he wrote down the required formula.

I had the powder in my pocket the following Sunday, upon my arrival at Noxmere. The day passed pleasantly, and Shakespeare proved a charming companion — rather too much given to reciting lines from his own works, perhaps, but full of geniality and quite like the man I had expected to find him. Indeed, had his manner at the luncheon been the same as that which he displayed at Noxmere I should have pursued the Jekyll-and-Hyde theory no further. But now I refused to cast suspicion aside without the supremest test of trying Jekyll's powders on Bacon. All day long, I avoided allusion to my professional work, and by nightfall both Bacon and Shakespeare were so thoroughly convinced that they had thrown me off the scent that they became frankly and facetiously jocular. I bided my time until the nightcap hour came, and then, in order to put my plan into operation, suggested that I be allowed to mix a cocktail for the company.

"I learned the art from an American friend," I said, "and I assure you, my Lord, and you, too, William Shakespeare, when you have swallowed your first Martini you will say that you've never had a drink before."

"Wassail to the Martini!" cried Bacon, joyously.

"All hail the *queue de cog!*" roared Shakespeare, jovially — a remark which caused Bacon to frown and Shakespeare to turn pale. What had the "Bard of Avon" to do, indeed, with the French language? I said nothing whatever, proceeding at once to the making of the mixture, and into Bacon's glass I slipped Jekyll's powder. We all drank, and then —

Do you remember Dr. Lanyon's narrative in Stevenson's stirring account of Jekyll's fall, in which he describes what happened to Mr. Hyde when he had swallowed the potion? His words, as I remember them, ran as follows:

"He put the glass to his lips and drank at one gulp. A cry followed. He reeled, staggered, clutched at the table and held on, staring with injected eyes, gasping with open mouth, and as I looked there came, I thought, a change — he seemed to swell, his face became suddenly black and the features seemed to melt and alter, and the next moment

I had sprung to my feet and leaped back against the wall, my arm raised to shield me from that prodigy, my mind submerged in terror.

"'Oh, God!' I screamed, and 'Oh, God!' again and again, for there, before my eyes, pale and shaken and half fainting, and groping before him with his hands, like a man restored from death, there stood Henry Jekyll!"

The same scene was enacted in the study of Francis Bacon. He, too, like Hyde, drained the contents of the glass at a gulp. He, too, reeled, staggered and clutched and held onto the table, staring with injected eyes and gasping with open mouth. And over him, also, came a change in which his face turned suddenly black and the features melted and altered.

Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam, faded in a mist of horror and out of it emerged, pale, palsied and shattered for the moment, no less a person than William Shakespeare himself, while seated opposite, gazing in horrified wonderment, sat another Shakespeare, who gasped and choked and gripped and groaned, staring the real in the eye and powerless for the instant to move. I stood back in the shadow of the mantel watching both, when suddenly the spurious Shakespeare, with a shriek, sprang madly to his feet and plunged toward the door. By a quick move I intercepted him.

"We have solved the old mystery — now for the new!" I cried. "Who are you?"

"I beg of you," he began, whereupon I seized him by the goatee, which, being false, came off in my hand and with it the rest of the disguise, wig, mustache and all.

It was M. Lecoq.

"I — I paid him for this, Mr. Homes!" gasped Bacon, or, rather, Shakespeare, as he now was. "Do not blame M. Lecoq for this —"

"He may go," said I. "I have only to deal with you."

And Lecoq shrank from the room and disappeared into the night.

"Well, Lord Bacon," said I, addressing the poor creature before me. "I have discovered the secret of the centuries. It is you who are the author of Shakespeare's plays."

"In a sense — as Shakespeare I — I wrote them, yes."

"So that I may report —"

"I do not know!" he moaned. "I am broken, Mr. Homes, absolutely broken, in spirit. To have this known —"

"It never will be, Lord Bacon," said I, "at least not here. I shall publish my report only in the upper world, and the books of that sphere have no circulation in this."

"And you will conclude?"

"There is but one conclusion, Lord Bacon. William Shakespeare wrote his own works. You backed him. I shall so report to Sorosis and the ladies may take it as final or leave it."

And so I left him. True to my promise, this story has not been circulated in Hades, and I rejoice to say that, based upon my report to the committee, the Society of Sorosis of Cimmeria has voted by 369 to 1 that Shakespeare wrote Shakespeare.

The negative vote was cast by Anne Hathaway, who observed that she did not wish to incriminate her husband until she had seen the stuff.

MADDENED BY MYSTERY:
or, The Defective Detective

by STEPHEN LEACOCK

"Maddened by Mystery," from Stephen Leacock's NONSENSE NOVELS (London, Lane, 1911; New York, Lane, 1911), is Canada's contribution to our Parade of Parodies. The author, a world-famous wit and political economist, goes all out in his satire of the Sacred Writings and the Great Man.

"Maddened by Mystery" (a maddening title) was the only parody chosen by E. C. Bentley, creator of Philip Trent, for his anthology, THE SECOND CENTURY OF DETECTIVE STORIES (London, Hutchinson, 1938). It is therefore safe to deduce that this hilarious burlesque is E. C. Bentley's favorite parody of Holmes — a recommendation not to be ignored, or cast aside lightly. Don't be self-conscious: chuckle to your heart's content!

THE GREAT DETECTIVE sat in his office. He wore a long green gown and half a dozen secret badges pinned to the outside of it.

Three or four pairs of false whiskers hung on a whisker stand beside him.

Goggles, blue spectacles, and motor glasses lay within easy reach. He could completely disguise himself at a second's notice.

Half a bucket of cocaine and a dipper stood on a chair at his elbow. His face was absolutely impenetrable.

A pile of cryptograms lay on the desk. The Great Detective hastily tore them open one after the other, solved them, and threw them down the cryptogram chute at his side.

There was a rap at the door.

The Great Detective hurriedly wrapped himself in a pink domino, adjusted a pair of false black whiskers and cried:

"Come in."

His secretary entered. "Ha," said the detective, "it is you!"

He laid aside his disguise.

"Sir," said the young man in intense excitement, "a mystery has been committed!"

"Ha!" said the Great Detective, his eye kindling, "is it such as to completely baffle the police of the entire continent?"

"They are so completely baffled with it," said the secretary, "that they are lying collapsed in heaps; many of them have committed suicide."

"So," said the detective, "and is the mystery one that is absolutely unparalleled in the whole recorded annals of the London police?"

"It is."

"And I suppose," said the detective, "that it involves names which you would scarcely dare to breathe, at least without first using some kind of atomizer or throat gargle."

"Exactly."

"And it is connected, I presume, with the highest diplomatic consequences, so that if we fail to solve it England will be at war with the whole world in sixteen minutes?"

His secretary, still quivering with excitement, again answered yes.

"And finally," said the Great Detective, "I presume that it was committed in broad daylight, in some such place as the entrance of the Bank of England, or in the cloakroom of the House of Commons, and under the very eyes of the police?"

"Those," said the secretary, "are the very conditions of the mystery."

"Good," said the Great Detective. "Now wrap yourself in this disguise, put on these brown whiskers and tell me what it is."

The secretary wrapped himself in a blue domino with lace insertions, then, bending over, he whispered in the ear of the Great Detective:

"The Prince of Württemberg has been kidnaped."

The Great Detective bounded from his chair as if he had been kicked from below.

A prince stolen! Evidently a Bourbon! The scion of one of the oldest families in Europe kidnaped. Here was a mystery indeed worthy of his analytical brain.

His mind began to move like lightning.

"Stop!" he said. "How do you know this?"

The secretary handed him a telegram. It was from the Prefect of Police of Paris. It read:

THE PRINCE OF WÜRTTEMBERG STOLEN. PROBABLY FORWARDED TO LONDON. MUST HAVE HIM HERE FOR THE OPENING DAY OF EXHIBITION. £1000 REWARD.

So! The Prince had been kidnaped out of Paris at the very time when his appearance at the International Exposition would have been a political event of the first magnitude.

With the Great Detective to think was to act, and to act was to think. Frequently he could do both together.

"Wire to Paris for a description of the Prince."

The secretary bowed and left.

At the same moment there was a slight scratching at the door.

A visitor entered. He crawled stealthily on his hands and knees. A hearthrug thrown over his head and shoulders disguised his identity.

He crawled to the middle of the room.

Then he rose.

Great Heaven!

It was the Prime Minister of England.

"You!" said the detective.

"Me," said the Prime Minister.

"You have come in regard to the kidnaping of the Prince of Württemberg?"

The Prime Minister started.

"How do you know?" he said.

The Great Detective smiled his inscrutable smile.

"Yes," said the Prime Minister. "I will use no concealment. I am interested, deeply interested. Find the Prince of Württemberg, get him safe back to Paris and I will add £500 to the reward already offered. But listen," he said impressively as he left the room, "see to it that no attempt is made to alter the marking of the Prince, or to clip his tail."

So! To clip the Prince's tail! The brain of the Great Detective reeled. So! A gang of miscreants had conspired to — But no! The thing was not possible.

There was another rap at the door.

A second visitor was seen. He wormed his way in, lying almost prone upon his stomach, and wriggling across the floor. He was enveloped in a long purple cloak. He stood up and peeped over the top of it.

Great Heaven!

It was the Archbishop of Canterbury!

"Your Grace!" exclaimed the detective in amazement. "Pray do not stand, I beg you. Sit down, lie down, anything rather than stand."

The Archbishop took off his miter and laid it wearily on the whisker stand.

"You are here in regard to the Prince of Württemberg."

The Archbishop started and crossed himself. Was the man a magician?

"Yes," he said, "much depends on getting him back. But I have only come to say this: my sister is desirous of seeing you. She is coming here. She has been extremely indiscreet and her fortune hangs upon the Prince. Get him back to Paris or I fear she will be ruined."

The Archbishop regained his miter, uncrossed himself, wrapped his cloak about him, and crawled stealthily out on his hands and knees, purring like a cat.

The face of the Great Detective showed the most profound sympathy. It ran up and down in furrows. "So," he muttered, "the sister of the Archbishop, the Countess of Dashleigh!" Accustomed as he was to the life of the aristocracy, even the Great Detective felt that here was intrigue of more than customary complexity.

There was a loud rapping at the door.

There entered the Countess of Dashleigh. She was all in furs.

She was the most beautiful woman in England. She strode imperiously into the room. She seized a chair imperiously and seated herself on it, imperial side up.

She took off her tiara of diamonds and put it on the tiara holder beside her and uncoiled her boa of pearls and put it on the pearl stand.

"You have come," said the Great Detective, "about the Prince of Württemberg."

"Wretched little pup!" said the Countess of Dashleigh in disgust.

So! A further complication! Far from being in love with the Prince, the Countess denounced the young Bourbon as a pup!

"You are interested in him, I believe."

"Interested!" said the Countess. "I should rather say so. Why, I bred him!"

"You which?" gasped the Great Detective, his usually impassive features suffused with a carmine blush.

"I bred him," said the Countess, "and I've got £10,000 upon his chances, so no wonder I want him back in Paris. Only listen," she said, "if they've got hold of the Prince and cut his tail or spoiled the markings of his stomach it would be far better to have him quietly put out of the way here."

The Great Detective reeled and leaned up against the side of the room. So! The cold-blooded admission of the beautiful woman for the moment took away his breath! Herself the mother of the young Bourbon, misallied with one of the greatest families of Europe, staking her fortune on a Royalist plot, and yet with so instinctive a knowledge of European politics as to know that any removal of the hereditary birthmarks of the Prince would forfeit for him the sympathy of the French populace.

The Countess resumed her tiara.

She left.

The secretary re-entered.

"I have three telegrams from Paris," he said. "They are completely baffling."

He handed over the first telegram.

It read:

THE PRINCE OF WÜRTTEMBERG HAS A LONG, WET SNOUT, BROAD EARS,
VERY LONG BODY, AND SHORT HIND LEGS.

The Great Detective looked puzzled.

He read the second telegram.

THE PRINCE OF WÜRTTEMBERG IS EASILY RECOGNIZED BY HIS DEEP
BARK.

And then the third.

THE PRINCE OF WÜRTTEMBERG CAN BE RECOGNIZED BY THE PATCH
OF WHITE HAIR ACROSS THE CENTER OF HIS BACK.

The two men looked at one another. The mystery was maddening, impenetrable.

The Great Detective spoke.

"Give me my domino," he said. "These clues must be followed up." Then pausing, while his quick brain analyzed and summed up the evidence before him — "A young man," he muttered, "evidently young since described as a 'pup,' with a long, wet snout (ha! addicted obviously to drinking), a streak of white hair across his back (a first sign of the results of his abandoned life) — yes, yes," he continued, "with this clue I shall find him easily."

The Great Detective rose.

He wrapped himself in a long black cloak with white whiskers and blue spectacles attached.

Completely disguised, he issued forth.

He began the search.

For four days he visited every corner of London.

He entered every saloon in the city. In each of them he drank a glass of rum. In some of them he assumed the disguise of a sailor. In others he entered as a soldier. Into others he penetrated as a clergyman. His disguise was perfect. Nobody paid any attention to him as long as he had the price of a drink.

The search proved fruitless.

Two young men were arrested under suspicion of being the Prince, only to be released.

The identification was incomplete in each case.

One had a long wet snout but no hair on his back.

The other had hair on his back but couldn't bark.

Neither of them was the young Bourbon.

The Great Detective continued his search.

He stopped at nothing.

Secretly, after nightfall, he visited the home of the Prime Minister. He examined it from top to bottom. He measured all the doors and windows. He took up the flooring. He inspected the plumbing. He examined the furniture. He found nothing.

With equal secrecy he penetrated into the palace of the Archbishop. He examined it from top to bottom. Disguised as a choirboy he took part in the offices of the Church. He found nothing.

Still undismayed, the Great Detective made his way into the home

of the Countess of Dashleigh. Disguised as a housemaid, he entered the service of the Countess.

Then at last the clue came which gave him a solution of the mystery.

On the wall of the Countess's boudoir was a large framed engraving.

It was a portrait.

Under it was a printed legend:

THE PRINCE OF WÜRTTEMBERG

The portrait was that of a dachshund.

The long body, the broad ears, the unclipped tail, the short hind legs — all were there.

In the fraction of a second the lightning mind of the Great Detective had penetrated the whole mystery.

THE PRINCE WAS A DOG!!!!

Hastily throwing a domino over his housemaid's dress, he rushed to the street. He summoned a passing hansom, and in a few minutes was at his house.

"I have it," he gasped to his secretary, "the mystery is solved. I have pieced it together. By sheer analysis I have reasoned it out. Listen — hind legs, hair on back, wet snout, pup — eh, what? Does that suggest nothing to you?"

"Nothing," said the secretary; "it seems perfectly hopeless."

The Great Detective, now recovered from his excitement, smiled faintly.

"It means simply this, my dear fellow. The Prince of Württemberg is a dog, a prize dachshund. The Countess of Dashleigh bred him, and he is worth some £25,000 in addition to the prize of £10,000 offered at the Paris dog show. Can you wonder that —"

At that moment the Great Detective was interrupted by the scream of a woman.

"Great Heaven!"

The Countess of Dashleigh dashed into the room.

Her face was wild.

Her tiara was in disorder.

Her pearls were dripping all over the place.

She wrung her hands and moaned.

"They have cut his tail," she gasped, "and taken all the hair off his back. What can I do? I am undone!"

"Madame," said the Great Detective, calm as bronze, "do yourself up. I can save you yet."

"You!"

"Me!"

"How?"

"Listen. This is how. The Prince was to have been shown at Paris."

The Countess nodded.

"Your fortune was staked on him?"

The Countess nodded again.

"The dog was stolen, carried to London, his tail cut and his marks disfigured."

Amazed at the quiet penetration of the Great Detective, the Countess kept on nodding and nodding.

"And you are ruined?"

"I am," she gasped, and sank down on the floor in a heap of pearls.

"Madame," said the Great Detective, "all is not lost."

He straightened himself up to his full height. A look of inflexible unflexibility flickered over his features.

The honor of England, the fortune of the most beautiful woman in England were at stake.

"I will do it," he murmured.

"Rise, dear lady," he continued. "Fear nothing. I WILL IMPERSONATE THE DOG!!!"

That night the Great Detective might have been seen on the deck of the Calais packet-boat with his secretary. He was on his hands and knees in a long black cloak, and his secretary had him on a short chain.

He barked at the waves exultingly and licked the secretary's hand.

"What a beautiful dog," said the passengers.

The disguise was absolutely complete.

The Great Detective had been coated over with mucilage to which dog hairs had been applied. The markings on his back were perfect. His tail, adjusted with an automatic coupler, moved up and down responsive to every thought. His deep eyes were full of intelligence.

Next day he was exhibited in the dachshund class at the International show.

He won all hearts.

"*Quel beau chien!*" cried the French people.

"*Ach! Was ein Dog!*" cried the Spanish.

The Great Detective took the first prize!

The fortune of the Countess was saved.

Unfortunately as the Great Detective had neglected to pay the dog tax, he was caught and destroyed by the dogcatchers. But that is, of course, quite outside of the present narrative, and is only mentioned as an odd fact in conclusion.

AN IRREDUCIBLE DETECTIVE STORY

by STEPHEN LEACOCK

In the preceding parody Mr. Leacock calls his protagonist "the Great Detective" — with two capital letters. In "An Irreducible Detective Story" the author calls his chief character "the great detective" — with no capitals.

This spelling clue suggests that Mr. Leacock did not intend his second parody to be a sequel to the first — more's the pity. But your Editors could not bring themselves to deprive you of a "hair-raising" burlesque merely because of the absence of two capital letters.

"An Irreducible Detective Story," from FURTHER FOOLISHNESS (New York, Lane, 1916; London, Lane, 1917), was written primarily to lampoon the so-called short-short story. This is not a deduction — it is clearly revealed by the author's own preface which reads: "Among the latest follies in fiction is the perpetual demand for stories shorter and shorter still. The only thing to do is to meet this demand at the source and check it. The story below, if left to soak overnight in a barrel of rainwater, will swell to the dimensions of a dollar-fifty novel."

THE MYSTERY had now reached its climax. First, the man had been undoubtedly murdered. Second, it was absolutely certain that no conceivable person had done it.

It was therefore time to call in the great detective.

He gave one searching glance at the corpse. In a moment he whipped out a microscope.

"Ha! Ha!" he said, as he picked a hair off the lapel of the dead man's coat. "The mystery is now solved."

He held up the hair.

"Listen," he said, "we have only to find the man who lost this hair and the criminal is in our hands."

The inexorable chain of logic was complete.

The detective set himself to the search.

For four days and nights he moved, unobserved, through the streets of New York scanning closely every face he passed, looking for a man who had lost a hair.

On the fifth day he discovered a man, disguised as a tourist, his head enveloped in a steamer cap that reached below his ears.

The man was about to go on board the *Gloritania*.

The detective followed him on board.

"Arrest him!" he said, and then drawing himself to his full height, he brandished aloft the hair.

"This is his," said the great detective. "It proves his guilt."

"Remove his hat," said the ship's captain sternly.

They did so.

The man was entirely bald.

"Ha!" said the great detective, without a moment of hesitation.

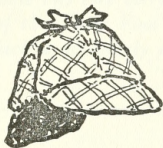
"He has committed not *one* murder but about a million."

PART FOUR:

BY DEVOTEES AND OTHERS

"I think, sir, when Holmes fell over that cliff,
he may not have killed himself, but all the same
he was never quite the same man afterwards."

— A Cornish boatman's
comment to Sir Arthur
Conan Doyle



THE ADVENTURE OF THE TABLE FOOT

by ZERO (*ALLAN RAMSAY*)

This sketch appeared originally in "The Bohemian" magazine, London, issue of January 1894. So far as your Editors have been able to determine, it has never been reprinted, and since copies of "The Bohemian" are hard to come by these days, we are happy to make available this rare early travesty.

"The Adventure of the Table Foot" illustrates the purely farcical approach, which is not nearly so effective as shrewdly plotted burlesque.

I CALLED one morning — a crisp cold wintry December day — on my friend Thinlock Bones, for the purpose of keeping him company at breakfast, and, as usual about this time of the morning, I found him running over the agony columns of the different newspapers, quietly smiling at the egotistical private-detective advertisements. He looked up and greeted me as I entered.

"Ah, Whatsoname, how d'you do? You have not had breakfast yet. And you must be hungry. I suppose that is why you drove, and in a hansom too. Yet you had time to stay and look at your barometer. You look surprised. I can easily see — any fool would see it — that you've not breakfasted, as your teeth and mouth are absolutely clean, not a crumb about. I noticed it as you smiled on your entry. You drove — it's a muddy morning and your boots are quite clean. In a hansom — don't I know what time you rise? How then could you get here so quickly without doing it in a hansom? A bus or four-wheeler couldn't do it in the time. Oh! The barometer business. Why, it's as plain as a pikestaff. It's a glorious morning, yet you've brought an umbrella thinking that it would rain. And why should you think

it would rain unless the barometer told you so? I see, too, some laborer pushed up against you as you came along. The mud on your shoulder, you know."

"It was a lamppost that did it," I answered.

"It was a laborer," quietly said Bones.

At that moment a young man was shown in. He was as pale as death and trembling in every limb. Thinlock Bones settled himself for business, and, as was the usual habit with him when he was about to think, he put his two long tapered hands to his nose.

"What can I do for you, sir?" asked Bones. "Surely a young swell like you, with plenty of money, a brougham, living in the fashionable part of the West End, and the son of a Peer, can't be in trouble."

"Good God, you're right, how do you know it all?" cried the youth.

"I deduct it," said Thinlock, "you tell me it all yourself. But proceed."

"My name is St. Timon —"

"Robert St. Timon," put in Bones.

"Yes, that is so, but —"

"I saw it in your hat," said Bones.

"I am Robert St. Timon, son of Lord St. Timon, of Grosvenor Square, and am —"

"Private Secretary to him," continued Thinlock. "I see a letter marked *Private and Confidential* addressed to your father sticking out of your pocket."

"Quite correct," went on St. Timon, "thus it was that in my confidential capacity I heard one day from my father of an attachment, an infatuation that someone had for him, an elderly —"

"Lady," said Thinlock Bones, from the depths of his chair, showing how keenly he was following the depths of the plot as it was unfolded to him by his peculiar habit of holding his bloodless hands to his nose.

"Right again," said the young man. "Mr. Bones, you are simply marvelous. How *do* you manage it?"

"It is very simple," Bones replied, "but I will not stop to explain. Whatsoname here understands my little methods quite well now. He will tell you by-and-by."

"It was an elderly and immensely wealthy lady, then," Robert St. Timon continued, "named the Honorable Mrs. Coran —"

"A widow," Bones interrupted.

"Wonderful," said St. Timon, "the Honorable Mrs. Coran, a widow. It was she who was simply head over ears in love with my father, Lord St. Timon. He, although a widower, cared little for her but —"

"A lot for her money," said the quick-witted detective.

"How do you divine these things? You guess my innermost thoughts, the words before they are out of my mouth. How did you know it?" St. Timon asked.

"I know the human race," Thinlock Bones answered.

"Well, if he could manage he wanted to inherit her money without marrying her. Would she leave him her riches if he did not propose, was the question? How to find out? He was a comparatively young man and did not unnecessarily wish to tie himself to an octogenarian, although a millionairess. But he mustn't lose her wealth. If when she died he was not her husband, would he get the money? If the worst came to the worst he must marry her sooner than let the gold slip out of his grasp. But he must not espouse the old lady needlessly. How was he to find out? A project struck him, and the means offered itself. We were both asked to a dinner party at the Countess Plein de Beer's where we knew the Honorable Mrs. Coran would be present, and —"

"You both accepted," interrupted Bones. "Oh," he went on before the other could ask the reasons of his swift and accurate deductions, "oh, it's very simple. I saw in *The Daily Telegraph's* London Day by Day."

"Yes, we accepted," continued St. Timon, "and this was our plan of campaign: I was to take the old doting lady down to dinner and to insinuate myself into her confidence — aided by good wine, of which she was a devoted admirer — in a subtle fashion and thus to extract the secret out of her. I was to find out — by the time she had arrived at the Countess's old port — whether my father was her heir or not. Whether she had left him her money without being his wife. Time was short, and if she had not my father was to propose that very night after dinner. The signal agreed on between my father and

me was that if he was her heir without being her husband I was to kick him under the table and he would *not* propose — otherwise he would. Oh! Mr. Bones," he sobbed, turning his piteous white face to Thinlock, "this is where I want your great intellect to help me, to aid me and explain this mystery.

"The plan worked admirably," he went on, "I gleaned every fact about the disposition of her money after her death from her when she was in her cups — or rather her wineglasses. My father was her absolute and sole heir, and I thanked the heavens with all my heart that I was spared such a stepmother. I kicked, as arranged, my father under the table, but oh! Mr. Bones, immediately after dinner my father went to her and asked her to be his wife and she has accepted him! What does it all mean, what does it all mean!!"

"*That you kicked the foot of the table instead!*" quietly replied the greatest detective of modern times as he unraveled the intricate plot and added another success to his brilliant career.

THE SIGN OF THE "400"

by R. K. MUNKITTRICK

This obscure parody, though it appeared in the American humor-magazine, "Puck," issue of October 24, 1894, is now virtually unknown. It was brought to your Editors' attention by Mr. Christopher Morley, Gasogene-and-Tantalus of The Baker Street Irregulars and a charter-enthusiast in all matter Sherlockian. Printer's copy was generously provided by Edgar W. Smith, Hon. "Buttons" of the same devotional organization.¹

"The Sign of the '400'" — an exceptionally felicitous parody-title — belongs to the "Punch" school of burlesque. Like the Picklock Holes series by R. C. Lehmann and "The Adventure of the Table Foot" by Zero (Allan Ramsay), it exploits the reductio ad absurdum technique, leaning heavily on mere farce and lacking the really clever plot framework which is so essential to classic permanence.

FOR THE nonce, Holmes was slighting his cocaine and was joyously jabbing himself with morphine — his favorite 70 per cent solution — when a knock came at the door; it was our landlady with a telegram. Holmes opened it and read it carelessly.

¹ The Baker Street Irregulars held their first formal meeting in Chris Cella's Restaurant in New York City on the evening of June 5, 1934. On the same evening the first dinner of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London was being held, appropriately, in Canuto's Restaurant in Baker Street. The American organization now boasts two branches. The Boston Chapter, founded in 1940, is called The Speckled Band; its officers are P. M. Stone, Hon. Chairman ("Stoker") and James Keddle, Jr., Hon. Treasurer ("Cheetah"). On the night of January 8th, 1943 a Chicago Chapter was inaugurated, headed by the Doyen of Sherlockholmitis, Mr. Vincent Starrett. The following telegram, sent to The Baker Street Irregulars convening simultaneously at the Murray Hill Hotel in New York City, announced the formation of the new Chicago Chapter: THREE GARRIDEBS AND A NOBLE BACHELOR MAKE DUTIFUL IF UNSTEADY BOW TO UNSTEADY BUT DUTIFUL PARENT IRREGULARS. DIVISION OF OPINION WHETHER WE ARE RED CIRCLE, RED-HEADED LEAGUE, DANCING MEN, OR WISTERIA LODGE, BUT GAME'S AFOOT.

"H'm!" he said. "What do you think of this, Watson?"

I picked it up. "COME AT ONCE. WE NEED YOU. SEVENTY-TWO CHINCHBUGGE PLACE, S. W.," I read.

"Why, it's from Athelney Jones," I remarked.

"Just so," said Holmes; "call a cab."

We were soon at the address given, 72 Chinchbugge Place being the town house of the Dowager Countess of Coldsław. It was an old-fashioned mansion, somewhat weather-beaten. The old hat stuffed in the broken pane in the drawing room gave the place an air of unstudied artistic negligence, which we both remarked at the time.

Athelney Jones met us at the door. He wore a troubled expression. "Here's a pretty go, gentlemen!" was his greeting. "A forcible entrance has been made to Lady Coldsław's boudoir, and the famous Coldsław diamonds are stolen."

Without a word Holmes drew out his pocket lens and examined the atmosphere. "The whole thing wears an air of mystery," he said, quietly.

We then entered the house. Lady Coldsław was completely prostrated and could not be seen. We went at once to the scene of the robbery. There was no sign of anything unusual in the boudoir, except that the windows and furniture had been smashed and the pictures had been removed from the walls. An attempt had been made by the thief to steal the wallpaper, also. However, he had not succeeded. It had rained the night before and muddy footprints led up to the escritoire from which the jewels had been taken. A heavy smell of stale cigar smoke hung over the room. Aside from these hardly noticeable details, the despoiler had left no trace of his presence.

In an instant Sherlock Holmes was down on his knees examining the footprints with a stethoscope. "H'm!" he said; "so you can make nothing out of this, Jones?"

"No, sir," answered the detective; "but I hope to; there's a big reward."

"It's all very simple, my good fellow," said Holmes. "The robbery was committed at three o'clock this morning by a short, stout, middle-aged, hen-pecked man with a cast in his eye. His name is Smythe, and he lives at 239 Toff Terrace."

Jones fairly gasped. "What! Major Smythe, one of the highest thought-of and richest men in the city?" he said.

"The same."

In half an hour we were at Smythe's bedside. Despite his protestations, he was pinioned and driven to prison.

"For heaven's sake, Holmes," said I, when we returned to our rooms, "how did you solve that problem so quickly?"

"Oh, it was easy, dead easy!" said he. "As soon as we entered the room, I noticed the cigar smoke. It was cigar smoke from a cigar that had been given a husband by his wife. I could tell that, for I have made a study of cigar smoke. Any other but a hen-pecked man throws such cigars away. Then I could tell by the footprints that the man had had appendicitis. Now, no one but members of the '400' have that. Who then was hen-pecked in the '400,' and had had appendicitis recently? Why, Major Smythe, of course! He is middle-aged, stout, and has a cast in his eye."

I could not help but admire my companion's reasoning, and told him so. "Well," he said, "it is very simple if you know how."

Thus ended the Coldslaw robbery, so far as we were concerned.

It may be as well to add, however, that Jones's arrant jealousy caused him to resort to the lowest trickery to throw discredit upon the discovery of my gifted friend. He allowed Major Smythe to prove a most conclusive alibi, and then meanly arrested a notorious burglar as the thief, on the flimsiest proof, and convicted him. This burglar had been caught while trying to pawn some diamonds that *seemed* to be a portion of the plunder taken from 72 Chinchbugge Place.

Of course, Jones got all the credit. I showed the newspaper accounts to Holmes. He only laughed, and said: "You see how it is, Watson; Scotland Yard, as usual, gets the glory." As I perceived he was going to play "Sweet Marie" on his violin, I reached for the morphine, myself.

OUR MR. SMITH*by* OSWALD CRAWFURD

Shortly after the turn of the century, Oswald Crawford rebelled against the romantic school of detective fiction, dominated at that time by Sherlock Holmes and his multitudinous imitators. Mr. Crawford wrote THE REVELATIONS OF INSPECTOR MORGAN (London, Chapman & Hall, 1906), a collection of four realistic detective stories which attempted "to establish the detective police [of England] in that position of superiority to the mere amateur and outsider from which he has been ousted in contemporary fiction."

Mr. Crawford went on record to the effect that "the professional is a better man than the amateur detective. . . . To think otherwise is a pestilent heresy."

During the following year THE REVELATIONS OF INSPECTOR MORGAN was published in the United States (New York, Dodd, Mead, 1907). For this edition Mr. Crawford wrote a special Introduction, which is the source of the passages quoted above. As a final and irrefutable outburst "of indignation against the injustice so long done to the Professional Detective," Mr. Crawford wound up his Introduction by taking a roundhouse swing at the arch offender, Sherlock Holmes. This literary haymaker took the form of a parody titled "Our Mr. Smith," in which The Great Man goes down in utter, ignominious defeat.

The question remains, after reading "Our Mr. Smith": Just what did Mr. Crawford prove?

AFTER a hard day's professional work I was sitting in my little room in Baker Street, deeply meditating on a subject never very long absent from my thoughts. Reader, you can guess what that subject

is. I was considering the marvelous analytical faculty of my friend Purlock Hone, when the door opened and Purlock Hone himself appeared on the threshold. In my accustomed impulsive and ecstatic way, not unmingled with that humour which I am proud to say tempers the veneration I feel for that colossal intellect, I was beginning with the trivial phrase, "Talk of the ——!" when my friend cut me short, with "Sh," and put his finger on his lips.

He sat down by the fire without a word, deposited his hat, gloves and handkerchief in the coal scuttle (I have before referred to my friend's untidy habits) and reached to the mantelpiece for my favourite meerschaum. He filled the pipe with long cut Cavendish, and, sitting with knotted brows, smoked it to the end before he spoke a word. Then he said:

"Humph!" It was little enough perhaps, but from Purlock Hone it meant volumes.

"Well?" I said. "Go on."

He did. He filled the pipe anew, and, for a second time, smoked it to the bitter end.

"Your pipe, Jobson, wants cleaning!" and he gently threw it upon the fire, from which I rescued it before the flames had done it much injury. From any one else this action had seemed hasty, if not inconsiderate; in this gifted and marvellous being it betokened a profound train of abstract and analytical meditation. I waited patiently for some revelation of the subject of his thoughts.

I need not remind the reader that in the spring of this year the world of international politics was gravely agitated. Menacing rumours were about everywhere, the international atmosphere was electrical and mutterings of the tempest were to be heard on every side, but no one could divine where and when the storm would burst — on whom the bolt would fall.

Mysterious messages were daily passing between the Dowager Empress of China and Kaiser William; what did they portend? President Castro of Venezuela was known to be in secret communication with the Dalai Lama. Our eminent statesman, Mr. Keir Hardie, was said to have despatched an ultimatum to the Emperor of Japan and an identical document to President Roosevelt. The aged wife of the Second Commissioner at the Foreign Office (Irish by birth and of convivial habits) had made certain compromising revelations of

the policy of the government in a tavern in Charles Street, Westminster, and the Cabinet of St. James's was already tottering to its fall!

I eagerly recapitulated to my friend these various sources of disquietude to the nation, to Europe and the World, and urged him eagerly to enlighten me as to which of these great world problems he was preparing to solve. His answer was characteristic of this remarkable man, characteristic at once of his geniality, his simplicity, his wonderful self-control, his modesty, and at the same time of his refusal, even to me, to commit himself to an avowal.

"Any one of them, or none — or all; I cannot guess," said Purlock Hone.

My friend could not guess! I forbore from speech, but I smiled when I reflected that I was in the presence of the man who had more than once interposed to save a British Ministry from defeat, who had maintained the balance of power in Europe by discovering a stolen naval treaty, nay, of the man who had restored the jewelled crown of England when it had been lost for nearly three hundred years!

"A penny for your thoughts," said Purlock Hone gaily. "Or, come, you shall hear them from me for nothing."

"I defy you to know what I was thinking of," I said impulsively, but a moment later that defiance seemed to me rash, as in truth it proved to be.

"My dear Jobson," said this greatest of clairvoyants, "if you wanted me not to guess your thoughts you should not have smiled and looked towards the portrait of the late Premier. That told me, as clearly as if you had spoken, that you were recalling my little service to the late Unionist Government. I suppose you are unconscious of the fact, but you distinctly hitched the belt of your trousers as you crossed the room, with a sailor-like roll in your walk; what more was needed to tell me your thoughts were of my modest success in the matter of the lost naval treaty?"

"Amazing! And the recovery of the Crown of England?"

"You have tell-tale eyes, Jobson, and you rolled them regally as you directed them to the print of His Gracious Majesty over the mantel-piece."

"Wonderful man! Stupendous perspicacity!" I muttered.

Purlock Hone filled my rescued pipe for the third time and resumed his smoking. As in most other things, so in his taste for tobacco he resembles no other human being. I happened to know that he had not touched a pipe, a cigar, or a cigarette for a month before.

"Smoking, Jobson, is one of the world's follies. No ordinary man needs tobacco. It is poison!"

"Yet *you* smoke, Hone, even to excess at times," I said.

"I said no *ordinary* man, Jobson," retorted my friend.

I quailed under the justice of the reproof. Any other man would have pressed his victory. He generously forbore.

"I smoke only when some very heavy work is before me," he went on; "not otherwise."

Then I had guessed aright! He had some great work in hand. Never before had I seen so deep a frown between those sagacious eyes, never had the thoughtful face been so pale, the whole physiognomy so enigmatic. Never had so thick a cloud of tobacco smoke issued from between those oracular lips.

"I expect a visitor," he observed presently, between two puffs of tobacco smoke.

"Where?" I asked.

"Here," said Hone simply. "I left word at home that any one who called at my place was to come on here. Read this!" He tossed a letter across the table. I read aloud:

"Dear Sir:

I will do myself the pleasure of waiting upon you between five and six to-day.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN SMITH"

"A pregnant communication, Jobson, eh?"

"I dare say, but I confess I don't see anything peculiar about it."

I looked again at the letter. It seemed to me as plain an epistle as any man could write. A dunning tradesman might have written it — a tax collector might have subscribed it.

"What do you make of those t's, Jobson? Does the spacing of the words tell you anything? Are those w's and l's there for nothing?"

"To me, Hone, they are there for nothing, but then — I am not a Purlock Hone."

He smiled as he regarded me with pity, and cocked his left eye, using one of those fascinating and favourite actions of his that bring him down to the level of our common humanity.

"It is a disguised hand, Jobson, and do you observe the absence of an address?"

The lucid and enlightened explanation that I expected was cut short by a ring at the door bell. Immediately afterwards the maid announced Mr. Smith. A little man with grey side whiskers, a neat black frock coat and carrying a somewhat gampish silk umbrella, entered the room.

"Be seated, Mr. — Smith." The slight pause between the last two words of Hone's sentence was eloquent.

"Which of you two gentlemen is Purlock Hone, Esquire?" The accent on which "Mr. Smith" spoke was cockney and the tone deprecating.

I looked to Hone to answer. He smiled upon the stranger. It was a smile of complete approval.

"Admirable!" said my friend. "Pray go on, sir."

The visitor was visibly taken aback.

"I asks a plain question, gentlemen, and I looks to get a plain answer."

"It does you the greatest credit, my dear sir," said Hone. "It would pass almost anywhere."

The little gentleman with grey side whiskers got red in the face and his eyes grew round. He was obviously angry, or was he only acting angry?

My friend Purlock Hone, as I think I have observed before in the course of these memoirs, often smiles, but seldom condescends to laugh.

Our visitor coloured violently and struck the end of his umbrella on the floor. "Look here," he said, "play-acting is play-acting, but I comes here on business; my name is John Smith, and I don't want none of your chaff."

"Capital! Capital! Go on, Mr. — Smith!"

"I will do so, sir, if *you* please!" The little gentleman put his hand in the inner breast pocket of his coat and produced therefrom a blue envelope; a quick glance at the superscription showed me that it was addressed to my friend and was written in that bold, regular, cursive

hand which is characteristic of the man engaged in commercial pursuits. My interest was now strongly roused. I waited eagerly for developments.

The mysterious visitor looked from one to the other of us. "As you two gentlemen refuse to say which of you is Hone, Esquire, I'll make so bold as to read this communication to the two of you."

"You may do so with perfect safety, Mr. — Smith. My friend is in my confidence."

The little gentleman cast a puzzled look at us both and read as follows: "To Purlock Hone, Esquire, Dear Sir — Our Mr. Smith will wait on you in respect of our little account already rendered and which you have no doubt overlooked. Early attention to the same will oblige."

The reader paused and looked at my friend. I, too, looked. His face was inscrutable, his lips were grimly closed. My curiosity — shall I say my indiscretion? — got the better of me.

"And whose Mr. Smith may you be, sir?" I asked.

The little man glibly read out the conclusion of the letter: "'Yours obediently, Dear Sir, Jones and Sons; Hatters; Oxford Street.' And here is the bill, gentlemen. *To one fancy broad-brimmed silk hat; cathedral style; — To one clerical soft felt bowler; — To one slouched Spanish Sombrero; — To one . . .*'"

Purlock Hone raised his hand, as if deprecating a list of further items, and Mr. Smith stopped and stared at him.

"What!" I thought. "Is it a real account for hats — after all!" For I remembered all these unusual forms of head-covering having formed parts of the various disguises in which my friend had walked the streets of London incognito. No! There must be some deep diplomatic secret behind the seemingly simple transaction!

"What is the total amount, Mr. Smith?" asked my friend in muffled tones.

"Nine, eleven, four, sir."

Without another word Hone walked across to my writing-table, took his cheque book from his pocket, sat down, and wrote and signed a cheque for nine pounds eleven shillings and fourpence.

"There you are, Mr. Smith. No — don't trouble to give me a receipt. The cheque is to order and Jones & Sons' endorsement will be as good as a receipt."

"Mr. Smith" rose quickly as my friend pronounced these, no doubt, pregnant words, bowed, and took his departure with "I wish you good morning, gentlemen." He preserved the deprecating attitude and the cockney accent of the small tradesman to the very last.

Purlock Hone preserved a pregnant silence. He slowly filled my pipe for the fourth time with strong Cavendish tobacco. I struck a match and handed it to him. It was my tacit tribute of admiration to the skill with which this mysterious scene, of evidently the highest diplomatic tension, had been played through without a hitch by the two great actors concerned. Words would have failed me — had I attempted to use them. My friend held my wrist while he lit his pipe at my match. His hand did not tremble more than mine — indeed not so much.

"Purlock Hone!" I cried with rising enthusiasm, "if I did not know that a great thing had passed and that Mr. Smith was the emissary of some great European Power and the bearer of some deep international secret, and that you have conveyed a secret reply to some European potentate under the pretence of writing a cheque on your banker, I could have sworn that Mr. Smith was a dunning hatter's assistant, and that you had paid an overdue bill!"

"Jobson, you know I make a rule never to take you in — every one else, but not you. Mr. Smith *was* in point of fact an emissary, but only from Jones & Sons of Oxford Street, and I have paid their bill."

Purlock Hone is one of the few men who can afford to tell the plain truth when it is against him. He is great even in defeat!

THE FOOTPRINTS ON THE CEILING

by JULES CASTIER

On December 2, 1914 the author, then a French soldier, was captured by the Germans in Alsace and kept a prisoner of war until after the armistice was signed. M. Castier, to put it mildly, did not get along with his captors. He passed through "a series of imprisonments, court-martials, more imprisonments, reprisals, and the like." He was even tried once (and sentenced) for high treason.

His greatest solace, M. Castier tells us, lay in reading — whenever he was allowed books. Chafing against his detention and other troubles, M. Castier hit on the idea of writing a sequence of parodies of the authors he had read, and it is one of these parodies we now bring you.

"The Footprints on the Ceiling" is a double-barreled burlesque of Doyle. It parodies not only Dr. Watson and Sherlock Holmes, but that other great Doyle character, Professor Challenger, as well; and it concerns a disappearance so strange, so unique, that it can be described only as "out of this world."

If the reader is interested in M. Castier's other parodies — of Arnold Bennett, G. K. Chesterton, Joseph Conrad, John Galsworthy, E. W. Hornung, W. W. Jacobs, Rudyard Kipling, William Le Queux, George Bernard Shaw, Robert Louis Stevenson, H. G. Wells, Oscar Wilde, and others — he'll find them in a volume called RATHER LIKE . . . (London, Jenkins, 1920; Philadelphia, Lippincott, 1920).

WHEN, some years ago, I attempted to chronicle the stupendous adventure of our little group in the "Lost World" of South America,

and, some time later, its still more amazing episode while the earth was passing through the "Poison Belt" of ether, I little thought it might be my lot to relate another marvelous occurrence some of us were to go through; and I feel it my duty to set it down at once, while most of the details are still fresh in my memory.

It was a warm day in June — the fourteenth, as I make out by an entry in my notebook — that the adventure may be said to begin. I had just come out of Mr. MacArdle's office; the kindhearted old Scot was about to retire from the post he had occupied so long, that of news editor to the *Daily Gazette*, to which (I say it in all modesty) the proprietors had decided to promote me. Old MacArdle had given me a few parting words of sound advice, and I was still meditating his well-meant remarks while I sat down in my own little office, which I was to leave so soon. My brain was full of lingering thoughts of the past, mingling with vague plans for the future, when the office boy came thundering in, bearing a visiting-card between his none too clean fingers.

"A gentleman to see you, Mr. Malone," he cried, banging the door.

"Sure it's me he wants to see, and not Mr. MacArdle?" I cautiously demanded, not wishing to be disturbed uselessly.

"He said Mr. Malone, sir," the boy assured me.

"Well, show him in," I said, looking at the card, which bore the printed inscription: DR. WATSON, below which I read, in a barely legible handwriting: *requests the favor of a few minutes' interview with Mr. Malone*. Here were the tables turned, indeed! I was all the more puzzled, as I knew nothing of this Dr. Watson. I was revolving in my mind the several doctors, and the many Watsons, with whom I was more or less acquainted, when the door opened again, and a plain-faced man — evidently a physician — was ushered in by the irrepressible office boy.

"How do you do, Mr. Malone?" he said in a singularly oppressed-sounding voice, anxiety seeming to pierce through his open lips and sallow cheeks.

"Good afternoon, Dr. Watson," I rejoined. "What may I do for you? I am afraid you must have made a mistake, as —"

"I think not," he hastily interrupted. "I must ask you to excuse me, but you are *the* Mr. Malone, Professor Challenger's friend?"

"Indeed, I have the honor of his acquaintance," said I, "although

friendship is, I fear, too presumptuous a word, on my part at least."

"Well, Mr. Malone," he continued, in gulping torrents of words, "I must intrude upon your time to the extent of asking you for an introduction to Professor Challenger. It is a matter of life and death. I know the eminent scientist and his wife do not care to be interviewed by strangers, and that is why I appeal to you."

"Indeed, Dr. Watson," I replied, "I doubt whether Professor Challenger would consent to see you at all, even if I were to introduce you to him."

"He is your friend — and what I ask is on behalf of a friend of mine, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, of whom you have doubtless heard."

"I must apologize for my ignorance," I replied. "However, I am quite willing to answer your urgent appeal to friendship — although I have very little confidence in my power to help. The best I can do would be, I suppose, to accompany you myself to Professor Challenger's: you might explain the matter to me on the way."

"Mr. Malone," he answered, heaving a deep sigh of relief, "I shall indeed be greatly indebted to you, if you can spare the time."

"Let me see," I mused, "there is a train from Victoria at —"

But he interrupted me at once.

"I have a forty-horsepower Humber waiting outside, which will take us to Rotherfield before we could get there by train."

"Very well," I replied. "Pray excuse me a moment while I see my assistant, and I shall be quite ready for you."

I found Harper, my assistant, smoking his pipe in the passage, and hurriedly told him of my unexpected mission. After which, putting on my cap and coat, and throwing a couple of rugs over my arm, I rejoined Dr. Watson and was conducted to his car, which a smart chauffeur set in motion at once, without even waiting for any direction from his master.

We had hardly set off, however, when I heard my name shouted by a voice I could not fail to recognize instantly, while I turned to gaze at a tall, thin figure, clad in a gray tweed shooting suit, that emerged from a motorcar just a few yards behind ours.

"Hullo, young fellah!" cried Lord John Roxton. Beside him was sitting another tall man, though he had nothing in common with his companion: silent and absorbed, he looked more like a human mummy than a living being, and the slow beating of the temples

was the only sign of life he seemed to give. I was waving my hand in reply to Lord John when my companion suddenly sprang up in his turn, and, pointing towards the second car, cried out excitedly:

"What, Holmes! You don't mean to say you —"

"My dear Watson," calmly replied my friend's fellow passenger, "since we are obviously bound for the same destination, I think we could no better than use the same car. Lord John," he continued, turning to his companion, "shall we join our friends? I am sure Dr. Watson's car will be more comfortable, and faster than our taxi."

"Right you are," said Lord John, "besides, the more, the merrier."

Accordingly both vehicles were stopped, Lord John paid his chauffeur, and the little party of four were soon seated in the capacious 40-H.-P., smoothly running southwards.

After a few exuberant remarks from Lord John Roxton in his most characteristic manner, his companion, looking keenly at me, began speaking in a marvelously even and passionless voice.

"Good day, Mr. Malone."

"Indeed, Holmes," interrupted his friend, "I am afraid I should have introduced you: pray excuse my carelessness . . . Though how you immediately hit on Mr. Malone's name — seeing you don't know him, and absolutely ignored what I was about to do — I really fail to see."

"Marvelous!" exclaimed Lord John. "Most astonishin', I call it."

"It is the simplest thing imaginable," Holmes calmly proceeded, turning to me. "It is obvious you are a journalist: your pockets are crammed with notebooks, and I see a Waterman peeping out of your waistcoat pocket; the second finger of your right hand is somewhat horny on the left side — an evident sign of active use of pen and pencil; there are a few ink-stains on your coat sleeves — where occasionally you dab your pen to rid it of any small encumbrance it may have caught; you are somewhat shortsighted — a sign of much reading or writing. Moreover, I see copies of the *Daily Gazette* protruding not only from your coat, but also between the rugs over your arm — which makes it quite evident that you are on the staff of that paper. Now I see you with my friend Watson, who is greatly concerned with the fate of Professor Challenger . . . Challenger has very few journalist friends; in fact, the only one is Mr. Malone: a child would deduce your identity."

"Absolutely rippin'!" exclaimed Lord John; while I was too much amazed for words.

"By the way," continued this remarkable man, turning to my companion, "let me congratulate you on your movements, my dear Watson. It was indeed most thoughtful of you to enlist the services of Mr. Malone, who is one of the two only men now in England with the power of securing an introduction to Professor Challenger. I was about to look him up myself at his office, when, by a lucky chance, I met Lord John Roxton, whom, of course, I instantly recognized from the description given in Mr. Malone's narratives."

"Yes," put in my friend, "extraordinary it was, too, seein' you had never even set eyes on me before."

"A simple instance of deduction, aided by memory," explained Sherlock Holmes.

Now, however, I turned to him and his friend, with questioning eyes.

"Perhaps," said I, "you could now explain the object of your mission; for I cannot conceal my astonishment."

"Right you are, young fellah," echoed Lord John. "Come now, gentlemen, will you kindly explain?"

"You have a perfect right to know everything," answered Dr. Watson, "and as we have some time before us, I think there is no reason whatever for withholding the explanation any longer. You must know, then, that Professor Challenger has disappeared."

The effect of this revelation was startling on both of us.

"What!" exclaimed Lord John, "a man of his size, disappearin' in the middle of a civilized country!"

"It is indeed incredible," I cried out.

"I received the news from his old chauffeur, Austin," Holmes said, "and immediately started on my investigation. At the present moment I happen to know a few data concerning the case: for instance, the person whom I suspect of having absconded with the professor is a small man, with blond hair and long fingernails; he must be in some great distress, and was formerly a creature of higher standard, now evidently fallen somewhat in the social and moral scale. I hope to lay my hands on him at no very future date, but in order to do so, I must examine Professor Challenger's abode with some care. That is why I set out to find you, Mr. Malone, little dreaming that I should

first meet Lord John Roxton, and still less that my friend Dr. Watson would be simultaneously — and successfully — engaged on the same quest.”

“Holmes,” excitedly exclaimed Dr. Watson, “accustomed to your deductive methods as I am, I am quite overwhelmed by all this information about the unknown blackguard on whose track we all of us are now set! How on earth has it been possible for you to get at it? Have you discovered some new clue since I left you?”

“None whatever,” calmly rejoined this remarkable man. “I know nothing more than you — we were together when the chauffeur rushed into my rooms in Baker Street, and related his master’s strange disappearance.”

“Why, dash it all,” Lord John cried out, “it’s clean marvelous!”

“Indeed,” I hastily added, “you might do us the favor of explaining something of your process, Mr. Holmes.”

“It is the simplest thing imaginable,” he answered. “All the data were inferred from Austin’s visit. You may recollect the man: of middle height, none too strong, though indubitably tough, and eminently impassive. From these characteristics, it is evident that the kidnaper is a small man — ”

“My dear Holmes!” ejaculated the doctor.

“Of course, my dear fellow,” continued his friend. “If he had been tall and strong, or only of medium height and strength, he would certainly have seen to it that Austin be removed, and put out of the possibility of telling tales. Austin was left free: *ergo* the kidnaper is physically his inferior. The color of his hair, and the abnormal length of his fingernails, were immediately deduced by a casual glance at the cap Austin wore — it was not his own, as I at once remarked; you may recollect he said, in reply to one of my questions, it was one of his master’s; well, the cap was strewn with long, fair, reddish hairs, and bore marks of tearing, which could only have been accomplished by fingernails: I have studied the question in some detail; the technicalities may, of course, be found in my pamphlet on the subject — and I am perfectly sure of my conclusion.”

“Rippin’!” exclaimed Lord John Roxton.

“But how could you deduce the moral and social part of your inference?” I asked, admiration for this deductive genius not yet quenching my thirst for his secrets.

"Equally simple, Mr. Malone," he answered, smiling. "First of all, it is quite clear no one would dream of absconding with a man like Professor Challenger if he could possibly do otherwise; hence the great distress. Moreover, the fact of kidnaping a man of such acknowledged genius points to a certain intellectual and moral standard: the common criminal would kidnap a millionaire, and hold him for ransom — but not a scientist: and last of all, our man has certainly fallen rather low in the moral and social scale, else he would visibly not have reverted to such extreme measures . . . You see, it is all perfectly simple."

"You beat Euclid hollow," roared Lord John. "Don't you think so, young fellow?"

"As far as I can remember," I answered, smiling ruefully, "Euclid only deduces things that everybody knew already, or ought to know, whereas Mr. Holmes makes the whole invisible effect appear under the full limelight of the cause."

"Very neatly put, I'm sure," added Dr. Watson. "But here, unless I am mistaken, we are at our journey's end."

At some distance behind us, peering over a clipped hedge, was Professor Challenger's so unhospitable notice-board. We were passing between the posts of a gate, and at the end of a drive hedged in with rhododendron bushes, the familiar brick house peered smilingly at us — that is, at least at two of us.

Entering the house, we were met by little Mrs. Challenger, as dainty as ever, though her eyes were red with recent crying, and her whole face bore the marks of the anxiety and sorrow she had undergone. She came up to Lord John and myself, while a look of gratitude and hope passed, for an instant, across her careworn features.

"Oh, Lord John, and you, Mr. Malone!" she exclaimed in a voice bordering between tears and joy. "How kind of you to come to me in my distress! I would not have dared to trouble you myself, but I cannot express my relief at seeing you here."

"It's all right, my dear Mrs. Challenger," cheerfully replied Lord John Roxton. "Although Malone and I are little good, I'm afraid, we've brought you a rippin' friend in need, who'll find the professor in half the time it'd take me to stalk a buffalo . . . May I introduce you to Mr. Sherlock Holmes, and to Dr. Watson, his friend? . . . Gentlemen, Mrs. Challenger."

She shook hands gratefully with both of them, and was speaking some words of welcome to the latter, when I noticed that Holmes had disappeared. Dr. Watson immediately excused his friend's apparent impropriety, on the plea that he was already following some clue to the mystery. All three of us then followed her into the cozy boudoir where we had passed such memorable hours while the world was passing through the Poison Belt.

She had begun to relate her husband's strange disappearance, which had occurred on the preceding day. The professor had retired to his study after breakfast, as usual, and when Austin, as was his habit, knocked at the door to announce lunch, he had received no answer; the faithful chauffeur had finally entered the study, only to find himself in an empty room. His master had said nothing of leaving, or even of going out; indeed, nobody had left the house, through the door, at any rate. Having reached this point in her narrative, Mrs. Challenger broke down, and it was only by our combined efforts that she finally managed to recover her composure, though her eyes filled with tears.

Suddenly the door was thrown open, and Sherlock Holmes, keen and alert, burst into the room, walking straight up to Dr. Watson.

"Watson," he said in that calm and passionless voice of his, though it was easy to see he was tingling with excitement, "would you be so kind as to give me some information concerning Zeeman's phenomenon? I have, myself, dabbled somewhat in science, but I am afraid I have no recollection of this apparently recently discovered notion, and I apply to you as to the scientist of our party."

"My dear Holmes," replied Watson, visibly disappointed, "I'm sure I utterly fail to see what Zeeman's phenomenon has to do with your case. Indeed, I am afraid it is somewhat outside the range of a mere physician. Nevertheless, I may tell you broadly what it is. Zeeman was the first to discover that all the colors and lines revealed by spectral analysis are actually deviated by some influences — amongst others, by a strong magnetic field."

"Then I have it!" exclaimed Holmes, himself moved to some display of excitement his voice no longer suppressed.

"What?" Mrs. Challenger cried out. "You mean you have found . . ."

"Professor Challenger will be amongst us within a few minutes,"

he resumed, in tones once more void of any emotion. "Gentlemen, I request you to follow me into the scientist's study. Pray excuse us, Madam."

The four of us found ourselves in the familiar study, a look of amazement on the faces of all save Sherlock Holmes, who began in an even voice: "I must first of all confess that I was completely wrong about the results I told you of on the way here; I was completely misled by appearances, which only proves that one should never work on preconceived ideas. However, I am happy to say I discovered my mistake as soon as I entered this room."

"How on earth could the simple aspect of this room account for such a change?" muttered Dr. Watson, turning his puzzled face towards his friend.

"Look," replied Holmes, pointing first to the ceiling, and then to a mass of papers strewn about the scientist's desk. "The ceiling unquestionably bears footprints . . . And these papers all contain diagrams and rough jottings, where the words *Zeeman's phenomenon* ever recur. Here—" he pointed towards a little case attached to the wall—"is an electric switch commanding an electro-magnet in the laboratory (as the inscription says): you may notice the current is now *on*. On further investigation, I ascertained that the current consumed since the Company's last visit (which happens to have been yesterday) is no less than 2000 Kwh. . . . The missing link in this remarkable chain of evidence was given me just now by Watson's explanation of Zeeman's phenomenon—and now Professor Challenger will instantly return."

All three of us were too dumfounded to understand; what Sherlock Holmes called a chain of evidence was an inextricable labyrinth to me, and I was just about to set a question, when I saw him jump forward, and calmly switch off the electric current. Immediately the silence seemed intensified; we gazed spellbound at one another, and suddenly a massive form was visible, apparently dropping out of nowhere, in the region of the ceiling.

Holmes was the first to act. He sprang forth, and clutched at the apparition, from which a bellowing yell issued at the same time. I came nearer in my turn, and was able to make out a black beard, a huge head, with a broad forehead and a dark plaster of black hair, then two clear gray eyes, with their insolent eyelids—and suddenly

I recognized the missing man. Holmes, lithe as a panther, caught him in his arms, and instantly set him on his feet.

"Hullo! What the devil do you mean? Now my young friend, what is all this?" How inexpressibly glad I was to hear the familiar voice!

"Why, Herr Professor!" cried out Lord John.

"Yes, himself," came Challenger's sonorous bass — and suddenly perceiving the two others, he went on: "And may I ask who these intruders are?"

"Dear Professor Challenger," I tried to calm him, "these gentlemen came here with Lord John and myself, and have just solved the mystery of your disappearance —"

"My disappearance?" he vigorously interrupted. "How can I have disappeared, when I was simply trying a little experiment on Zeeman's phenomenon? Pray answer that, sir — yes, you, I mean!" And he turned savagely towards Sherlock Holmes.

Our remarkable friend calmly met his gaze. "May I ask you what day you make it out to be, Professor Challenger?" he inquired.

"What day?" bellowed the irate scientist. "Tell you what day it is? Yes, sir, I can: it is the 13th of June, and it also happens to be" — here he looked at his watch — "3:35 P.M."

"As a matter of fact," replied Holmes, "you happen to be wrong — which is only natural after your adventure: it is not the 13th but the 14th; you have been absent from our planet for something over twenty-seven hours."

"Extraordinary!" muttered Lord John Roxton.

"Incredible!" I could not help exclaiming.

"Would you mind explaining your meaning, which appears somewhat blurred to my feeble intellect?" asked Challenger, taking up his thundering irony.

"Nothing is easier," said Sherlock Holmes. "Yesterday morning, you came into your study, and started experimenting about Zeeman's phenomenon. You switched the current into a hyper-powerful electromagnet, evidently not thinking of the enormous amount of iron a human body of your dimensions must contain — or the tremendous effect the magnetic field might have upon the spectrum such a body would absorb. In short, Zeeman's phenomenon deviated that spectrum farther than could have been expected — and you followed

it, quite unconsciously, into space—or into ether. Those are the traces of your passage,” he added, pointing to the footmarks on the ceiling. “It is quite simple, as you see, my dear Watson . . . And now, gentlemen, let us return to Mrs. Challenger.”

THE END OF SHERLOCK HOLMES

by A. E. P.

So far in this Procession of Pastiches you have misadventured with Sherlock Holmes the sleuth. Now we bring you The Great Man in an entirely different role — as the father of a three-year-old child-prodigy.

Sympathize with our harassed, heartsick hero — the sire of a satanically sapient sprout — a chip of the old block, in spades. It is a shocking spectacle, this deflation of a once dynamic demigod, this collapse of Colossus, this toppling of a Titan. For here we see Holmes a stricken, suffering shadow of himself, in dire dismay not of a modern and more murderous Moriarty but of his own odious offspring.

Many hours of research have failed to reveal the identity of A. E. P.¹ who remains regretfully the anonymous Ananias of our anthology.

This unusual pastiche first appeared in "The Manchester Guardian," issue of July 7, 1927 and on this side of the Atlantic in "The Living Age," issue of August 15, 1927. There is reason to believe that the original title was "Sherlock Holmes Finds Himself Out-Holmesed."

Other instances dealing with the scion of Sherlock include John Kendrick Bangs's Raffles Holmes, who was the "son" of Sherlock and the "grandson" of Raffles (see page 191, with footnote); and Sherlock Holmes, Jr., the hero of a color-comic series that appeared in the Sunday supplements of many American newspapers between 1911 and 1914, drawn by no less a person than Sidney Smith, the creator of the famous "Gumps." There is also Frederic Arnold Kummer's and Basil Mitchell's Shirley

¹ Mr. Starrett inquires: "Could A. E. P. possibly be Allan Edgar Poe?" A most ingenious theory!

Holmes, daughter of Sherlock, assisted by Joan Watson, daughter of Dr. Watson, in THE ADVENTURE OF THE QUEEN BEE and "The Canterbury Cathedral Murder" (see page 313).

[The following account of the real reason for Holmes's retirement was found among Dr. Watson's private papers after his death. It is not dated, but from internal evidence (noticeably the mention of ladies' hat pins) it may be placed about 1903-1905.]

IT WAS my intention to close these memoirs with the remarkable chain of circumstances resulting in the marriage of my friend Sherlock Holmes with Miss Falkland. For some time after that event my friend gave up professional work and went abroad with his wife. Our rooms in Baker Street were of course destroyed, and my practice occupied my full time, and certainly prospered all the better for receiving my undivided attention. From time to time, however, he would be recalled to my memory by some startling and unexplained case claiming my attention in the morning's paper; and in the "unforeseen circumstances" and "unexpected turn of events" or remarkable instances of fresh light being thrown on some obscure point I would recognize my friend's unparalleled genius, though, with characteristic modesty, his name never appeared.

For instance, there was the remarkable case of the Hereditary Princess of Stohit-Leinengen, which culminated in a royal divorce; and the still more recent affair of the Grand-Nurse-in-Waiting's tame monkey, which made such a stir and resulted in the suicide of a Russian Consul. It was when public excitement was at its height over the great Bribery Case in connection with the Pope's birthday celebrations, and suspicion had settled on a well-known workhouse official, that I again received intimation that Holmes was in England. I had just come in from a long round when the maidservant brought in a note whose appearance struck me at once as familiar. As I tore it open I mechanically noticed that it was written on cream-laid paper, with a printed address, and that the stamp was in the right-hand top corner of the envelope. This lapse into long-forgotten habit made me

think of Holmes, and I was not surprised to recognize his signature at the foot of the sheet.

"Dear Watson," it ran: "Can you come round to the old place at 3 P.M. to-morrow? — Yours, S. H."

I hastily scribbled an acceptance, and the following day, having turned over my practice to my assistant and locked the dispensary door for fear of accidents, I hailed a "City Atlas" and soon found myself en route for Baker Street. (Holmes had taken rooms just above our former locality.)

The door was opened by a tired-looking maid. I entered, and encountered the gaze of a child about three years of age. He was wearing a miniature dressing gown, and had just been taking an impression of the cat's foot in a piece of dough.

Before I had time to speak he had crawled rapidly and noiselessly up the stairs and announced me: "Pa, there's a man to see you."

"Who is it?" answered Holmes's voice, and I was struck by the weariness of his tone.

"He's a doctor, poor, and he's got a wife, but she is away. He came up in the omnibus, it was very full, a lady got in too, but he didn't get up to let her have his seat, same as he ought to," said this remarkable child.

I entered in response to Holmes's invitation. The apartment was thick with tobacco smoke and Holmes was listlessly repairing a string in his violin. He held out his hand with something of his old heartiness, but there was a tired look in his eyes I did not like.

"Ah, Watson, I'm glad to see you again." Then, following the direction of my glance, "This is my son — Sherlock, come and say 'How do you do?' to the gentleman."

"He's quite well, he did have a cold, but that is quite well too, and he didn't put nothin' in the bag las' Sunday," finished this remarkable infant. I turned to Holmes in amazement.

"But how on earth —"

"Oh, *he* knows," said my friend rather bitterly; "there isn't much he can't see. But it is your professional assistance I want you for now."

Holmes was not the man to take such a step lightly, and my gravest fears were aroused. I glanced keenly at him. His eyes were closed, his temperature was normal, but the pulse was beating in quick irregular jerks, and symptoms pointed to a slight cerebral congestion;

an application of the stethoscope showed me at a glance his nerves were all to pieces. He languidly turned up his sleeve.

"No," I said firmly, laying my hand upon a small hypodermic syringe he had taken from a pocket of his dressing gown, "I cannot allow any more morphia; you only need rest and a complete change."

"Heaven knows you're right, Watson, my dear fellow, but how the deuce am I to get it? Can you tell me that?"

I felt that here was something more than appeared on the surface.

"What is it that prevents you — not Moriarty again?"

Holmes looked at me in something of his old manner. "Watson, Watson, when shall I teach you to eliminate the obviously impossible? We have already twice disposed of Moriarty — once in the Strand, and again at the Lyceum; you will remember the circumstances very well." He sighed. "No, it is not Moriarty."

His eyes wandered to his son, who was scraping the sole of a shoe and examining the matter so obtained by the aid of a powerful lens. "It *was* Martha meddled with my specimens, and she said it was the cat," the infant announced conclusively. His face darkened, and he crawled off after the offending Martha.

Holmes turned to me. "What do you make of it, Watson?"

I hesitated. "It is evident he has your talents; it must be very gratifying."

"Watson, it is killing me. All day long and every hour of the day he is at it. My wife has broken down — nervous system entirely shattered; no one will visit us; we can't keep a servant — they won't put up with it."

"Surely," I said, "it is not so bad as that; he is only a baby —"

Holmes smiled bitterly. "He contrives to do a good deal in his way. He told the Dean's wife her husband had been married before, and that her diamonds were not real. He took the opportunity of announcing at an At Home that Sir Ronald's grandfather was a tailor in Stepney, that he made his money in patent pills, and that he was afraid of his valet. He took an impression in wax of the vicar's thumb and subsequently told him that his sermons were not his own, that he had some money on Daystar at the St. Leger, that his niece was a sempstress, and that his brother-in-law was doing time for forgery. He tracked the area policeman for over three weeks to find out where he went when he was off duty — and he told the

tax collector his back teeth were false. You have seen for yourself he is after Martha now. She'll give notice next."

"Why don't you keep him in the nursery?"

"They can't. He outwits them in every possible way. No, there is only one thing to be done: I must take on the job myself. Watson, Watson, if you are a truthful person you will faithfully recount this in the memoirs you are giving to the public. I who have baffled Moriarty, I who have had a hand in unravelling most of the mysteries that have perplexed Europe, with knowledge enough of the seamy side of courts and the back doors of politics to bring about a European war—I am now compelled to turn all my energies to circumventing my own son; and, Watson, it is killing me."

He plunged his hands deep in his dressing-gown pockets, and his chin fell on his breast.

I crept out softly and closed the door.

THE ADVENTURE OF THE NORCROSS RIDDLE

by AUGUST DERLETH

August Derleth, the youthful sage of Sauk City, is a Guggenheim Fellow of 1938 and special lecturer in American Regional Literature at the University of Wisconsin. One of the most prolific writers in the United States, Mr. Derleth averages from 750,000 to 1,000,000 words per year, and his range is incredibly catholic — from serious novels, poetry, and biography to weird tales (his first efforts but still an active part of his work) and detective stories.

Mr. Derleth was born in 1909, began writing at the age of thirteen, published at fifteen, and now in the mellow maturity of middle-thirties is engaged in one of the most ambitious literary projects ever attempted — the saga of Sac Prairie. This gargantuan work will comprise more than fifty books of which thirteen have already been published. Mr. Derleth compares the scope of his epic to Balzac's COMÉDIE HUMAINE (HUMAN COMEDY) and Proust's À LA RECHERCHE DU TEMPS PERDU (REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST).

In his literary adolescence Mr. Derleth was incurably bitten by the Holmesian bug. He wrote a series of 18 tales — 14 short stories, 1 short novel, and 3 unfinished short stories — all reverently imitating the Sacred Writings. Of this series your Editors have selected "The Adventure of the Norcross Riddle" as typical of Mr. Derleth's sincere homage at the Shrine of Sherlock. Internal evidence¹ places the writing of "The Norcross Riddle" in 1928 — when Mr. Derleth was only nineteen years old. How many budding authors, not even old enough to vote, could have captured the spirit and atmosphere with as much fidelity? It

¹ The age of Mr. Manton: deduce for yourself as you read the story.

proves how deeply Sir Arthur's magic enchanted youthful readers.

Mr. Derleth is to be credited with one innovation. Writers of pastiches are usually content to retain the grand old name in its perfect form. Mr. Derleth elected to create a variant — and his choice of the euphonic "Solar Pons" is an appealing addition to the fascinating lore of Sherlockian nomenclature.

THE SCIENCE of deduction rests primarily on the faculty of observation," said Solar Pons, looking thoughtfully at me with his keen dark eyes, the ghost of a smile at his thin, firm lips.

"Perhaps you're right," I answered, "but I find that much of my so-called observation arises out of intuition. What do you make of that?"

Pons chuckled. "I don't deny it. We are all intuitive in varying degrees. But for accuracy in conclusions, observation must stand first." He turned and rummaged through the papers scattered on the table beside his chair; from among them he drew an ordinary calling card, which he tossed over to me. "What does your intuition make of that?"

The card bore an embossed legend: MR. BENJAMIN HARRISON MANTON, and in one corner, in smaller print, NORCROSS TOWERS. I turned it over. The caller had written on its back *Will call at three*.

"My observation tells me that the gentleman used a broad-point pen; the character of the writing indicates that he is firm and steady. I see he uses the Roman e consistently; my intuition tells me he is an intelligent man."

Pons's smile widened, and he chuckled again.

"What do you make of it?" I asked, somewhat nettled.

"Oh, little more," replied Pons matter-of-factly, "except that the gentleman is an American by birth, but has resided in England for some length of time; he is a man of independent means, and is between thirty-five and thirty-nine years of age. Furthermore, his ancestry is very probably southern United States, but his parents were undoubtedly members of the American Republican political party."

"You have seen the man!"

"Nonsense!" Pons picked up the card. "Observe:—The name *Manton* is more common to the southern part of the United States than to any other region; undoubtedly it is English in ancestry. In that part of the States, political sentiment is very largely Democratic, but it is not amiss to suggest that Manton's parents were Republican in sentiment, since they named him after a Republican president."

"Well, that is simple," I admitted.

"Precisely, Parker. But there is no intuition about it. It is mere observation. Now test yourself; tell me how I know he is of independent means."

"He calls at three," I ventured. "Certainly if he were not of independent means he could not break into an afternoon like that."

"He might well get away from his work to visit us," objected Pons. "Examine the card more closely."

"Well, it is embossed; that is a more expensive process than simple printing."

"Good, Parker. Come, you are getting there!"

"And the card itself is of very fine quality, though not pretentious." I held it up against the window. "Imported paper, I see. Italian."

"Excellent!"

"But how do you know he has lived in England for some time?"

"That is most elementary of all. The gentleman has purchased or rented a country place, possibly an abandoned English home, for 'Norcross Towers' is certainly the name of a country house."

"But his age!" I protested. "How can you know the man's age merely by glancing at his calling card?"

"That is really absurdly simple, Parker. In the States it is considered fashionable even today to name children after the president in office at the time of the child's birth; doubtless the American tendency to hero worship plays its part in that, too. Harrison was president from 1889 to 1893; hence it follows that our man was born in one of the four years of Harrison's term. The age is more likely to be thirty-nine years, because the tendency to name children in such fashion is strongest during the inaugural period."

I threw up my hands. "The contest is yours!"

Pons smiled. "Well, here it is three o'clock, and I should not be surprised if our client is at the door."

As he spoke, there was a steady ring at the doorbell and, after the

usual preliminary of shuffling feet on the stairs, Mrs. Johnson finally ushered into our rooms a youngish, black-haired man, whose smooth-shaven face was partly concealed by large, horn-rimmed glasses with dark panes. He was clothed in the best fashion, and as he stood before us, leaning on his stick, he held in his hand a motoring cap, indicating that he had come some distance — possibly from his country place.

Our visitor looked from one to the other of us, but, before Mrs. Johnson had closed the door behind her, he had fixed his gaze on Pons, and it was to him he now addressed himself.

"You are Mr. Solar Pons?" he asked in a low, well-modulated voice.

Pons nodded. "Please be seated, Mr. Manton."

"Thank you." With simple dignity our visitor seated himself and immediately threw a dubious glance in my direction.

"My assistant, Dr. Parker," said Pons. "Anything you say is eminently safe with him."

Manton nodded to me and gave his attention again to Pons. "The matter about which I have come to consult you is one of disturbing mystery. I don't know that anything criminal is at its root, and I cannot afford to have any word of it leak out."

"You have our confidence," Pons assured him.

Manton nodded abstractedly, and for a few moments he was silent, as if trying to decide where to begin. Finally, however, he looked up frankly, and began to speak. "The matter concerns my country estate, Norcross Towers, which fell into my hands a little over six months ago. I might say that it was purchased to please my wife, who had lived there before I married her, and is again mistress of her old home. I have been very fortunate in business, and I am able to keep both town and country houses; but since I am usually kept in the city, I don't often have time to join my wife at Norcross Towers.

"However, a month ago I drove to the Towers for a short vacation. Though the estate had been in my possession for some months, I had not yet had time to go over it thoroughly, and this I now set about to do. One of the first places to attract my attention was the fens, which had claimed the life of my wife's first husband."

Pons, who had been sitting with closed eyes, looked suddenly at our visitor. "Are the fens on your estate called 'Mac's Fens'?"

Manton nodded. "They were named after my wife's first husband — by the natives in that country."

"Then your wife was Lady McFallon."

"I married her six months after her husband's tragic death."

"Scott McFallon was the man who with one servant and his hounds set off across the fens near his home and sank in a bog. His servant, I understand, pointed out the exact spot where he went down."

Manton nodded again. "Yes, that is quite right."

"Go on with your story, Mr. Manton."

"The fens," Manton resumed, "are quite large and, in common with most fens, almost entirely marshland, with a few scattered patches of firm ground. On this considerable tract of land stand the ruins of a very old building at one time used as an abbey. It is of stone, and one wing of the place has a kind of intactness. I had taken it into my head to examine this ruin, and I started out alone for it one afternoon in my car; I had had a road built to wind through the fens to the village of Acton, to reach which previously it had always been necessary to make a wide detour. The new road was open to the public, of course.

"As I drove toward the ruin, it occurred to me that I had forgotten to instruct my secretary about a business matter of some importance; so I decided to drive straight on to Acton and wire him, examining the ruin on my return. But dusk had already fallen when I returned, and I had no intention of prowling about the building with a flashlight. Just as I was approaching my home, a car came speeding past me, going in the direction of Acton. I thought nothing of it then, for it was possible that someone was taking this convenient short cut to the village, though it is not often used."

"You made a note of the car?"

"Not definitely. It was a large touring car — a Daimler, I thought; but I could not be sure. However, I did see three people in the car, for I noticed this especially because one of them seemed to be ill."

"What gave you that impression?"

"He was sitting in the rear seat with a companion, and was almost completely covered with rugs and coats. As I flashed by, it seemed to me that his companion was trying to soothe him."

Pons nodded, and indicated that Manton was to continue.

"I speedily forgot this incident, and went into the house for dinner.

Throughout the meal, I observed that my wife ate very little, and I became alarmed at the thought that something troubled her. I had noticed something like this before — a certain uneasiness and nervousness — but had put it down to some passing physical disorder. I could now see, however, that she was deliberately trying to appear normal, and eat dinner as if she were perfectly herself. This is unusual for my wife; she is a remarkably straightforward woman, and illness in the past has always caused her to refrain from taking heavy meals. I asked her whether she felt ill, and whether I could do anything, but she denied that she was ill, and only redoubled her efforts to appear at her ease.

"I tried to forget this incident, and retired to my study, where my wife shortly followed me. Now, Mr. Pons, my study overlooks the moor, and is in a direct line with the ruins. I was sitting directly opposite a low window facing the ruin when I closed my book at about ten o'clock. Judge my surprise, gentlemen, to see in this ruin two lights, one of which was put out even as I looked. Presently the other began to move, going from one room to another, according to its appearance, among those which were left intact in the wing still standing. Then it, too, was put out.

"My wife, meanwhile, had caught my look, and since she sat opposite me and could not see the lights, she asked what I saw. 'There's someone in the ruin,' I said.

"I caught an exclamation from her, and then in some confusion she said, 'Oh, I forgot to tell you, but I rented the ruin for two months.'

"I was astonished, but I recovered quickly enough, and asked to whom she had rented it. There was quite a pause before she replied, with some apprehension, that she had rented it to a professor of psychiatry who had brought a lunatic and his keeper out there for the purpose of isolated observation of his patient. Though I had been somewhat upset at first, I now recalled the car which had passed me on my homeward way that evening, and I assumed at once that the sick man was none other than the psychiatrist's patient. I could not forbear suggesting to my wife that she might first have consulted me, whereupon she seemed hurt and said that we could put them out. Of course, I would not hear of it.

" 'I'd like to have a talk with the professor, though,' I said.

"‘I wouldn’t disturb them, Benjamin,’ she answered.

"‘Oh, I don’t suppose there’s any harm in going out there. After all, it’s our property and they’re our tenants temporarily.’

"‘But there’s no need to disturb them, Benjamin,’ my wife insisted.

"I could not help feeling that for some reason unknown to me my wife did not want me to go to the ruin, but as I said no more, the matter was closed for the time being. Shortly afterward, I went to bed. My wife usually stays up quite late, reading and embroidering, and I thought nothing of her staying up that night.

"Sometime during the night, I was awakened by the sound of tapping on glass somewhere about the house. I am a very light sleeper, and I sat up in bed to listen. I heard a window open downstairs. I looked at my watch; it was a quarter of twelve. Then I remembered that in all probability my wife was still in the study. I called down to her from my doorway, and Anna answered at once. Reassured, I returned to bed.

"Next day, my wife asked for a thousand pounds. Though it means little to me as money, this sum rather staggered me, and I was naturally curious to know what Anna wanted with so large a check. She evaded all my questions with banter, but I believed I would most likely learn to whom Anna signed over the check; so I gave it to her. When the check came back a month later, I discovered that Anna had cashed it at my bank, and that in consequence I knew nothing of where the money might have gone.

"Last night another chapter in this curious puzzle took place. As before, I was awakened close to midnight by the sound of tapping on a window, but this time I slipped from the room into the hall just after the window was opened. I went down the stairs as the window was closed again. Below me, I could see my wife’s shadow, cast by the lamplight in the room, and distorted by the firelight from the hearth. To me it seemed that she was reading something, but my thoughts were interrupted by a low moan from her. At the same instant I saw her fall to the floor. She fell toward the fireplace, and I ran to her assistance.

"She had fainted. As I bent forward, I caught sight of what she had been reading; it had fallen from her hand into the fire, and was now almost entirely consumed. Nevertheless, I snatched it, put out

the fire with my hands, and on the corner of paper as yet untouched by the flames, I read: *five thousand pounds at once . . . what will happen if . . .*—disconnected certainly, but enough to assure me that my wife was an unwilling party to some conspiracy. I thought immediately of the thousand pounds of the previous month, and of the ruin on the fens, which I feel instinctively is connected with the mystery in some fashion. The inhabitants of the ruin have never been seen; by day there is no sign of life about the place.

"My wife, meanwhile, was coming around, and as she regained consciousness, she looked toward the fireplace; this made me determine to say nothing about the note, for I felt that if she wanted me to know about it, she would speak. She did not. I could think only that some diabolical circumstances were keeping her from confiding in me. There can be no question of doubtful conduct on her part; I know that as only a husband can know that. I have had countless proofs of her devotion to me, and I hope I have given her all reason to feel that I love her fully as much.

"This morning, Mr. Pons, my wife asked for five thousand pounds. I quibbled a little, but in the end I handed over the money. Then I came directly to the city and poured out my story to Lord Crichton, who advised me to come to you as a man of the utmost discretion. I left my card on my first visit. Now that you have heard my story, perhaps you could come to visit us—say as friends of mine in the trade—and see what you can make of the matter at close range."

Manton leaned back and watched Pons.

"The matter certainly has points of interest," mused Pons. "I see no reason to forego it."

"Can you come with me at once?"

"I believe we can. But first, a few questions."

"Go right ahead, Mr. Pons."

"I am under the impression that before her first marriage, your wife was the young social leader, Anna Renfield. Has it occurred to you that she is being blackmailed for some past error?"

"It has," replied Manton gravely. "But unless I have been grossly deceived, Anna was held up as an example of all that is best in a young lady."

Pons nodded, and appeared to reflect for a moment. "You say you married Lady McFallon six months after the tragic death of her

husband. Were you aware of the financial condition of the late Scott McFallon?"

Our visitor nodded. "When I came to England seven years ago, and came to know the lady who is now my wife, I learned that her husband's affairs were in a bad way, and that it had become necessary to sell Norcross Towers."

"You were not then aware that other factors entered into McFallon's weak financial condition at the time of his death?"

"Such as what?" asked Manton bluntly.

"His lack of honesty with friends and patrons to the extent of causing many of them to lose heavily because of certain ill-advised — if not criminal — activities?"

Manton shook his head. "I knew nothing of it."

"Perhaps it has so happened that some group of persons has discovered or manufactured evidence to show complicity between McFallon and his wife, and perhaps this is the nature of the blackmailing attempts."

Manton sprang from his chair in extreme agitation. "I can't consider such a suggestion, Mr. Pons," he said sharply. "I cannot for a moment believe that Anna was in any way a party to McFallon's schemes. If you come to Norcross Towers with that idea, Mr. Pons —" He shook his head violently. "No, it's better to drop the matter at once. Anna's past is spotless; if McFallon was guilty of dishonest or criminal acts, then she knew nothing of it, believe me. You cannot think it."

"You forget that I am only suggesting possibilities, and it's entirely possible that forged evidence would cause her to fall a ready victim, fearing that connection with scandal, however ill-founded, might reflect upon your name or your business."

Manton looked down at Pons, a light breaking over his features. "Mr. Pons, I believe you have hit it!" he exclaimed. "That must be the reason she didn't want to tell me — for fear of injuring my position — for she knew nothing could ever come between us."

"I am not at all sure that my supposition is correct," objected Pons. "I merely consider possibilities. There are more to examine."

Pons reached for the telephone and called Scotland Yard. I heard an answering voice which, from my place close to Pons, I recognized as Inspector Jamison's. Pons asked for information concerning Scott

McFallon, and we sat in silence while Pons waited until Jamison had given him the data he wanted.

He turned from the instrument smiling cryptically. "Apparently death was an escape for McFallon. The day before the bog claimed him, an order for his arrest was signed. He would be in prison today if he had come alive from the fens."

"Good God Mr. Pons!" exclaimed Manton. "My wife must never know that — she can't have suspected anything bad of McFallon."

Pons nodded and rose to dress for the long ride before us.

Norcross Towers was a large rambling structure, a typical English country house, not far from the highroad, which connected with the road Manton had had constructed across the fens to Acton. The two-story building was surmounted at the rear by twin turret-like towers, from which the estate no doubt derived its name. The house was of old gray stone, made extremely attractive by great masses of ivy that flung its vines far up along the old walls. As we came up the flagstone walk toward the house, I noticed that all the windows within range were set very low, close to the ground.

Mrs. Manton was the type of woman most often described as ash-blond. Her features were thin, well-formed, and her body was very lithe. She had lost neither the dignity of bearing nor the singular beauty which had helped to make her a social leader before her marriage. We met the lady in Manton's study, where we were introduced under our own names as brokers, for Pons considered it unlikely that Mrs. Manton would recognize either of us.

It was dusk when we arrived at Norcross Towers, and the first duty before us was dinner, over which we spent an hour, chatting about stocks and bonds, a subject about which Pons knew much more than I had given him credit for, and, for the benefit of the lady, the news of the day. However, Pons and I excused ourselves immediately after dinner and retired to our room on the first floor, where Pons had insisted it be, for he planned on some nocturnal reconnoitering, and had no wish to be forced to descend the stairs each time he wanted to prowl about.

In our rooms, Pons gave a sigh of relief. He changed into an old hunting outfit, complete with a rifle, and stepped out of the low window to the adjoining terrace. I watched him make his way over

the lawns to the road leading across the fens, and saw him at last trudging away down the road. I settled myself to read and await his return.

But it was after midnight when Pons came back, and I was dozing in my chair, book in my lap, when he slipped into the room. I awoke with a start to see him standing before me, removing his hunting jacket, and regarding me with a tolerant smile.

"You examined the ruin, I suppose?" I guessed.

Pons nodded. "There's certainly some kind of patient there. The fellow is in an improvised bed, and if I'm not mistaken, he won't last long; he is quite wasted by disease. He looks sixty, but cannot be much over forty."

"And his keeper?"

"A burly fellow, but never a country man. I daresay I should not be wrong in asserting that he is not unfamiliar with Limehouse or Wapping. The patient's doctor is there, too — a great hulk of a man, who shows some traces of culture. He is well-dressed, wears pince-nez on a gold chain, and has fascinating — that is to say, hypnotic — eyes. There is nothing definite to be said about him, save that under pressure, he might well become a very ugly customer. I should not like to cultivate his acquaintance.

"All in all, it has the appearance of what it is meant to be: a case of experimentation on the health, mental and/or physical, of the patient, though he seemed to protest his imprisonment. Unfortunately, I could hear nothing of the conversation, for the room was tightly shut — they are occupying but one room, incidentally — and the three spoke in low voices. It's entirely possible that we may be assuming too much in suggesting a connection between the trio and the unknown blackmailers, but there is something very suspicious about them. I have the feeling I have seen the three before, but I'm hanged if I can place them at the moment."

"They must be in it," I put in. "I see no reason for this kind of treatment of a patient, lunatic or not. The man is exposed to consumption in this atmosphere; it is perfectly ridiculous."

"Consumption!" exclaimed Pons. "Yes, the patient out there strikes me as a consumptive; if he is, then his doctor is no more a physician than I am, and the patient's presence there is vitally necessary to the blackmail plot. It may be that the patient is the directing genius,

but that is unlikely, for he would not endanger his life by staying out there." He shrugged. "Ah, well, let us just sleep on it."

The next day Pons drew Manton aside. "Do you think it possible for me to have a few words with the servant who accompanied McFallon on the day of his death?"

"Why, the fellow has been dead for years. He had a stroke two days after his master was drawn under by the mire out there," said Manton.

For a moment Pons stood as if petrified, his eyes fixed on our host in open astonishment, his pipe hung loosely from his mouth. Then he clapped his hand to his head and exclaimed, "What a fool I have been!"

Without a further word, he astounded Manton and me by stepping from the study window and vanishing into the mists of early evening in the direction of the ruin on the fens.

"Do you think he has discovered something?" asked Manton guardedly.

"Unless I'm greatly mistaken, he has. Pons displays every sign of being off on a strong and perhaps conclusive trail!"

Pons's face on his return was jubilant. His easy grace had returned, and his attentions were all for Mrs. Manton. He managed to seat himself next to her at the table that night, and he chatted with her amiably throughout the meal. It was as she was rising to retire that Pons bent to assist her, and muttered into her ear five words, which, however lightly they were said, I managed to overhear.

"He died tonight of consumption."

I think Mrs. Manton would have fallen, had not Pons been at her side. Manton, however, noticed nothing; for her recovery was instant, and there now passed between our hostess and Pons a glance of understanding which had our host as its object.

Some time after Mrs. Manton had left us, Pons turned to Manton and said quietly, "I think your charming wife will no longer be bothered by the rascals out there on the fens."

"You've cleared up the matter, then?" asked Manton eagerly.

"I have."

"In heaven's name, what could they have held over Anna?"

"Forgery, my dear sir. And what an elaborate forgery!"

"Poor Anna!"

"But they will be well on their way to the coast by now," continued Pons.

"What!" cried Manton, springing to his feet. "You didn't let them off?"

"In the circumstances, I thought it best," said Pons calmly. "The rascals would be certain to drag up the scandal of McFallon's questionable activities, with which they are thoroughly familiar."

Manton nodded glumly.

"But sit down, my dear sir, and let me tell you the clever story the fellows had forged to deceive your wife."

Manton sat down expectantly.

"Two blackmailers, familiar with McFallon's history, met a young man whose resemblance to your wife's first husband was very remarkable. These two persuaded this third man to fall in with their plan and impersonate McFallon in order to blackmail the present Mrs. Manton. Their plan was this: they were to go to Mrs. Manton with the clever story that her first husband had not been lost in the bog, but had fled to the continent to escape the consequences of his stock juggling — 'certain unpleasant circumstances,' they told your wife. Now these fellows were supposed to have encountered McFallon on the Continent, persuaded him to return to England with them some time ago, and forced him to reveal his presence to his wife through his writing, carefully copied from the real McFallon's. Then the blackmailing was to begin, to rise from small sums to larger and ever larger sums, forcing the lady to give and give under fear of the exposure of her first husband's presence here on the fens, and the scandal of a bigamous marriage.

"How long this might have kept up, it is difficult to say; for all went well for them at the beginning over a month ago. Your wife believed their fantastic story, and fell prey to them. Unfortunately for the villains, the fellow they had chosen to play the part of McFallon was a consumptive. The damp air of the fens brought about a quick collapse in his constitution, and only tonight he died and was buried in the bog. The rascals are gone, and my advice to you, Mr. Manton, is to say no word of the affair to your wife. She will soon know that her trouble is over, and she will feel better if you know nothing of it." He sighed. "And now let us get to bed, for I should like to be in London early tomorrow."

"What a curious tale," I said, when we were once more alone in our room, "and yet, in a way, very clever. The idea of having McFallon vanish with the servant as accomplice is perfectly logical in the circumstances of McFallon's imminent arrest; his supposed stay on the Continent and his meeting with those rascals when he could no longer return to England because his wife had remarried after the unexpected death of his accomplice prohibited her from knowing the true state of affairs; those fellows forcing him to aid them, for he was noble enough to keep away all these years and now fell victim to them — why, every step is perfectly logical!" I exclaimed in admiration.

I stopped suddenly and looked at Pons, whose face looked gray and gaunt in the dimmed light of the room. "Why, Pons!" I cried. "It was true!"

"Every word of it!" Pons nodded. "Except that McFallon killed himself rather than be instrumental in his wife's suffering. He rests now in the bog, and no one will ever know he has not been there all these years!"

"Good God! And you let those scoundrels get away?"

Pons turned his inscrutable eyes on me. "I had all I could do to keep my hands from their throats — but there are better ways of handling these matters. I sent a wire to Jamison before lunch; they'll be taken at Dover."

THE MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS JEWEL

by WILLIAM O. FULLER

You probably have never heard of the late William O. Fuller. Would you like to know the kind of man he was? Well, Thomas Bailey Aldrich once said that he was the nearest approach to Charles Lamb of all the writers Mr. Aldrich came to know. That gives you an inkling, but the picture broadens when you learn further that men like Mark Twain, Edward Bok, and Henry van Dyke were his friends. They came to visit him in his famous treasure-house of a study—"The Brown Study," as it was known to his intimates.

It was in "The Brown Study" that Mr. Fuller, newspaperman, lecturer, and eminent after-dinner speaker, wrote "The Mary Queen of Scots Jewel"—a sensitive and sincere pastiche of the Sacred Conan, with a closing speech by Sherlock Holmes that makes us love him all the more. This hitherto unchronicled adventure is made available to the general public through the gracious permission of Mrs. Kathleen S. Fuller, the author's wife. Previously it appeared only as a private edition, limited to 200 copies, printed in 1929 by The Riverside Press of Cambridge, Massachusetts, under the title A NIGHT WITH SHERLOCK HOLMES.

IT WAS one of those misty, rainy mornings in early summer when the streets of London contrive to render themselves particularly disagreeable, the pavements greasy with mud and the very buildings presenting their gloomy façades wreathed in a double melancholy. Returning from a professional call and finding Baker Street in my way, I had dropped in on my friend Sherlock Holmes, whom I

found amid the delightful disorder of his room, his chair drawn up to a fire of coals and himself stretched abroad in it, pulling at his favorite pipe.

"Glad to see you, Watson," he called heartily. "Sit down here, light a cigar and cheer me up. This infernal wet spell has got on my nerves. You're just the company I require."

I helped myself to a cigar, put a chair to one side of the grate and waited for Holmes to talk, for I understood that in this frame of mind he had first to relieve himself of its irritability before a naturally pleasant mood could assert itself.

"Do you know, Watson," he began, after some moments of silent smoking, "I don't at all like your treatment of my latest adventure. I told you at the time that the part played by that country detective threw my methods into a comparison with his such as tends to overrate my abilities."

Holmes's querulous allusion to the now famous Amber Necklace Case, to my mind one of his most brilliant exploits, I could afford to let pass in silence, and did so.

"Not," he added, with a suggestion of the apologetic in his voice, "not that, on the whole, you let your pen of a ready chronicler carry you too pliantly into the realm of romance — but you must be careful, Watson, not to ascribe to me the supernatural. You know yourself how ordinary my science is when the paths of its conclusions are traced after me. As, for instance, the fact that I am about to have a caller — how I know this may for a moment appear a mystery to you, but in the sequel most commonplace."

There came on the instant a rap at the street door, and to my surprised look of inquiry Holmes replied, with a laugh:

"My dear Watson, it is kindergarten. You failed to hear, as I did an instant ago — for you were listening to my morose maunderings — the faint tooting of the horn of a motorcar, which it was easy to perceive was about turning the upper corner of our street; nor did you observe, as I was able to do, that in the proper space of time the unmistakable silence caused by the stopping of a motor engine was apparent under my window. I am persuaded, Watson, that a look out of that window will plainly disclose a car standing by my curbstone."

I followed him across the room and peered over his shoulder as

he put back the curtains. Sure enough, a motorcar had drawn up to the curb. Under its canopy top we perceived two gentlemen seated in the tonneau. The chauffeur stood at the street door, evidently waiting. At this moment Holmes's housekeeper, after a warning rap, walked into the room, bearing two cards on a tray, which she passed to Holmes.

"MR. WILLIAM S. RICHARDSON — MR. WILLIAM O. FULLER," he said, reading the cards aloud. "H'm. Evidently our friend the Conqueror has many admirers in America. You may ask the gentlemen to walk upstairs, Mrs. Hudson," he added.

"How do you know your callers are from America?" I was beginning, when following a knock at the door, and Holmes's brisk "Come in!" two gentlemen entered, stopped near the threshold and bowed. They were garbed in raincoats; one, of medium height, smooth-shaven, resembling in features the actor Irving; the other, of smaller stature, distinguished by a pair of Mr. Pickwick spectacles.

"Pray come in, gentlemen," said Sherlock Holmes, with the courtesy of manner that so well becomes him. "Throw off your raincoats, take a cigar, sit here in these chairs by the fire, and while you talk of the circumstances that have given me the honor of a visit so soon after your arrival in London, I will busy myself in mixing a cocktail, one of the excellent devices which your American people have introduced to an appreciative British public."

The visitors responded readily to these overtures of cordiality; from a tray on the table selected with unerring discrimination what I knew to be Holmes's choicest cigars, and in a brief time the four chairs were drawn in a half-moon before the glowing grate. Introductions had quickly been got through with.

"Dr. Watson, as my somewhat o'erpartial biographer," said Holmes as he lighted his pipe, "was on the point of wondering, when interrupted by your entrance, at my having in advance pronounced upon the nationality of my callers."

The taller of the gentlemen — it was the one bearing the name of Richardson — smiled.

"I was myself struck by that allusion," he responded, "no less than by your other somewhat astonishing reference to our being but newly come to the city. In point of fact we have been here a period of something less than twenty-four hours."

Sherlock Holmes laughed pleasantly. "It is the simplest of matters when explained," he said, "as I have often pointed out to Dr. Watson. In the line of research to which I occasionally turn my attention, as he has so abundantly set forth in his published narratives, acquaintance must be had, as you will know, with a great variety of subjects. The motorcar, for instance, that ubiquitous invader of the realm of locomotion, naturally falls within the periphery of these attentions; nor could I long study its various interesting phases without coming to recognize the cars of different makes and nationalities. There are, if my memory is not at fault, some one hundred and thirty varieties of patterns easily distinguishable to one adept in this direction. When Watson looked out of the window, at my shoulder a moment ago, his investigations, pursued in quite different channels, did not disclose to him what was evident to me at a glance, namely, an American machine frequently encountered in this country. It was easy to guess that its occupants were also from the States.

"As to the other matter — among the earliest things the American man or woman of taste does on reaching London is to give an order to the engraver for his name card in the latest London style. The card this season, as we know, is small, the type a shaded variety of Old English. The cards brought me by the hand of Mrs. Hudson were of medium size, engraved in last year's script. Plainly my American callers had at the longest but a short time come to the city. A trifle hazardous — yes — but in these matters one sometimes has to guess point-blank — or, to quote one of your American navigators, 'Stand boldly to the South'ard and trust to luck!' You find this holds together, Watson?"

I confessed with a laugh that I was quite satisfied. The American gentlemen exchanged glances of gratification. Evidently, this exhibition of my friend's characteristic method of deduction afforded them the highest satisfaction.

"Which brings us," remarked Holmes, whose pipe was now drawing bravely, "to the real object of this visit, which I may say at once I am glad to be honored with, having a high appreciation of your country, and finding myself always indebted to one of your truly great writers, whose French detective I am pleased to consider a monumental character in a most difficult field of endeavor. My friend Watson has made some bold essays in that direction," added Holmes,

with a deprecatory shake of the head, "but it is a moot question if he ever has risen to the exalted level of *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*."

As Sherlock Holmes ceased speaking, the visitors, who had turned grave, looked at each other questioningly.

"It is your story," said the one in spectacles.

The gentleman by the name of Richardson acknowledged the suggestion.

"Perhaps," he said, "I would best begin at the beginning. If I am too long, or obscure in my details, do me the honor to interrupt me."

"Let us have the whole story," said Holmes. "I naturally assume that you solicit my assistance under some conditions of difficulty. In such matters no details, however seemingly obscure, can be regarded as inessential, and I beg you to omit none of them."

The American flicked the ash from his cigar and began his story.

"My friend and I landed at Liverpool ten days or more ago, for a summer's motoring in your country. We journeyed by easy stages up to London, stopping here only long enough to visit our bankers and to mail two or three letters of introduction that we had brought from home."

"To mail —" interrupted Holmes; then he added with a laugh: "Ah, yes, you posted your letters. Pardon me."

"Long enough to post our letters," repeated the American, adopting the humorously proffered correction. "Then we pushed on for our arranged tour of the South of England. At Canterbury a note overtook us from the Lord M —, acknowledging receipt of our letter of introduction to that nobleman, and praying us to be his guests at dinner on Wednesday of the present week — yesterday — as later he should be out of the city. It seemed best, on a review of the circumstances, for us to return to London, as his Lordship was one whom we particularly desired to meet. So Wednesday found us again in the city, where we took rooms at the Langham, in Portland Place. It wanting several hours of dressing time, we strolled out in a casual way, bringing up in Wardour Street. I don't need to tell you that in its abounding curio shops, which have extraordinary fascination for all American travelers, we found the time pass quickly. In one of the little shops, where I was somewhat known to the proprietor by reason of former visits, we were turning over a tray of curious

stones, with possible scarf pins in mind, when the dealer came forward with a package that he had taken from his safe, and removing its wrappings said: 'Perhaps, sir, you would be interested in this?'

"It was a curious bit of antique workmanship — a gold bar bearing the figure of a boy catching a mouse, the whole richly set about with diamonds and rubies, with a large and costly pearl as a pendant. Even in the dingy light of the shop it sparkled with a sense of value.

"It is from the personal collection of the Countess of Warrington," said the dealer. 'It belonged originally to the unfortunate Mary Queen of Scots, and there is an accompanying paper of authentication, showing its descent through various hands for the past three hundred and forty years. You will see engraved here, in the setting, the arms of Mary.'

Holmes, a past master in the science of heraldry, his voice exhibiting a degree of interest with which I was quite familiar, here broke in:

"Or, a lion rampant within a double tressure flory and counter flory, gules. Mary, as Queen of Scotland and daughter of James I, would bear the arms of Scotland. I know the jewel you are describing — indeed, I saw it one time when visiting at the country seat of the Countess, following a daring attempt at burglary there. You know the particulars, Watson. I have heard that since the death of the Countess, the family being straitened financially, some of her jewels have been put into discreet hands for negotiation."

"So the dealer explained," the visitor continued, "and he added, that as the jewels were so well known in England, they could be sold only to go abroad, hence the value of a prospective American customer. I confess that the jewel interested me. I had a newly married niece in mind for whom I had not yet found just the wedding gift that suited me, and this appeared to fit into the situation.

"What is the price?" I asked.

"We think one thousand pounds very cheap for it, sir," said the dealer, in the easy manner with which your shopkeepers price their wares to Americans.

"After some further talk, our time being run out, my friend and I returned to the Langham and dressed for dinner. It was while dressing that a knock came at my room door. Opening it, I found a messenger from the curio dealer's, who, handing me a small package,

explained that it was the jewel, which the dealer desired me to retain for more convenient examination. In the embarrassment of the moment I neglected to do the proper thing and return the package to the messenger, who indeed had touched his cap and gone while I yet stood in the door.

"Look at this, Fuller," I called, and stepped into his room — it is our traveling custom to have rooms connecting. 'Isn't this quite like an English shopkeeper, entrusting his property to a comparative stranger? It's a dangerous thing to have credit with these confiding tradesmen.'

"My friend's reply very clearly framed the situation.

"It's a more dangerous thing," he said, 'to be chosen as the safe-deposit of priceless heirlooms. It is scarcely the sort of thing one would seek to be made the custodian of in a strange city.'

"This was true. The dinner hour was close on our heels, a taxi was in waiting, there was no time to arrange with the office, and I dropped the package into my inner pocket. After all, it seemed a secure enough place. I could feel its gentle pressure against my side, which would be a constant guarantee of safety.

"We were received by Lord and Lady M — with the open-handed cordiality that they always accord to visitors from our country. The company at table was not so large but that the conversation could be for the most part general, running at the first to topics chiefly American, with that charming exhibition of English naïveté and ignorance — you will pardon me — in affairs across the water. From this point the talk trailed off to themes quite unrelated but always interesting — the Great War, in which his Lordship had played a conspicuous part; the delicious flavor of wall-grown peaches; the health of the King; of her ladyship's recipe for barleywater; the recent disposal of the library and personal effects of the notorious Lord Earlbank. This by natural steps led to a discussion of family heirlooms, which speedily brought out the jewel, whose insistent pressure I had felt all through the courses, and which was soon passing from hand to hand, accompanied by feminine expressions of delight.

"The interest in the jewel appeared to get into the air. Even the servants became affected by it. I noticed the under butler, while filling the glass of Captain Pole-Carew, who was holding the trinket up to catch the varying angles of light, in which it flashed amazingly,

fasten his eyes upon it. For an instant he breathed heavily and almost leaned upon the captain's shoulder, forgetting the wine he was in the act of decanting, and which, overflowing the glass, ran down upon the cloth. The jewel continued its circuit of the table and returned to my inner pocket.

"'A not over-safe repository, if I may venture the opinion,' said the captain, with a smile. I had occasion later to recall the cynical remark.

"We returned to our hotel at a late hour, and fatigued with the long day went directly to bed. Our rooms, as I have said, adjoined, and it is a habit in our travels at the day's end to be back and forth, talking as we disrobe. I allude to this fact as it bears upon the case. I was first in bed, and remember hearing Mr. Fuller put up the window before his light went out. For myself, I dropped off at once and must have slept soundly. I was awakened by hearing my name called loudly. It was Fuller's voice and I rushed at once into his room, hastily switching on the electric light. Fuller sat on the edge of the bed, in his pajamas — and as this part of the story is his, perhaps he would best tell it."

The visitor in the Pickwickian spectacles, thus appealed to, took up the narrative.

"I also had gone instantly to sleep," he said, "but by-and-by came broad awake, startled, with no sense of time, but a stifled feeling of alarm. I dimly saw near the side of my bed a figure, which on my suddenly sitting up made a hurried movement. With no clear idea of what I was doing, I made a hasty clutch in the dark and fastened my hand on the breast of a man's coat. I think my grip was a frenzied one, for as the man snatched himself away, I felt the cloth tear. In a second of time the man had crossed the room and I heard the window rattle as he struck the sash in passing through it. It was then I cried out, and Mr. Richardson came running in."

"We made a hasty examination of the room," the first speaker resumed. "My evening coat lay on the floor, and I remembered that when taking it off I had hung it on the post of Fuller's bed. It is to prolong an already somewhat lengthy story not to say at once that the jewel was gone. We stared at each other with rueful faces.

"'The man has gone through that window with it!' cried Fuller. He pointed with a clenched hand. Then he brought his hand back,

with a conscious air, and opened it. "This is a souvenir of him," he said, and he held out a button — this button."

Sherlock Holmes reached quickly for the little article that the speaker held out and carefully examined it through his lens.

"A dark horn button," he said, "of German manufacture and recent importation. A few strands of thread pulled out with it. This may be helpful." Then he turned to his callers. "And what else?"

"Well — that is about all we can tell you. We did the obvious thing — rang for the night clerk and watchman and made what examination was possible. The burglar had plainly come along a narrow iron balcony, opening from one of the hotel corridors and skirting the row of windows that gave upon an inner courtyard, escaping by the same channel. The night watchman could advance only a feeble conjecture as to how this might be done successfully. The burglar, he opined, could have made off through the servants' quarters, or possibly was himself a guest of the house, familiar with its passages and now snugly locked in his room and beyond apprehension."

"Did you speak of your loss?" asked Holmes.

"No; that did not appear to be necessary. We treated the incident at the moment as only an invasion."

"Exceedingly clever," approved Holmes. "You Americans can usually be trusted not to drive in too far."

"We breakfasted early, decided that you were our only resource and — in short," concluded the visitor, with an outward gesture of the hands, "that is the whole story. The loss is considerable and we wish to entrust the matter to the discreet hands of Mr. Sherlock Holmes."

My friend lay back in his chair, intently regarding the button poised between his forefingers.

"What became of that under butler?" he asked abruptly.

A little look of surprise slipped into the countenance of the visitor. "Why, now that you call attention to it," he returned, after a moment's reflection, "I remember seeing the head butler putting a spoonful of salt upon the red splotch the spilled wine had made, then turning his awkward assistant from the room. It was so quietly done as to attract no special notice. Afterward, over our cigars in the library, I recall his lordship making some joking allusion to Watkins — so he

called the man — being something of a connoisseur in jewelry — a collector in a small way. His Lordship laughingly conjectured that the sight of so rare a jewel had unnerved him. Beyond regarding the allusion in the way of a quiet apology for a servitor's awkwardness, I gave it no particular thought."

Sherlock Holmes continued to direct his gaze upon the button.

"Your story is interesting," he said after some moments of silence. "It will please me to give it further thought. Perhaps you will let me look in on you later at your hotel. It is possible that in the course of the day I shall be able to give you some news."

The visitors hereupon courteously taking their leave, Holmes and I were left alone.

"Well, Watson," he began, "what do you make of it?"

"There is an under butler to be reckoned up," I replied.

"You also observed the under butler, did you?" said Holmes abstractedly. After a pause he added: "Do you happen to know the address of Lord M —'s tailor?"

I confessed that this lay outside the circle of my knowledge of the nobility. Holmes put on his cap and raincoat.

"I am going out on my own, Watson," he said, "for a stroll among the fashionable West End tailor shops. Perhaps you will do me the honor to lunch with me at the Club. I may want to discuss matters with you."

Sherlock Holmes went out and I returned home. It was a dull day for patients, for which I was glad, and the lunch hour found me promptly at the Athenaeum, waiting at our accustomed corner table — impatiently waiting, for it was long past the lunch hour when Holmes came in.

"A busy morning, Watson," was his brief remark as he took his chair.

"And successful?"

To this Holmes made no reply, taking his soup with profound abstraction and apparently oblivious of his guest across the table. While I was accustomed to this attitude of preoccupation, it piqued me to be left so entirely out of his consideration. A review of his morning investigations seemed, under the circumstances, to be quite my due.

"I am going to ask you," began Holmes, when the meal had gone

on to its close in silence, "to get tickets for the Alhambra tonight — four tickets. In the middle of the house, with an aisle seat. Then kindly drop around to the hotel and arrange with our friends to go with us. Or, rather, for us to go with them — in their motorcar, Watson. Request them to pick us up at Baker Street. You will undertake this? Very good, Watson. Then — till I see you at my rooms!" And tossing off his coffee in the manner of a toast, Sherlock Holmes abruptly arose and left me, waving his cap as he went through the door.

It was useless to demur at this cavalier treatment. I had to content myself with the reflection that, as my friend mounted into the atmosphere of criminal detection, the smaller obligations fell away from him. During what was left of the day I was busy in executing the commissions which he had entrusted to me, and night found me at Baker Street, where I discovered Holmes in evening clothes.

"I was just speculating, Watson," he began, in an airy manner, "upon the extraordinary range and variety of the seemingly insignificant and lowly article of commerce known as the button. It is a device common in one form or another to every country. Its origin we should need to seek back of the dimmest borders of recorded history. Its uses and application are beyond calculation. Do you happen to know, my dear Doctor, the figures representing the imports into England for a single year of this ornamental, and at times highly useful, little article? Of horn buttons, for example — it were curious to speculate upon the astonishing number of substances that masquerade under that distinguishing appellation. Indeed, the real horn button when found — if I may quote from our friend Captain Cuttle — is easily made a note of."

It was in this bantering vein that Holmes ran on, not suffering interruption, until the arrival of our callers of the morning, in their motorcar, which speedily conveyed us to the Alhambra, that gorgeous home of refined vaudeville. The theater was crowded as usual. A few moments after our arrival, one of the boxes filled with a fashionable party, among whom our American friends recognized some of their dinner acquaintances of the previous evening. Later I perceived Captain Pole-Carew, as he looked over the house, bow to our companions. Then his glance ranged to Sherlock Holmes, where I may have imagined it rested a moment, passing thence to a distant part

of the galleries. Why we had been brought to this public amusement hall it was impossible to conjecture. That in some manner it bore upon the commission Holmes had undertaken I was fain to believe, but beyond that conclusion it was idle to speculate. At one time during the evening Holmes, who had taken the aisle seat, suddenly got up and retired to the lobby, but was soon back again and apparently engrossed in what went on upon the stage.

At the end of the performance we made our way through the slowly moving audience, visibly helped along by Holmes. In the lobby we chanced to encounter Captain Pole-Carew, who had separated from the box party. He greeted the Americans with some reserve, but moved along with us to the exit, near which our motor-car already waited. The captain had distantly acknowledged the introduction to Holmes and myself, and knowing how my friend resented these cool conventionalities, I was unprepared for the warmth with which he seconded the suggestion that the captain make one of our party in the drive home.

"Sit here in the tonneau," he said cordially, "and let me take the seat with the chauffeur. It will be a pleasure, I assure you."

The captain's manifest reluctance to join our party was quite overcome by Holmes's polite insistence. His natural breeding asserted itself against whatever desire he may have entertained for other engagements, and in a short time the car had reached his door in Burleigh Street.

Sherlock Holmes quickly dismounted. "We have just time for a cigar and a cocktail with the captain," he proposed.

"Yes, to be sure," said Captain Pole-Carew, but with no excess of heartiness. "Do me the honor, gentlemen, of walking into my bachelor home. I—I shall be charmed."

It was Sherlock Holmes who carried the thing off; otherwise I think none of us would have felt that the invitation was other than the sort that is perfunctorily made and expected to be declined, with a proper show of politeness on both sides. But Holmes moved gayly to the street door, maintaining a brisk patter of small talk as Pole-Carew got out his latchkey. We were ushered into a dimly lighted hall and passed thence into a large apartment, handsomely furnished, the living room of a man of taste.

"Pray be seated, gentlemen," said our host. "I expected my valet here before me — he also was at the theater tonight — but your motor-car outstripped him. However, I daresay we can manage," and the captain busied himself setting forth inviting decanters and cigars.

We had but just engaged in the polite enjoyment of Captain Pole-Carew's hospitality when Sherlock Holmes suddenly clapped his handkerchief to his nose, with a slight exclamation of annoyance.

"It is nothing," he said, "a trifling nose-bleed to which I am often subject after the theater." He held his head forward, his face covered with the handkerchief.

"It is most annoying," he added apologetically. "Cold water — er — could I step into your dressing room, Captain?"

"Certainly — certainly," our host assented; "through that door, Mr. Holmes."

Holmes quickly vanished through the indicated door, whence presently came the sound of running water from a tap. We had scarcely resumed our interrupted train of conversation when he reappeared in the door, bearing in his hand a jacket.

"Thank you, Captain Pole-Carew," he said, coming forward, "my nose is quite better. It has led me, I find, to a singular discovery. May I ask, without being regarded as impolite, if this is your jacket?"

I saw that Captain Pole-Carew had gone pale as he answered haughtily: "It is my valet's jacket, Mr. Holmes. He must have forgotten it. Why do you ask?"

"I was noticing the buttons," returned Holmes; "they are exactly like this one in my pocket," and he held the dark horn button up to view.

"What of that?" retorted our host quickly; "could there not be many such?"

"Yes," Holmes acknowledged, "but this button of mine was violently torn from its fastening — as it might have been from this jacket."

"Mr. Holmes," returned Captain Pole-Carew with a sneer, "your jest is neither timely nor a brilliant one. The jacket has no button missing."

"No, but it had," returned Holmes coolly; "here, you will see, it has been sewn on, not as a tailor sews it, with the thread concealed,

but through and through the cloth, leaving the thread visible. As a man unskilled, or in some haste, might sew it on. You get my meaning, Captain?"

Sherlock Holmes as he spoke had crossed the room to where Captain Pole-Carew, his face dark with passion, was standing on the hearthrug. Holmes made an exaggerated gesture in holding up the jacket, stumbled upon the captain in doing so, and fell violently against the mantel. In an effort to recover himself his arm dislodged a handsome vase, which fell to the floor and shattered into fragments. There was a cry from Captain Pole-Carew, who flung himself amid the fractured pieces of glass. Swift as his action was, Sherlock Holmes was quicker, and snatched from the floor an object that glittered among the broken fragments.

"I think, Mr. Richardson," he said calmly, recovering himself, "that, as a judge of jewelry, this is something you will take particular interest in."

Before any one of us was over the surprise of the thing, Captain Pole-Carew had quite regained his poise, and stood lighting his cigar.

"A very pretty play, Mr. Sherlock Holmes," he said. "I am indebted to you and your itinerant friends for a charming evening. May I suggest, however, that the hour is now late, and Baker Street, even for a motorcar, something of a distance?"

"Naturally," said Sherlock Holmes, when we had reached his rooms and joined him in a good-night cigar, "you expect me to lay bare the processes and so rob my performance of its sole element of fascination. Watson has taught you in his memoirs to expect it. My button quest was certainly directed against his Lordship's under butler, but at the first inquiry it turned up, to my surprise, the entirely unexpected valet of quite another person. It was a curious fact, the tailor declared, that he should twice in one day have calls for that identical button, and he innocently alluded to the valet of Pole-Carew. This was sufficient clue to start upon.

"Investigation in proper quarters not only established the palpable innocuousness of the under butler, but afforded such insight into the existent relations between the captain and his valet as I doubt not will again bring them into the sphere of my attentions. It was plainly

the brain of the master that conceived the robbery, but the hand of the valet executed it. I even paid a most enjoyable visit to our friends at the Langham, as I had promised."

The Americans looked at each other.

"That could hardly be," they said. "We were not out of our rooms, and our only caller was a clerk from the curio shop with a message from the dealer—an impertinent old fellow he was, too, who followed us about the rooms with many senile questions as to our tour."

"In this profession I have to adopt many disguises," Holmes smilingly explained. "Of course I could have called on you openly, yet it amused me to fool you a bit. But a disguise would not serve my purpose in getting into Captain Pole-Carew's apartments, which was the thing now most desired. Looking back upon the achievement, I flatter myself that it was rather ingeniously pulled off. You know, Watson, of my association with the theaters and how easily under such a connection one can learn who has reserved boxes.

"I confess that here things played into my hand. I perceived that Pole-Carew recognized me—that is your doing, Watson—and I was not surprised when I saw his glance single out a person in the gallery, with whom he presently got into conversation. I say conversation, for Pole-Carew I discovered to be an expert in the lip language, an accomplishment to which I myself once devoted some months of study and which I have found very helpful in my vocation. It was an easy matter to intercept the message that the captain from his box, with exaggerated labial motion, *lipped* above the heads of the audience.

"*'Hide the vase!'* was the message, several times repeated. *'Hide the vase!'*

"That was the moment when I left the theater for consultation with a friendly detective in the lobby. I strongly suspect," said Sherlock Holmes, with a chuckle, "that the reason the captain failed to find his valet at home could be traced to the prompt and intelligent action of that friendly detective. Our foisting ourselves upon the reluctant captain was merely a clever bit of card forcing, arranged quite in advance, but the rest of it was simplicity itself.

"Inasmuch as you declare that it is the property only, and not a criminal prosecution, that you desire, I do not think anything remains?"

"Except," said the gentleman warmly, taking the jewel from his pocket, "to pay you for this extraordinary recovery."

Sherlock Holmes laughed pleasantly.

"My dear American sir," he replied, "I am still very much in your debt. You should not lose sight of Edgar Allan Poe."

Detective: SHERLOCK HOLMES

Narrators: WATSON and BUNNY

THE RUBY OF KHITMANDU

by HUGH KINGSMILL

This artful blend of pastiche and parody first appeared in "The Bookman," issue of April 1932. It is an excellent example of what might be termed "humorous reverence." The take-off of E. W. Hornung's style and characterization is extraordinarily true to the original—far truer, in fact, than the Doyleesque counterpart.

Not the least unusual quality of Mr. Kingsmill's contribution is his superb indirection. By exposing the colossal blundering and incompetence of the two famous "stooges," Bunny and Watson, Mr. Kingsmill subtly reminds us that it is Raffles and Sherlock Holmes who are the real giants—that as champions respectfully [sic] of crime and detection, Raffles and Holmes reduce all colleagues and competitors to the mere status of, on the one hand, pilfering pigmies, and on the other, detecting dwarfs. It is a lesson we should not forget . . .

(SYNOPSIS—*The Maharajah of Khitmandu, who is staying at Claridge's, is robbed of the famous Ruby of Khitmandu. Sherlock Holmes traces the theft to Raffles, who agrees to hand over the ruby to Holmes, on condition that he and his confederate Bunny are not proceeded against. Raffles has just explained the situation to Bunny. They are in the rooms of Raffles in the Albany.*)

CHAPTER XV

(Bunny's Narrative)

MY HEART froze at the incredible words which told me that Raffles, of all men, was throwing up the sponge without a struggle,

was tamely handing over the most splendid of all the splendid trophies of his skill and daring to this imitation detective, after outwitting all the finest brains of the finest crime-investigating organization in the world. Suddenly the ice turned to fire, and I was on my feet, speaking as I had never spoken to living man before. What I said I cannot remember. If I could, I would not record it. I believe I wept. I know I went down on my knees. And Raffles sat there with never a word! I see him still, leaning back in a luxurious arm-chair, watching me with steady eyes sheathed by drooping lids. There was a faint smile on the handsome dare-devil face, and the hands were raised as if in deprecation; nor can I give my readers a more complete idea of the frenzy which had me in its grip than by recording the plain fact that I was utterly oblivious to the strangeness of the spectacle before me. Raffles apologetic, Raffles condescending to conciliate me — at any other time such a reversal of our natural rôles had filled me with unworthy exultation for myself, and bitter shame for him. But I was past caring now.

And then, still holding his palms towards me, he crossed them. I have said that during the telling of his monstrous decision he had the ruby between the thumb and forefinger of his right hand. Now the left hand was where the right had been, and the ruby was in it. I suppose I should have guessed at once, I suppose I should have read in his smile what it needed my own eyes to tell me, that there was a ruby in his right hand too! So that was the meaning of the upraised hands! I swear that my first sensation was a pang of pure relief that Raffles had not stooped to conciliate me, my second a hot shame that I had been idiot enough even for one moment to believe him capable of doing so. Then the full significance of the two rubies flashed across me.

"An imitation?" I gasped, falling back into my chair.

"An exact replica."

"For Holmes?"

He nodded.

"But supposing he —"

"That's a risk I have to take."

"Then I go with you."

A savage gleam lit up the steel-blue eyes.

"I don't want you."

"Holmes may spot it. I must share the risk."

"You fool, you'd double it!"

"Raffles!" The cry of pain was wrung from me before I could check it, but if there was weakness in my self-betrayal, I could not regret it when I saw the softening in his wonderful eyes.

"I didn't mean it, Bunny," he said.

"Then you'll take me!" I cried, and held my breath through an endless half-minute, until a consenting nod brought me to my feet again. The hand that shot out to grasp his was met half-way, and a twinkling eye belied the doleful resignation in his "What an obstinate rabbit it is!"

Our appointment with Holmes was for the following evening at nine. The clocks of London were striking the half-hour after eight when I entered the Albany. My dear villain, in evening dress, worn as only he could wear it, was standing by the table; but there was that in his attitude which struck the greeting dumb upon my lips. My eyes followed the direction of his, and I saw the two rubies side by side in their open cases.

"What is it, Raffles?" I cried. "Has anything happened?"

"It's no good, Bunny," he said, looking up. "I can't risk it. With anyone else I'd chance it, and be damned to the consequences, too. But Holmes — no, Bunny! I was a fool ever to play with the idea."

I could not speak. The bitterness of my disappointment, the depth of my disillusion, took me by the throat and choked me. That Raffles should be knocked out I could have borne, that he should let the fight go by default — there was the shame to which I could fit no words.

"He'd spot it, Bunny. He'd spot it." Raffles picked up one of the cases. "See this nick?" he asked lightly, for all the world as if blazing eyes and a scarlet face were an invitation to confidences. "I've marked this case because it holds the one and only Ruby of Khitmandu, and on my life I don't believe I could tell which ruby was which, if I once got the cases mixed."

"And yet," I croaked from a dry throat, "you think Holmes can do what you can't!"

"My dear rabbit, precious stones are one of his hobbies. The fellow's written a monograph on them, as I discovered only to-day. I'm not

saying he'd spot my imitation, but I am most certainly not going to give him the chance," and he turned on his heel and strode into his bedroom for his overcoat.

The patient readers of these unworthy chronicles do not need to be reminded that I am not normally distinguished for rapidity of either thought or action. But for once brain and hand worked as surely and swiftly as though they had been Raffles's own, and the rubies had changed places a full half-minute before Raffles returned to find me on my feet, my hat clapped to my head, and a look in my eyes which opened his own in enquiry.

"I'm coming with you," I cried.

Raffles stopped dead, with an ugly glare.

"Haven't you grasped, my good fool, that I'm handing Holmes the real stone?"

"He may play you false."

"I refuse to take you."

"Then I follow you."

Raffles picked up the marked case, snapped it to, and slipped it into his overcoat pocket. I was outwitting him for his own good, yet a pang shot through me at the sight, with another to follow when the safe closed on the real ruby in the dummy's case. And the eyes that strove to meet his fell most shamefully as he asked if I still proposed to thrust my company upon him. Through teeth which I could hardly keep from chattering I muttered that it was a trap, that Holmes would take the stone and then call in the police, that I must share the danger as I would have shared the profits. A contemptuous shrug of the splendid shoulders, and a quick spin on his heel, were all the answer he vouchsafed me, and not a word broke the silence between us as we strode northwards through the night.

There was no tremor in the lean strong hand which raised the knocker on a door in Baker Street. He might have been going to a triumph instead of to the bitterest of humiliations. And it might be a triumph, after all! And he would owe it to me! But there was little enough of exultation in the heart which pounded savagely as I followed him upstairs, my fingers gripped tightly round the life-preserver in my pocket.

"Two gentlemen to see you, sir," wheezed the woman who had admitted us. "And one of them," drawled an insufferably affected

voice, as we walked in, "is very considerably advertising the presence of a medium-sized life-preserver in his right overcoat pocket. My dear Watson, if you must wave a loaded revolver about, might I suggest that you do so in the passage? Thank you. It is certainly safer in your pocket. Well, Mr. Raffles, have you brought it?"

Without a word, Raffles took the case out, and handed it across to Holmes. As Holmes opened it, the fellow whom he had addressed as Watson leaned forward, breathing noisily. Criminals though we were, I could not repress a thrill of pride as I contrasted the keen bronze face of my companion with the yellow cadaverous countenance of Holmes, and reflected that my own alas indisputably undistinguished appearance could challenge a more than merely favourable comparison with the mottled complexion, bleared eyes, and ragged moustache of the detective's jackal.

"A beautiful stone, eh, Watson?" Holmes remarked, in the same maddening drawl, as he held the ruby to the light. "Well, Mr. Raffles, you have saved me a good deal of unnecessary trouble. The promptitude with which you have bowed to the inevitable does credit to your quite exceptional intelligence. I presume that you will have no objection to my submitting this stone to a brief examination?"

"I should not consider that you were fulfilling your duty to your client if you neglected such an elementary precaution."

It was perfectly said, but then was it not Raffles who said it? And said it from the middle of the shabby bear-skin rug, his legs apart and his back to the fire. Now, as always, the center of the stage was his at will, and I could have laughed at the discomfited snarl with which Holmes rose, and picking his way through an abominable litter of papers disappeared into the adjoining room. Three minutes, which seemed to me like twice as many hours, had passed by the clock on the mantelpiece, when the door opened again. Teeth set, and nerves strung ready, I was yet, even in this supreme moment, conscious of a tension in Raffles which puzzled me, for what had he, who believed the stone to be the original ruby, to fear? The menacing face of the detective brought my life-preserver half out of my pocket, and the revolver of the man Watson wholly out of his. Then, to my unutterable relief, Holmes said, "I need not detain you any longer, Mr. Raffles. But one word in parting. Let this be your last visit to these rooms."

There was a threat in the slow-dropping syllables which I did not understand, and would have resented, had I had room in my heart for any other emotion than an overwhelming exultation. Through a mist I saw Raffles incline his head with a faintly contemptuous smile. And I remember nothing more, till we were in the open street, and the last sound I expected startled me back into my senses. For Raffles was chuckling.

"I'm disappointed in the man, Bunny," he murmured with a laugh. "I was convinced he would spot it. But I was ready for him."

"Spot it?" I gasped, fighting an impossible suspicion.

"Yes, spot the dummy which my innocent rabbit was so insultingly sure was the one and only Ruby of Khitmandu."

"What!" My voice rose to a shriek. "Do you mean it was the dummy which was in the marked case?"

He spun round with a savage "Of course!"

"But you said it was the real one."

"And again, of course!"

Suddenly I saw it all. It was the old, old wretched story. He would trust no one but himself. He alone could bluff Holmes with a dummy stone. So he had tried to shake me off with the lie about restoring the real stone. And my unwitting hand had turned the lie to truth! As I reeled, he caught my arm.

"You fool! You infernal, you unutterable fool!" He swung me round to face his blazing eyes. "What have you done?"

"I swapped them over. And be damned to you!"

"You swapped them over?" The words came slowly through clenched teeth.

"When you were in your bedroom. So it *was* the one and only ruby you gave him after all," and the hand that was raised to strike me closed on my mouth as I struggled to release the wild laughter which was choking in my throat.

CHAPTER XVI

(*Dr. Watson's Narrative*)

I must confess that as the door closed on Raffles and his pitiful confederate I felt myself completely at a loss to account for the unexpected turn which events had taken. There was no mistaking the

meaning of the stern expression on the face of Holmes when he rejoined us after examining the stone. I saw at once that his surmise had proved correct, and that Raffles had substituted an imitation ruby for the original. The almost laughable agitation with which the lesser villain pulled out his life-preserver at my friend's entrance confirmed me in this supposition. It was clear to me that he was as bewildered as myself when Holmes dismissed Raffles instead of denouncing him. Indeed, his gasp of relief as he preceded Raffles out of the room was so marked as to bring me to my feet with an ill-defined impulse to rectify the extraordinary error into which, as it seemed to me, Holmes had been betrayed.

"Sit down!" Holmes snapped, with more than his usual asperity.

"But Holmes!" I cried. "Is it possible you do not realize —"

"I realize that, as usual, you realize nothing. Take this stone. Guard it as you would guard the apple of your eye. And bring it to me here at eight to-morrow morning."

"But Holmes, I don't understand —"

"I have no time to discuss the limitations of your intelligence."

I have always been willing to make allowances for my friend's natural impatience with a less active intelligence than his own. Nevertheless, I could not repress a feeling of mortification as he thrust the case into my hand, and propelled me into the passage. But the night air, and the brisk pace at which I set out down Baker Street, soon served to restore my equanimity. A long experience of my friend's extraordinary powers had taught me that he often saw clearly when all was darkness to myself. I reflected that he had no doubt some excellent reason for letting the villains go. No man could strike more swiftly and with more deadly effect than Holmes, but equally no man knew better how to bide his time, or could wait more patiently to enmesh his catch beyond the possibility of escape. While these thoughts were passing through my mind, I had been vaguely conscious of two men walking ahead of me, at a distance of about a hundred yards. Suddenly one of them reeled, and would have fallen had not his companion caught his arm. My first impression was that I was witnessing the spectacle, alas only too common a one in all great cities, of two drunken men assisting each other homewards. But as I observed the couple in pity mingled with repulsion, the one who had caught the other's arm raised his hand as if to deliver a blow. I

felt for my revolver, and was about to utter a warning shout, when I perceived that they were the very men who had just been occupying my thoughts. The need for caution instantly asserted itself. Halting, I drew out my pipe, filled it, and applied a match. This simple stratagem enabled me to collect my thoughts. It was plain that these rascals had quarrelled. I recalled the familiar adage that when thieves fall out honest men come by their own, and I summoned all my powers to imagine what Holmes would do in my place. To follow the rogues at a safe distance, and act as the development of the situation required, seemed to me the course of action which he would pursue. But I could not conceal from myself that his view of what the situation might require would probably differ materially from my own. For an instant I was tempted to hasten back to him with the news of this fresh development. But a moment's reflection convinced me that to do so would be to risk the almost certain loss of my quarry. I had another, and I fear a less excusable, motive for not returning. The brusquerie of my dismissal still rankled a little. It would be gratifying if I could, this once, show my imperious friend that I was capable of making an independent contribution to the unravelling of a problem. I therefore quickened my steps, and soon diminished the distance between myself and my quarry to about fifty yards. It was obvious that the dispute was still in progress. Raffles himself maintained a sullen silence, but the excitable voice and gestures of his accomplice testified that the quarrel, whatever its nature, was raging with unabated vehemence.

They had entered Piccadilly, and I was still at their heels, when they turned abruptly into Albany Courtyard. By a fortunate coincidence I had for some weeks been visiting the Albany in my professional capacity, having been called in by my old friend General Macdonagh, who was now at death's door. I was therefore known to the commissionaire, who touched his hat as I hastened past him. With the realization that this was where Raffles lived, the course of action I should adopt became clear to me. He had the latchkey in his door, as I came up.

"By Heavens!" his companion cried. "It's Watson!"

"*Dr. Watson*, if you please, Bunny." The scoundrel turned to me with a leer. "This is indeed a charming surprise, Doctor."

Ignoring the covert insolence of the man, I demanded sternly if he would accord me a brief audience in his rooms.

"But of course, my dear Doctor. Any friend of Mr. Holmes is our friend, too. You will excuse me if I lead the way."

My hand went to my revolver, and as the door of his rooms closed behind us, I whipped it out, at the same time producing the case which contained the imitation ruby.

"Here is your imitation stone," I cried, tossing the case on to the table. "Hand over the real one, or I shall shoot you like a dog."

Accomplished villain though he was, he could not repress a start of dismay, while his miserable confederate collapsed on a sofa with a cry of horror.

"This is very abrupt, Doctor," Raffles said, picking the case up and opening it. "May I ask if you are acting on the instructions of Mr. Holmes? It is, after all, with Mr. Holmes that I am dealing."

"You are dealing with me now. That is the only fact you need to grasp."

"But Mr. Holmes was entirely satisfied with the stone I handed him."

"I am not here to argue. Will you comply with my request?"

"It is disgraceful of Holmes to send you to tackle the pair of us single-handed."

"Mr. Holmes, you blackguard! And he knows nothing of what I am doing."

"Really? Then I can only say he does not deserve such a lieutenant. Well, Bunny, our triumph was, I fear, a little premature."

A minute later, I was in the passage, the case containing the genuine stone in my breast pocket. Through the closed door there rang what I took to be the bitter, baffled laugh of an outwitted scoundrel. In general, I am of a somewhat sedate temper, but it was, I confess, in a mood which almost bordered on exultation that I drove back to Baker Street, and burst in on Holmes.

"I've got it! I've got it!" I cried, waving the case.

"Delirium tremens?" Holmes enquired coldly, from his arm-chair. I noticed that he was holding a revolver.

"The original ruby, Holmes!"

With a bound as of a panther Holmes leaped from his chair and

snatched the case from my hand. "You idiot!" he snarled. "What have you done?"

Vexed and bewildered, I told my story, while Holmes stared at me with heaving chest and flaming eyes. My readers will have guessed the truth, which Holmes flung at me in a few disconnected sentences, interspersed with personal observations of an extremely disparaging nature. It was indeed the original ruby which Raffles had brought with him, and which Holmes, suspecting that Raffles would attempt to retrieve it while he slept, had entrusted to my keeping. The warning which Holmes had given Raffles not to visit him again was now explained, as was also the vigil with a loaded revolver on which my friend had embarked when I burst in on him.

The arrest a fortnight later of Raffles and the man Bunny, and the restoration of the famous ruby to its lawful owner, will be familiar to all readers of the daily papers. During this period the extremely critical condition of General Macdonagh engaged my whole attention. His decease was almost immediately followed by the unexpected deaths of two other patients, and in the general pressure of these sad events I was unable to visit Holmes in order to learn from his own lips the inner story of the final stages in this remarkable case.

HIS LAST SCRAPE : or, Holmes, Sweet Holmes!

by RACHEL FERGUSON

Rachel Ferguson's NYMPHS AND SATIRES (London, Benn, 1932) is a veritable encyclopaedia of parodies. It is divided into six sections — Theatrical, Vaudeville, Musical, Literary, Verse, and General. It was inevitable that the literary section, containing satires on George Bernard Shaw, P. G. Wodehouse, Elinor Glyn, and others, should also include a burlesque of Sherlock Holmes — “with unfading gratitude to Conan Doyle” (which speaks for all of us).

“His Last Scrape” packs an enormous amount of detail into its few pages. Here is no leisurely parody, but one which, to use H. Douglas Thomson’s description of a detective short story, “is intensive, and with so little time to spare drives at express speed to the final issue.”

We liked especially that utterly bewildering moment when Holmes muttered: “Impossible — AND WHAT OF THE SOUP?” And who could resist, in the final two words of the parody, Miss Ferguson’s delicious pun on Doyle’s own “Bruce-Partington plans”?

TIMES are dull, Watson,” said Sherlock Holmes reflectively, and taking up his violin, he played the first movement from Beethoven’s Leonora No. 3.

“Come, come, Holmes!” I exclaimed. “What of the Welsh Cottage, and the Supposed Murder of the Elderly Aunt by Her Fifteen-Year-Old Niece?”

Sherlock Holmes toyed with an ounce of shag. “A simple case of probabilities, Watson. If you remember, I spent a weekend in a

Shadwell slaughter-house sparring with a saddle of beef as much heavier than myself as the proportional strength of a hale woman of middle age and a child in her teens. Repeated blows upon the carcass resulted in no more than a slight displacement of suet, equivalent to an abrasion of the human skin, and in no wise fatal. The deduction was obvious. There was another factor at work in that remote cottage."

He strolled to the window. "There is a man coming down Baker Street," he murmured. "I can see that he has no wife, lives on clay soil and is a vegetarian—but let him tell us his story." Before I had time to interject: "Holmes, this is witchcraft!" the bell rang below. Our visitor was a man of middle height in a derby and check suit. "Pray be seated," said Holmes. "I perceive you to be absent-minded to the point of aberration, of solitary habits, and that you have recently become engaged to be married."

"I am indeed, sir," answered the worthy fellow. Then his simple face clouded with astonishment. "But how did you know that, Mr. Holmes?"

"Come, come," replied my friend, "when a man enters my rooms and hands me his railway-ticket instead of his visiting-card, he is a man whose thoughts are elsewhere. Had you been of convivial bent you would beyond question invest in a season ticket up to London. This is a Third return. The Mizpah ring upon your finger suggests amorous entanglement; from the fact that it is brand-new the deduction that the affair is of recent date is child's play."

Accustomed as I am to the methods of my friend, I too was quick to grasp these details almost as soon as Holmes had pointed them out.

"My name is Jarvis," began our visitor. "My father died leaving the bulk of his considerable wealth, together with Whytings, his country-seat, to my twin brother and myself. Under the terms of his will, whichever of us marries first enters into sole possession, the only stipulation being that the lady shall be of British birth. Five years ago, my brother, Ambrose, returned from Ceylon a hopeless invalid; he had lost a limb whilst scaling a tea-plant, and is bed-ridden. I confess to some annoyance at the prospect of the upset to my ordered life entailed by the presence of one who is practically a stranger to me. But, once settled in, he proved an acceptable inmate, until last summer. In the August of that year a snake fell on my head as I was ordering lunch —"

"What sort of a snake?" said Holmes sharply, joining his finger tips together.

"A small one, with diamond markings."

Holmes chuckled softly. "Pray continue, Mr. Jarvis, you interest me enormously."

"In September began the horrible disturbances in the beech-grove —"

"Hah!" exclaimed Holmes, his sallow cheeks sharp with excitement, "and what time do these manifestations take place?"

"At nine o'clock regularly every evening."

"And what time do you dine?"

"At seven."

"Capital," said Holmes, relaxing, "you would make an excellent witness! Pray continue."

"I can keep no servants. The house has got an unsavoury reputation. My household now consists of a Burman, a Thug and a Dervish — retainers of my brother."

Holmes rose. "Your problem offers novel features, though of course in these cases the element of surprise is practically nil."

As he spoke he put on his Inverness and deerstalker. "Watson, there is a Promenade concert at the Queen's Hall in ten minutes. After that, we can just catch the eleven-thirty to Slopshire."

Whytings, not a large place, lies in an arm of the Slopshire hills, squat and slightly sinister.

"Welcome," said our simple host. But Holmes was already upon his knees. He was not praying; he is, I believe, a Freethinker, a Pan-aesthetist (his little monograph upon *Religions in the Swamps of Central America* is a minor classic).

During the next few days all fell out as our host had related. The disturbances occurred punctually every evening. On the fourth day there was a new development: the native staff disappeared.

"With them vanishes the mystery of the beech-grove, gentlemen," said Holmes. He had spent that morning in throwing a loaded basket up at the invalid's bedroom window. The path, littered with plates, resembled a china shop in an earthquake. "Impossible —" he muttered — "AND WHAT OF THE SOUP?" I confess I was a little nettled at this want of confidence. He now looked up from his minute

examination of the floor, and closed his lens. "We have nothing to learn here. We will now proceed to your brother's room, Mr. Jarvis."

Suddenly he clapped his hand to his nose. "Dear me, gentlemen," he observed, "my nose is bleeding; may I trouble you for your handkerchiefs? Mine, as you perceive, is already inadequate. Thank you."

As we sat and chatted to the invalid, Holmes was seized with a paroxysm of sneezing. The fretful cripple proffered his handkerchief — we had all searched our pockets in vain. Holmes groped for it and put it to his streaming eyes. Then he rose to his feet.

"The game is up, Mr. Ambrose Jarvis," he said grimly. "*You have been getting through a lot of reading lately.*"

The result of this simple statement astonished us. The one-legged ex-tea-planter sprang out of bed and fell upon Holmes.

"Watch the book-case, Watson!" yelled Holmes. The bogus cripple drew back, ashen. "I give up," he said, and collapsed.

"It is as well, my friend," said Holmes.

Striding to the book-case he cried, "Madam, you can come out, nobody will harm you!"

I think we were all prepared for some apparition of horror; it was with a feeling of stupefaction that we witnessed the emerging from the concealed room the shelf had so cunningly masked of a charming Indian lady!

"As simple a case as I have yet been concerned with," remarked Sherlock Holmes as we reclined in our rooms in Baker Street. "Let me reconstruct it for you. Here we have two brothers; one has travelled much in the East. He learns of his father's death and of the terms of his will — as nice an incentive to crime as was ever framed by lawyers! The snake put me on the trail; those diamond markings are peculiar to certain tracts of Ceylon; this reptile is not indigenous to our isles. This brother returns, then, and tries by every means to rid himself of his rival. Why? Why should he fear his brother if he himself has played the game? Is not this suggestive? It is a workable hypothesis to assume that he has contracted an alliance with a native lady. Where was she concealed? That, for me, was the root of the problem."

"But the disturbances, Holmes?"

"Bunkum. Rockets, lanterns, native war-cries. The storm-centre

was within. Why did they occur at nine every night? Obviously this punctuality pointed to the fact that it was essential *at a fixed hour* to distract the attention of our client to the grounds. What hours are so fixed as those of meals? The brothers dine at seven. The disturbances occur at nine. When you caught me throwing a basket up at the window I was endeavouring to ascertain if it were possible for confederates to cast sustenance into the house from without. The result showed me it was not. Therefore the food was delivered from inside. Any doubts I might have had were set at rest after I had secured the native servants in the larder. The disturbances instantly ceased, which pointed to human agency. The dust on the floor of the invalid's bedroom accumulated, and enabled me to perceive with the naked eye the prints of *two* bare feet going in the direction of the book-case. With regard to the nose-bleeding," he added with a smile, "I plead guilty. I was seeking the feminine touch. To do this, it was necessary to confiscate all available male handkerchiefs in the house, for I knew that you, with your lovable density, would give the game away by offering me your own. The handkerchief lent me by our 'one-legged' friend put the finishing touch. It was heavy with hibiscus perfume — very popular among the ladies of Colombo. These trifles — these *trèfles* I might call them, should not be overlooked.

"And now let us turn our attention to the affair of the missing Booth Tarkington proofs."

THE ADVENTURE OF THE MURDERED ART EDITOR

by FREDERIC DORR STEELE



Frederic Dorr Steele is the most distinguished American illustrator of Sherlock Holmes. On second thought, we can safely cross out the word "American." Worshipers at the shrine of Sherlock will always owe a huge vote of thanks to that inspired art director of "Collier's" who first commissioned Frederic Dorr Steele to draw those splendid magazine illustrations.

If there is one fly in the inkpot, if there is one smudge on the brush, it is the profound regret that Mr. Steele has illustrated only 30 of the 60 Sherlock Holmes stories in print. We fervently hope that when the newly discovered short story, "The Man Who Was Wanted," is finally released for publication it will be the "hand of Steele" that depicts the great manhunter.

Shortly before THE MISADVENTURES went to press, your Editors purchased an original drawing of Sherlock Holmes from Mr. Steele. The illustration is one almost unknown even to the inner circle: a large blue-white-and-black drawing of Holmes and Watson examining the dead body of Selden under the "cold, clear moon" of the Devonshire moor. This superb piece of work was done in 1939 for Twentieth Century Fox, to ad-

vertise the motion-picture version of *THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES*, starring Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce.

When the drawing arrived, your Editors drank it in. Then we noticed a queer thing about it: the deerstalkered head of Sherlock was drawn on an irregular piece of board pasted into the larger board. Scenting a mystery ("The Adventure of the Second Head"), we asked Mr. Steele if he remembered any tidbit of history connected with that paste-in.

"No," he said, "nothing at all interesting."

"You simply didn't like the first head you drew," we said, "and replaced it with a second one before sending the drawing to Twentieth Century Fox?"

"Oh, no," Mr. Steele replied. "I drew that new head only a week ago — just before sending it to you."

It took a few moments for Mr. Steele's soft-spoken and almost casual reply to sink in. Then we grasped the full implications. Long after the drawing had been finished, years after it had served its commercial purpose, four years in fact after it had been bought and paid for by Twentieth Century Fox, Mr. Steele was still working on it, still improving it — and for no other reason than the sheer love of his subject! And Mr. Steele thought there was nothing interesting about that!

Can you conceive of a more revealing anecdote about Mr. Steele? Do you realize now the enormous and enduring affection Mr. Steele must have for that extraordinary figment of the imagination known in every nook of the world as Sherlock Holmes?

"The Adventure of the Murdered Art Editor" appeared first in *SPOOFS* (New York, McBride, 1933), edited by Richard Butler Glaenzer. Mr. Steele wrote two other parody-pastiches of his favorite fiction hero:

"The Adventure of the Missing Hatrack," in "The Players Bulletin," issue of October 15, 1926; reprinted in *THE PLAYERS' BOOK*, a volume published in 1938, the 50th year of the Club.

"The Attempted Murder of Malcolm Duncan," in "The Players Bulletin," issue of June 1, 1932.

IT WAS on a dark, misting day in March 1933, that Sherlock Holmes stamped into our lodgings in Baker Street, threw off his dripping raincoat and sank into an armchair by the fire, his head bowed forward in deepest dejection.

At length he spoke. "Of all the cases we have had to deal with, Watson, none touches us more nearly than this." He tossed over a damp copy of the *Mail*, with an American despatch reading as follows:

ARTIST SUSPECTED OF MURDER

New York, March 27. (AP) The partially dismembered body of Elijah J. Grootenheimer was found today in a canvas-covered box which had been left on the curb in 10th Street near the East River. The face had been horribly mutilated by beating with some blunt instrument. Identification was made by means of a letter in the pocket of the dead man's coat, addressed to him and signed *Frederic Dorr Steele*. The police decline to give out the contents of this letter, but intimate that it was threatening in tone. Steele is an artist well known for his pictures illustrating Sherlock Holmes and other mystery tales, and it is thought that brooding over these stories may have affected his mind. The motive of the crime clearly was not robbery, since \$4.80 in cash and a valuable ticket for the Dutch Treat Show were found undisturbed in his pockets. Steele's last known address was a garret in East 10th Street. Search has been made for him in his usual haunts, but thus far without success.

"Ah, but this is incredible — impossible!" I exclaimed. "Poor Steele wouldn't hurt a fly."

We sat in silence for a time, drawn together by our common anxiety. From time to time during some thirty years, beginning with "The Return of Sherlock Holmes," this Steele had been making illustrations for my little narratives. Though an American, he seemed a decent unobjectionable fellow who did his work conscientiously, and we had grown rather fond of him. His naïve simplicity and quaint American speech amused Holmes, who relished oddities among human beings in all walks of life.

"I can't make it out," I said. "What does it all mean?"

"It means, my dear Watson," said Holmes briskly, dragging out his old kit bag, "that you and I must catch the *Berengaria* at Southampton tomorrow morning."

We had fine weather as we sped westward. Holmes spent most of his waking hours pacing the deck, looking in now and again at the radio room for news—of which there was none. His nerves were as usual under iron control, but little indications of strain were plain to me who knew him so well; as for example when he abstractedly poured his glass of wine into the captain's soup plate, or when, on the boat deck, he suddenly picked up Lady Buxham's Pekinese and hurled it over the rail into the sea.

"Steady, Holmes," I said stanchly. "You must give yourself more rest."

"I cannot rest, Watson," he said, "until we have probed this hideous mystery to the bottom."

"Have you a theory?" I asked. "Surely you don't believe that that poor fellow has murdered an editor in cold blood!"

"Hot or cold, the thing is possible," said Holmes crisply. "It is well known that editors, especially art editors, are usually scoundrels, and sometimes able scoundrels, which makes them more dangerous to society. It is conceivable that our poor artist, after a lifetime of dealing with them, may have come to the end of his patience. Even a worm—" He broke off moodily and resumed his pacing of the deck.

When we reached New York, and Holmes had suffered with ill-disguised impatience the formal civilities of the Mayor's Committee for Distinguished Guests, we established ourselves in a hotel where English travelers had told us we might be assured of finding food properly prepared. But without waiting for even a kipper and a pot of tea, Holmes disappeared, and I did not see him again for three days.

When he reappeared he looked haggard and worn. "I have seen the garret studio," he said.

"Have you a clue to Steele's whereabouts?" I asked.

"A small one," he returned. "In fact, just sixteen millimeters long." He produced from his wallet a bit of cinema film. "I found it on the floor, Watson. What do you make of it?"

I held it to the light. "Well, I see a picture of a little girl and some queer-looking structures like giant mouse-traps behind her."

"Those mouse-traps, Watson, are lobster pots, and of a type peculiar to the coast of Maine. We are on the track of our man."

On a foggy day in May our motor boat crunched against the barnacle-covered timbers of the wharf at a small wooded island, on which stood perhaps twoscore bare gray buildings. Holmes wasted no time. To the leather-visaged lobsterman who had caught our bow line he said, "Sir, we are in quest of a certain artist, said to reside somewhere on your most picturesque coast. Do you know of any artist on this island?"

"Well, we used to know one, but he ain't any artist any longer. He itches all the time."

"Itches!" I said. "Perhaps, Holmes, that may be our man. He has a nervous temperament. He may have developed hives or some such ailment."

"Splendid, Watson. Your deduction is sound, but it is based on an incorrect pronunciation."

"But I don't see —" I began.

"You never see, my good Watson," said Holmes with a touch of asperity.

"He lives down in that shack by the Cove," said the lobsterman. "But if you callate to go down there you want to be careful. He bites."

"Bites!" I said in amazement.

"Yeah. Sid, here, was down there yesterday, with a mess o' tinkers, and got chased out. He said he was biting. I guess he's gone kind o' nutty-like, seems though."

"Is his name by any chance Steele?" asked Holmes.

"Seems like it was. But he calls himself Seymour Haden now."

"Seymour Haden!" I exclaimed. "That is the name of a great etcher."

"Precisely," said Holmes dryly. "He used to itch too."

Dreading a possible shock to our friend's mind, we approached him cautiously. He sat at a table in his little house, bent over a metal plate immersed in some villainous blue acid.

"Do you know us, Steele?" I asked timidly.

After a moment he turned his head toward us and we saw a wild gleam in his bloodshot eyes. His disheveled hair and beard and his grimy clothes made him uncouth, even repulsive in appearance. "I can't get up now. I'm biting a plate," he said.

"Another mystery solved," observed Holmes quietly.

"Don't you know us?" I repeated. "We have come all the way from London to find you."

"Sure I know you. You probably want me to illustrate another crime. I killed a man for less than that," said the artist vehemently.

"I daresay. I daresay," Holmes said soothingly. "But we're not hunting crimes now. We just want to help you."

"But you can't help me!" he shouted. "I have been a doomed man for thirty years. Ever since I began making pictures for your damned stories, those editors have called me a crime artist. No matter what else I do, they still try to feed me raw blood. But I got square with 'em. They made a criminal of me, and now, by Heaven, I've committed a perfect crime on one of them. And there are more to come, Mr. Holmes, more to come!"

After this outburst he turned his back on us again.

"Come, come," said Holmes gently, "we mustn't get excited. Think a minute. Is that why you have come off here and left all your friends — hidden from the world?"

"Yes, Mr. Holmes. And that is why I have had this old well cleaned out: I am going to fill it with editors' blood. It will take quite a lot of editors to fill it, but I have hopes."

We saw that it was useless to pursue the conversation further and rose to depart.

"Well, then, go take a walk," he said, "take the path straight over Light House Hill to White Head. After that you'd better come back here. I can give you a crust and perhaps a bit of short lobster if you're not too legally minded."

We crossed the island to the cliffs and stood for a time looking into the blue haze. "Strange, isn't it, Watson," Holmes reflected, "that crime and madness can lurk in so peaceful a spot. . . . I hate to do it, but I must question him further."

"But I say, Holmes, would it be quite sporting," I protested, "now that we are his guests?" But Holmes was resolute.

When we returned to the little house at sunset, we found its owner

composed. We talked quietly together of his life on the island, where, he said, he meant to end his days. Only one subject seemed to bring on a return of abnormality, — the subject of editors.

"There is a big cavern up the shore," he said, "that I've got filled solid full of dynamite. There's a big boulder over it, and if an editor ever comes to this island, I'm going to pry it loose. . . ."

"But these editors," said Holmes gently. "Aren't they human beings?"

"Not after they become editors," was the reply. "They are machines. Machines that buy merchandise by the yard, put it in pigeon holes, label it. . . ."

"Look here, my dear fellow," said Holmes, "you are happy here, aren't you? You are not bloodthirsty about other people — fishermen for example?"

"Oh, no."

"Well, then, I think Watson and I will go back to England and leave you in peace. You will be safe here. No one need ever know."

Two weeks later we were back in the old rooms in Baker Street. There had been no further developments in the Grootenheimer case. The police had given up the search for the missing artist, and now thought that the editor might have been killed by some Modernist or other deranged person.

But Holmes's watchful eye had caught this curious PERSONAL advertisement in the *New York Times*: "WANTED, an Art Editor, as companion for a summer vacation in Maine. All expenses paid. Must be full-blooded American."

"Poor soul," I said musingly, "no doubt his sorrows have driven him mad. But somehow I am not convinced that his crime is real. It may be entirely imaginary."

"Quite," said Holmes.

"No one could blame him, of course."

"Hardly."

Detective: SHIRLEY HOLMES

Narrator: JOAN WATSON

THE CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL MURDER

by FREDERIC ARNOLD KUMMER
and BASIL MITCHELL

Here is one of the most daring "pastiche" ever to claim admission to the Sacred Canon. In this story — hold your hat! — Sherlock Holmes is in effect a woman!

We can thank two authors, one an Englishman, the other an American, for this amazing state of affairs. The hands-across-the-sea collaboration postulates that Holmes has married and is now blessed with a grown-up daughter; that her name, most appropriately, is Shirley Holmes; that quite naturally Shirley follows in the footsteps of her illustrious father; that just as naturally her adventures, memoirs, and cases are recorded by none other than the daughter of Dr. John Watson, named with equal appropriateness Joan Watson!

Shirley Holmes first appeared in print in THE ADVENTURE OF THE QUEEN BEE, a four-part serial in "Mystery" magazine, issues of July, August, September, and October 1933. This tale was adapted by Frederic Arnold Kummer from the London stage play by Basil Mitchell, which was produced with the consent and approval of Lady Conan Doyle. The début of Shirley Holmes, in drama and novelette, was so successful that she "returned" (again emulating her famous father) in the December 1933 issue of the same magazine — and it is this return engagement we now bring you.

Gentlemen, the Sherlockian stag-party is over . . . We welcome the one and only feminine facsimile of The Great Man to our innermost circle.

AS SHIRLEY HOLMES and I descended the steps of the North Transept at Canterbury Cathedral she suddenly seized my arm.

"Look, Joan!" she whispered. "There! On the slab!"

I peered through the stained-glass gloom ahead of us, my heart pounding. Even though the celebrated murder of Thomas à Becket was a seven-century-old affair, the ancient stone which is popularly supposed to mark the spot where he perished still attracts many sight-seers, some of whom make a practice of prostrating themselves upon it in silent devotion. There was a figure lying on the slab now . . . the figure of a man, and but for a certain grotesqueness in his attitude I might have supposed him to be merely one of these pious pilgrims, paying his respects to the sainted bishop. But the moment my eyes fell upon his sprawling form I drew back, shuddering, striving to remain as calm as Shirley.

He was a young man, clean-shaven, with rather long, untidy hair. The soft white shirt beneath his tweed sports jacket was open at the neck; his wrinkled flannel trousers, his scuffed and dusty shoes, suggested the tourist, the hiker.

I did not, however, grasp all these details in that first terrified instant. Shirley still held my arm in her slim, strong grasp.

"Don't scream!" she commanded, her voice reassuringly cool. A moment later we were bending over the figure.

He lay on his breast, with his head turned to one side. His right arm was doubled under him, his left outstretched, and in his left hand he clutched a small, open notebook. I saw Shirley's finger tips rest for an instant upon that inert wrist, then she stood up, her eyes narrowing.

"Joan!" she murmured, glancing swiftly about. "You'd better fetch somebody . . . quick!"

I ran up the stone steps, my brain whirling. As the more or less modest chronicler of Shirley Holmes's adventures I had complained to her only that morning of the dullness of life since her amazing exploits in the case of the stolen Queen Bee, but I am quite sure that neither of us expected to come upon anything exciting in the course of a peaceful afternoon's visit to Canterbury Cathedral. I glanced

about the dim old building, wondering to whom I had best apply for help.

Not far away I saw the verger, holding forth on the martyrdom of the unfortunate Becket to a group of visiting tourists. I went up to him, managed to attract his attention.

"If you please!" I said. "I'd like to speak to you. . . ."

The verger frowned. It annoyed him to have his little lecture interrupted.

"What about, miss?" he asked gruffly.

"There . . . there's been an accident!" I whispered. "You'd best come at once!"

Still frowning, the verger turned the group over to one of his assistants and accompanied me back to the point where Shirley stood.

"What's the trouble here?" he grumbled.

Shirley glanced up; I thought her face, in the shadows, unusually white.

"This man has been stabbed through the heart!" she said quietly. "He's dead!"

"What?" The verger's jaw sagged; in his astonishment his voice became a mere squeak. "Dead! Good God." He ran swiftly down the short flight of steps. "How did it happen?"

"I haven't the least idea," Shirley replied calmly. "Miss Watson and I —" she glanced at me — "found him lying here a few moments ago. He hasn't been dead very long . . . the body is still warm. I advise you to send for a doctor . . . call in the police at once! And as a precaution, I think the doors of the building should be closed!"

The verger, having at last grasped the situation, acted promptly. Going to the head of the steps he signaled to one of his assistants, gave the necessary orders without alarming the group of visitors near the altar, then hurried to the main entrance.

I looked at Shirley. Did her suggestion that the doors of the building be closed mean that the man had been murdered? If so, the order, I feared, came too late. Whoever had committed the crime, if crime it was, had already been allowed ample time to escape. But Shirley did not seem disturbed; as she stood there, her figure alert and tense, her fine, aquiline features thrown into relief by her short, blonde hair, I was again struck, as I had so often been in the past, by her astonish-

ing resemblance at times like this to her celebrated father, Sherlock Holmes.

"You say the man has been stabbed?" I asked curiously.

"Yes," Shirley nodded. "With a silver pencil, of all things. If you'll bend down you can see the end of it, between the fingers of his right hand."

I did as she directed. The pencil, a heavy one, had been driven through the young man's shirt straight into his heart. Since it still plugged the wound there was almost no bleeding; the circulation had ceased with the stopping of his heartbeats. But I could not quite understand why the dead man clutched the pencil in his fingers. That suggested suicide, rather than murder.

"Do you suppose he could have done it himself?" I whispered. "Have placed the sharp point of the pencil against his breast and then deliberately fallen forward with all his weight? From the way he's holding the end of it in his fingers . . ."

"It's possible," Shirley said, but I saw that for some reason unknown to me she did not think so.

I glanced at the notebook in the man's outstretched hand. It was clearly new and on the very first page of it two lines had been written in the form of a verse. I read them aloud.

"Oh, who could find a nobler fate
Than death where died the good and great."

"Why, Shirley!" I exclaimed. "It's a poem about himself and . . . Thomas à Becket! A sort of farewell message, I should say!"

"Yes," Shirley agreed. "It could certainly be so interpreted. I wonder if he wrote it."

"Then you still think the man was murdered? After reading that?"

"I do. But the police won't, I imagine. Here they come now. You'd better not say anything about my opinion. Let them form their own."

I looked up. Two worried policemen were hastening down the aisle, accompanied by the verger and a small, thin man in civilian's clothes whom I took to be a doctor. A third had taken charge of the startled group of tourists.

The doctor proceeded at once to examine the body while one of the two officers who had joined us, a beetle-browed sergeant, turned to

Shirley and myself and curtly demanded our names. But the moment Shirley told him who she was, his frowns vanished, and when I remarked that I was the daughter of Dr. Watson he fairly beamed.

"Have either of you young ladies ever seen this man before?" he asked.

"No," Shirley said, shaking her head. "We haven't. Miss Watson and I arrived at the Cathedral about half-past three. The party of tourists didn't particularly attract us, so we came straight along here . . . and found the body lying on the slab. I sent Miss Watson for help, and she brought the verger. . . ."

"That's right!" the latter nodded. "My assistant at the door tells me the young fellow came in, alone, a little before three. He remembers the man particularly, on account of his long wavy hair. The party of tourists arrived about ten minutes later and I took them in charge at once."

"Bring them over here?" the sergeant questioned.

"Oh, yes. All visitors want to see the slab. . . ."

"Then some of them must have noticed the young man."

"I don't doubt they did, sir."

"Find out, Harris," the sergeant said, turning to his companion. "And get all their names and addresses."

"There's something written in here, sir," announced the policeman, indicating the dead man's notebook. "Looks like a farewell message to me." He strode off.

The sergeant read the verse aloud, nodding.

"Think it could be a suicide, Doctor?" he asked.

"Why, yes . . . it could. Unusual, but by no means unprecedented. The noble Romans, when they were tired of life, usually fell on their swords, didn't they? That silver pencil, almost as sharp as a needle, didn't need much force behind it to penetrate to the heart. The weight of his body, against the stone slab, would have done it. And with the butt end of the pencil clutched in his fingers . . . that farewell message in his book . . ." He shrugged.

Harris, the other policeman, now came back, bringing several of the wide-eyed tourists with him. All remembered seeing the young man sitting on the steps half an hour before. He had held his head in his hands as if praying. One gray-haired woman testified that in

going down to look at the slab she had accidentally trodden on the open notebook, lying on the steps at the young man's side. When she apologized he had glanced up and nodded. This, according to the verger, was at a quarter past three.

"Miss Watson and I found the body at twenty minutes to four," Shirley volunteered. "I took the time immediately, of course." She smiled at the sergeant, as though *he* would appreciate her caution. "He can't have been dead over twenty-five minutes."

"Rather less, if anything," said the doctor, who was searching the young man's pockets. "Nothing here to identify him," he went on, placing some keys, a small pile of money, a pipe and pouch of tobacco on the floor.

Shirley went to the steps and sat in approximately the same position the young man had occupied when seen by the tourists.

"Would you mind, madam," she asked the gray-haired woman, "going down to look at the slab just as you did before?"

"Why . . . not at all." Somewhat mystified, the woman descended the short flight of steps, went up again.

"Thanks!" Shirley rose, her eyes shining, and stood beside the young man's body. "You can see plainly, Sergeant," she continued, pointing, "the print of this lady's shoe on the open page of the notebook. There. Very faint, of course . . . under the penciled verse. Which would seem to show that he wrote it *after* the verger's party came by . . ."

"No doubt." The sergeant nodded. "Any of you recognize the fellow?" he went on, addressing the little group. "Suppose you step down and look. Bring the rest of them over, Harris. If possible we must get the body identified."

But although the score or more of visitors trooped dutifully down to where the dead man lay not one of them, so they declared, was able to throw any light upon his identity.

"Very well!" The sergeant snapped a rubber band about his notebook, placed it in his pocket. "That's all. You'll be wanted, at the inquest most likely, young ladies," he went on to Shirley and me. "If we need any of the rest of you people, you'll be notified." With a nod he dismissed the little group.

Shirley stood watching them and I felt sure, from my knowledge of her, that the features, the general appearance, of each one was

being recorded by her acute and sensitive brain. When they had drifted off to continue their sightseeing in care of the verger, she took me by the arm.

"What about tea?" she said.

But as soon as we had passed the doors of the Cathedral I realized that her mind was set on other things than tea. Watching carefully for a moment to make sure that no one had followed us from the building she drew me toward her car.

"Hurry, darling," she whispered. "We have work to do!"

I stared at her, astonished.

"Apparently you still think it wasn't a case of suicide?" I remarked, as we got in.

"Suicide my grandmother!" snapped Shirley, glancing through the rear window of the car. "One of the most daring murders I've ever come across!"

"I don't see why you think so," I objected.

"It's simple enough! The dead man was left-handed! And left-handed people don't stab themselves with their right hands!"

"How do you know he was left-handed?"

"Because the fingernails of his left hand were much more worn and broken than those of his right! Because between the thumb and forefinger of his left hand was a dark smudge, made by the silver pencil when he wrote with it! Because he carried his money in his left-hand trousers' pocket! And because that woman I asked to walk down the steps . . . the one who trod on his notebook . . . passed to the right side of him!"

"But . . . I don't see what that shows."

"You would, if you thought a moment. A left-handed man would hold a notebook in his right hand, wouldn't he? And if he laid it down on the steps beside him it would be at his right side . . . just where that woman stepped on it!"

"But he had it in his *left* hand when we found him!"

"Which clearly proves that the murderer, when he put it there, either forgot, or didn't know, that the young fellow was left-handed!"

"Shirley! You're . . . wonderful!" I gasped.

"The killer came up behind him, no doubt," Shirley went on, "as he was sitting on the steps with his head in his hands. Throttled him to silence with one arm about his neck . . . snatched up the pencil

with the other and stabbed him to the heart! Then lowered him on the slab, thrust the handle of the pencil into his right hand, the notebook into his left, and walked off . . . after searching the body. . . ."

"How do you know it was searched?"

"One of the pockets was turned inside out. I looked through them myself, while you were calling the verger. Stuffed in his tobacco pouch I found this." She took a crumpled paper from her purse.

I read the words on it, written in a crabbed, feminine hand.

Received of Eric Sefton 30 shillings for one week's board and lodging in advance. MRS. ELLEN CHOWN—Dover Road.

"We're going there now," Shirley murmured. "To see Mrs. Chown. His landlady, it appears. The receipt, you may have noticed, is dated the day before yesterday!"

"But shouldn't we have told the police?"

"Yes. But they'll find out soon enough. And I wanted to get there first. Even now we may be too late!" She glanced at the house before which we presently drew up . . . a small but very homelike cottage on the edge of the town. "Let me do the talking, Joan," she went on, as we hurried to the door.

The middle-aged woman who opened it for us seemed, I thought, a bit startled.

"Mr. Sefton isn't in," she said, "but I'm looking for him back at any moment."

"I'm afraid he won't be back at all, Mrs. Chown," Shirley said gravely. "A young man answering his description was found dead in Canterbury Cathedral this afternoon . . ."

Mrs. Chown sagged against the door frame, her expression dismayed.

"Oh . . . the poor young fellow!" she murmured. "My daughter will be terribly upset!"

"She was a friend of his, then?"

"In a way, miss. They'd got to know each other quite well, in the short time he'd been here. Such a nice young man!" She wiped a suggestion of tears from her eyes. "Mabel was real fond of him."

"If we might come in for a moment," Shirley said quickly, "I'd like to ask you a few questions. My friend and I" — she glanced at me — "are journalists from London." This was true enough, as far as I

was concerned, at least. Shirley might have been anything, from a duchess down.

"Why . . . of course." Mrs. Chown ushered us into her small, plain parlor. "I'll be glad to tell you what little I know. Mr. Sefton arrived here about ten days ago. A writer, he said he was, a poet, on a walking tour for his vacation, and wanted lodgings for the night. The next day he liked his room so much he thought he would stay on, and paid a week's board in advance. The day before yesterday he paid for a second week. A very quiet respectable young man; spent most of his time in his room. My daughter, Mabel, who works for Frost & Chandler's, the florists, in town, used to talk to him, evenings. She rides to work every day on her bicycle, but of course, at night —"

"I see," interrupted Shirley quickly, and I saw that she was tremendously interested. "Mr. Sefton didn't go out much, then?"

"Scarcely at all, miss, since he came. He wouldn't have gone to Canterbury today, he told me, if he hadn't wanted to get his hair cut."

"He was left-handed, wasn't he?" Shirley asked.

"He was, miss. But very quick with tools, just the same. I know, because he put a new stopper on the water butt for me. And fixed my rustic rose arbor, when the storm last week blew it down. And mended the broken kitchen step, just as good as new. You wouldn't think a writer would be so handy with tools."

"You certainly wouldn't," Shirley agreed. "Did he have many callers, Mrs. Chown?"

"Not a one, miss, all the time he was here, until this afternoon."

"This afternoon?" Shirley's eyes were snapping.

"Why . . . yes, miss. The man who came just before you did. A friend of Mr. Sefton's, he said, with a message for him . . ."

"Did you let him go up to Mr. Sefton's room?"

"Why . . . yes, miss. How did you know?"

"I suspected it," Shirley replied, frowning. "What did he want there?"

"To leave him a note, he said . . ."

"Oh!" Shirley rose. "I was afraid we'd be too late. Will you let us see his room, too, Mrs. Chown?"

"Why . . . I don't know of any objection." The landlady went to the door. "There's really nothing in it . . . the poor fellow only brought a knapsack. Come this way."

We hurried up the stairs. Mrs. Chown's statements about the young man's room were borne out by the facts. His knapsack, empty, hung on the back of the door. Its contents, a meager supply of shirts, socks and underwear, had been arranged in the drawers of the dresser. The small wooden table contained only a few gaudy magazines, with no sign of poems or literary work of any other nature to be seen. In fact there was not a letter or scrap of paper in the place . . . not even the note the young man's caller was supposed to have left for him.

"He must have changed his mind," Mrs. Chown muttered, her old eyes troubled. "When he came down, he asked me about Mabel . . . wanted to know where she worked."

"Indeed!" said Shirley, who was making a meticulous search of the room. "What did this friend look like?"

"He was medium-tall," the landlady replied, "smooth-shaved, and had on a gray suit . . . or was it blue . . . ?"

"How old?" Shirley groaned, realizing the uncertainty of all such evidence.

"Around thirty, I'd say."

Shirley led the way down the stairs. From her expression I was certain that she had not discovered a single clue of any value in solving the mystery. But her face still wore its gay and indomitable smile.

"Wouldn't you like to show us your rose garden, Mrs. Chown?" she said, as we reached the lower hall. "I adore flowers."

"I'd be proud to," the landlady replied. "Come this way." She led us to the kitchen, opened the rear door. "Here's the step Mr. Sefton fixed for me," she went on, as we passed into the garden. "Concrete. Much stronger than the old one was. And there's the rose arbor he mended." She indicated a rustic trellis covered with a mass of crimson blossoms. "The wind had knocked it flat. My larkspur and primroses are doing very well, don't you think?"

"They are indeed," Shirley agreed, but I saw that she was not interested, and after a few moments she put out her hand. "Thanks for your kindness, Mrs. Chown," she went on. "And don't say anything to the police about our having been here, will you? They rather object to journalists butting in." She shook hands with the old lady and a moment later we were on our way back to the car.

"The murderer didn't find what he wanted when he searched the body," Shirley said, "or he wouldn't have come here."

"Do you think he found it here?" I inquired.

"That," Shirley smiled, "depends on whether he has gone to see Mrs. Chown's daughter. Since we are about to interview the young lady ourselves we shall soon know." She added another five miles to the speed of her small, smart roadster. "One thing is clear . . . Mr. Sefton was no poet. Did you notice the way the step, and that rose arbor, were mended? Skillful work, my dear Joan. Our young friend, without meaning to do so, told the world that he was a first-class mechanic." She did not speak again until we drew up before the expensive-looking shop of Messrs. Frost & Chandler.

Miss Chown, a sharp-eyed, good-looking girl, was waiting on a customer when we came in, but presently joined us.

"You want to see me?" she asked, her manner apprehensive.

"Yes." Shirley laid her hand on the girl's arm. "About that man who called here . . . talked with you, this afternoon. The young man in a gray suit?"

"He wasn't young," Miss Chown objected. "Forty, at least. And his suit wasn't gray . . . it was tan . . ."

"My mistake," Shirley murmured, giving me a triumphant glance. "Would you mind telling me what he wanted?"

The girl's eyes narrowed, at this.

"Why should I?" she asked. "Who are you?"

Shirley did not pursue the fiction of our being journalists.

"Miss Chown," she said gravely, "a desperate crime was committed in Canterbury Cathedral this afternoon. A young man, known to you as Eric Sefton, was deliberately murdered there!" She tightened her grip on the girl's arm as the latter swayed against the counter. "Don't do anything to attract attention, please, but I suspect that this man who came to see you was his murderer. He believes himself safe, for the time being at least, because the police think Mr. Sefton committed suicide. Please tell me, as briefly as you can, what the fellow wanted."

Miss Chown passed her hand across her eyes; it was clear that the news of Mr. Sefton's death had come as a great shock.

"Are . . . are you sure it was . . . Eric?" she whispered.

"Not absolutely," Shirley said. "I am going to ask you, when we leave here, to go to the police . . . identify his body. But first tell me why that man came to see you."

"He . . . he wanted to know," Miss Chown stammered, "if . . . if

Eric had given me anything of value to keep for him. He said he was a friend of Eric's and had been looking for him all the afternoon. It seems that unless he could produce this . . . this article . . . immediately, Eric would lose a great deal of money."

"He didn't tell you what it was?"

"No."

"Or that Mr. Sefton was dead?"

"Oh, no. He said he'd been trying to find him."

"And what did you say?"

"That Eric never gave me anything to keep for him at all . . . that I knew nothing about his affairs. Finally the man went away. But I was frightened, because . . . because Mr. Sefton *did* tell me that . . . that somebody might try to rob him, and that was why he was afraid to go out. . . ."

"Rob him of what?"

"I don't know. He never said. But it must have been something he carried in his knapsack, because, when he first came, he wouldn't let the thing out of his sight. Later on, after he unpacked it, he didn't seem to care. . . ."

Shirley stood staring at the girl without seeing her; there was a queer, clairvoyant look in her eyes that told me her thoughts were far away. Presently she shook her head with a swift, decisive gesture, glanced at her watch.

"Half-past five!" she said. "You close at six, I imagine. Get your hat, Miss Chown! I'll arrange with the proprietors for you to leave!" She hurried to the small office at the rear of the shop and returned almost immediately with a slim, gray-haired gentleman who assured the sales-girl she was at liberty to go for the day. A moment later we were climbing into Shirley's car.

We did not, however, drive at once to the police station, but made a short stop at what appeared to be a newspaper office on the way. Shirley, although she left us for ten minutes, offered no explanations, and presently we were once more facing the beetle-browed sergeant who had questioned us at the Cathedral.

"Have you found out who the dead man was?" she asked.

"Not yet," replied the sergeant, eyeing us curiously, "but we are expecting reports at almost any moment."

"I think this girl may be able to identify him," Shirley went on.

"Her name is Chown . . . Mabel Chown . . . and she works for Frost & Chandler, the florists. Unless I am very much mistaken the young man was a boarder at her mother's house."

The sergeant did not, as I feared he might, question Shirley concerning the source of her information. Perhaps the magic name of Sherlock Holmes lent her a certain glamour. Instead he turned to Miss Chown.

"Come with me, please," he said, going to the door. "Since I don't suppose you care to visit the mortuary, Miss Holmes," he went on, "I suggest that you and Miss Watson wait here."

When they had gone I turned to Shirley.

"He still thinks it a case of suicide," I whispered.

"Yes," Shirley replied. "I wonder if Mr. Sefton wrote that verse in his notebook to prove to the girl that he really was a poet?"

"What do you want to know for?" I asked.

"Because," said Shirley grimly, "if he didn't, then it wasn't written by him at all! I wish I had a sample of his handwriting!" After that she remained buried in thought until Miss Chown, very much shaken, returned in the charge of the sergeant.

"It's young Sefton, all right," the latter said. "I'll send a man to look over his papers, his belongings. If the poor fellow had any relatives they should be notified at once."

Shirley gave me one of her swift, inscrutable glances.

"Joan!" she said. "Take Miss Chown out to the car. We're going to drive her home. I'd like a few words with the sergeant."

I nodded. Shirley, I knew, was up to something mysterious. It was fifteen minutes before she rejoined us and when she did there was an expression on her face that boded ill to whoever had killed young Sefton. Yet the fact that there had been a murder was still unknown; as we drove off, boys were crying late editions of the afternoon newspapers, with full details of "the horrible suicide in Canterbury Cathedral!"

Mrs. Chown, we learned on arriving at the cottage, had not been disturbed by further visitors; even the policeman the sergeant had planned to send out had not yet arrived. Shirley, to my surprise, announced that she was hungry, and accepted with what seemed to me almost indecent alacrity Mrs. Chown's invitation to supper. While it

was being prepared she went into the garden, remained there alone for half an hour, smoking endless cigarettes, apparently trying to solve some intricate problem.

But as soon as supper was over she became once more her eager, active self. Sending me out to the car, she stopped for a short talk with Miss Chown. When she rejoined me she was beaming.

"We'll give the affair a good write-up in our paper!" she called back, noisily starting the engine.

"Well, Shirley," I said, as we drove off through the darkness, "we don't seem any nearer to the murderer than we were before."

She gave me an impish grin, at that.

"You don't realize, Joan," she whispered, "just how near to the murderer we really are . . . or have been." For a moment she glanced back down the shadowy street, then, to my surprise, she suddenly turned off the Dover Road and brought the car to a standstill in one of the side streets. "We're getting out here, darling," she said.

I climbed down, considerably mystified, having supposed we were on our way back to the old Falstaff Inn where we had taken rooms for the night. No thought of investigating murders had brought us to Canterbury; Shirley and I had set out from Eastmill the day before on a leisurely progress to join Mother and Dad at Folkestone for the week end.

As soon as we reached the sidewalk, Shirley started back in the general direction of the cottage, taking, however, a roundabout way which brought us, through dark lanes and byroads, to the rear of the Chowns' little garden. A thick hedge of evergreens bordered the farther edge of it; when we had noiselessly forced a way through their branches we found ourselves close behind the rose arbor, the heavy vines of which hid us completely from sight of those in the house. It was now, I knew, close to nine o'clock, and while there was no moon, the night sky was still sufficiently luminous to render objects in the garden quite plainly visible.

We crouched, hidden, behind the arbor for what seemed hours, although the ringing of church bells presently told me that it was only ten o'clock. Then Shirley, who had offered no explanations, nodded significantly in the direction of the house.

I followed her gaze. The kitchen door was being slowly pushed open. Against the light behind it I saw the slender figure of a woman

... too slender, I realized at once, to be that of Mrs. Chown. Her daughter, no doubt, coming into the garden for a breath of air.

But a breath of air proved not to be Miss Chown's purpose. As she crept into view I saw, dimly, that she held an object of some sort in her hand. Presently, bending over the new concrete step so kindly built by Mr. Sefton at the kitchen door, she began an operation of some sort upon it; I could clearly hear the clink of metal as against stone.

"Shirley!" I whispered. "It's that girl! What does it mean?"

"Be quiet!" Shirley replied, and I saw the glint of a revolver in her hand.

I said no more, but it came to me, suddenly, that whatever the object Mr. Sefton had guarded so carefully in his knapsack, it might well have been hidden beneath this newly made concrete step . . . and Miss Chown, now that the coast was clear, was engaged in recovering it. How all this fitted into Shirley's theory of a murder in Canterbury Cathedral was a mystery to me but I knew that it would be useless to question her about it now. Nor was such questioning necessary.

As Miss Chown, manipulating what I presently made out to be a crowbar, succeeded in overturning the step, I saw a dark figure emerge from the shadows at the side of the house and leap toward her.

Instantly the girl gave a shrill and terrified cry and at the same moment Shirley rose, and revolver in hand went plunging across the garden.

At the foot of the kitchen steps a sharp struggle was going on; I heard the impact of a blow and Miss Chown's terrified cries ceased abruptly. A moment later, the figure of a man sprang toward the front of the house, tucking, as he went, a long slender object beneath his arm.

Shirley stood for an instant gazing after him. Then her hand shot up and I heard the sharp report of her pistol. Two other figures, racing through the darkness, bore down upon the fleeing man, now clutching in agony a shattered arm.

Shirley was upon him almost as soon as the two policemen . . . was picking up the slender roll he had dropped upon the grass.

"The Wellesley Van Dyck, Sergeant!" she said triumphantly, unrolling the brown-canvas cylinder. "You'll get the credit for this, at

Scotland Yard, but I think Miss Chown should have the reward! For running the risk she did in acting as decoy! That brute might have killed her . . . as he did his confederate, Sefton. Or Edwards, rather. Sefton was merely an assumed name." She turned to Miss Chown, nursing a badly bruised cheek. "Thank you, my dear! I hope it doesn't hurt too much. It was the only way we could catch him red-handed!" Again she glanced at the furious prisoner, moaning dismally over his wounded arm. "I wouldn't have shot him, Sergeant," she said, "if you'd been a little quicker on the uptake!"

"We got caught in the hedge," replied the officer, flushing. "I don't see how we are going to thank you, Miss Holmes. And if you don't mind my asking how you did it . . ."

"Nothing simpler!" Shirley laughed. Like her distinguished father, she has a keen love for the dramatic. "I knew that Sefton had hidden something . . . something he'd most likely stolen. So this afternoon I glanced through the London newspapers for the past two weeks, checked up the important crimes. One of them was the theft of Lord Wellesley's Van Dyck, on the very day before this young fellow arrived in Canterbury. By two mechanics, doing plumbing repairs at his house. Having learned that this young man was a mechanic, I concluded he'd had the picture in his knapsack. And since a rolled-up canvas isn't an easy thing to hide, I could imagine no more likely place than a recess in that concrete step he so obligingly built for Mrs. Chown. This evening, while waiting for supper, I made some investigations, satisfied myself that the step was hollow . . . persuaded Miss Chown to upset it with a crowbar soon after it was dark, and disclose the hiding place. I felt sure that this man, having killed Sefton, probably for double-crossing him, would watch the house, knowing quite well the picture must be hidden somewhere about the premises. And of course, Sergeant, that was why I didn't tell you, until I came to the station with Miss Chown late this afternoon, that Sefton had been murdered . . . it was necessary that his death should be regarded publicly as a suicide, in order not to scare the murderer away. . . ."

"Amazing!" the sergeant whispered. "Even your father, Miss Holmes, couldn't have handled the thing better. . . ."

"You think not?" smiled Shirley. "You're wrong. Dad would have

known by now why this fellow in hiding went to the Cathedral at all, today. That still is a mystery to me. You figure it out, Sergeant."

The sergeant stood staring after us, scratching his head in bewilderment.

Shellock Holmes is dead. At the age of eighty he passed away quietly in his sleep. And it once ascended to Heaven.

THE CASE OF THE MISSING PATRIARCHS

by LOGAN CLENDENING, M.D.

The eminent physician-author of THE HUMAN BODY gives us his version of one of the shortest and cleverest pastiches of Sherlock Holmes ever conceived. The scene is Heaven and the creative spirit behind this delicious anecdote is undeniably Jovian. The climactic deduction attributed to Sherlock is a priceless jewel in the diadem of Holmesian lore.

This is the first book-appearance of Dr. Clendening's short-short story. It was issued in 1934 as a "Sherlockiana" leaflet, privately printed by Edwin B. Hill, and limited to exactly thirty copies. (Try to find one!) Vincent Starrett, who edited the "Sherlockiana" series, and still does, appended this note to the 1934 issue:

"The editor of 'Sherlockiana' by no means presumes that its readers will regard this curious item as fresh or original. Indeed, he is perfectly aware of a reference in 'The Bookman' of 1902, couched in terms that would be acceptable to the taste of that time, to a story going the rounds of New York: it concerned the feats of Sherlock Holmes in Heaven; but the modesty of the period kept the anecdote from a full elucidation. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle also referred to it, in his autobiography, but similarly denied his readers the privilege of reading it. . . ."

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Then obey that impulse — read on!

SHERLOCK HOLMES is dead. At the age of eighty he passed away quietly in his sleep. And at once ascended to Heaven.

The arrival of few recent immigrants to the celestial streets has caused so much excitement. Only Napoleon's appearance in Hell is said to have equaled the great detective's reception. In spite of the heavy fog which rolled in from the Jordan, Holmes was immediately bowled in a hansom to audience with the Divine Presence. After the customary exchange of amenities, Jehovah said:

"Mr. Holmes, we too have our problems. Adam and Eve are missing. Have been, 's a matter of fact, for nearly two aeons. They used to be quite an attraction to visitors and we would like to commission you to discover them."

Holmes looked thoughtful for a moment.

"We fear that their appearance when last seen would furnish no clue," continued Jehovah. "A man is bound to change in two aeons."

Holmes held up his long, thin hand. "Could you make a general announcement that a contest between an immovable body and an irresistible force will be staged in that large field at the end of the street — Lord's, I presume it is?"

The announcement was made and soon the streets were filled with a slowly moving crowd. Holmes stood idly in the divine portico watching them.

Suddenly he darted into the crowd and seized a patriarch and his whimpering old mate; he brought them to the Divine Presence.

"It is," asserted Deity. "Adam, you have been giving us a great deal of anxiety. But, Mr. Holmes, tell me how you found them."

"Elementary, my dear God," said Sherlock Holmes, "they have no navels."

THE CASE OF THE DIABOLICAL PLOT

by RICHARD MALLET

The recipe for that gourmand's dish, Parodie à la Punch, has remained constant through the decades. The modern salad is just a second helping of the old-style salmagundi.

For example: Richard Mallett's "The Case of the Diabolical Plot," published in "Punch" on June 12, 1935, is concocted of essentially the same ingredients — equal parts of farce and exaggeration, with a light sprinkling of plot — that R. C. Lehmann stirred into his Picklock Holes series forty-two years before.

Garnished with thick satire sauce, The Great Detective again foils his ancient enemy, The Master Criminal. This time the Master Criminal is head of a secret society (the Hippy Hops) whose plot strikes at the very roots of the British Empire. How otherwise explain the singular and ubiquitous thefts of piano keys, circus elephants, and billiard balls?

"It was all perfectly obvious from the first, my dear Watson."

Four other burlesques of The Great Detective, all signed by the author's initials, R. M., may be found — if the reader is still hungry — in the following issues of "Punch":

"The Case of the Pearls" — November 21, 1934

"The Case of the Traveller" — December 26, 1934

"The Case of the Pursuit" — January 23, 1935

"The Case of the Impersonation" — May 8, 1935

IN AN unguarded moment the Great Detective's sceptical friend, J. Smith, remarked off-handedly, "If there is one thing more than

another for which I am thankful (and I assure you there is no great competition), it is that you never seem to have come into contact with one of those enormously wealthy and ruthless but cultured master criminals whose aim is to overthrow the British Empire by means of a plot."

"Oh," said the Great Detective, "but I have. The fact that you have noticed my reticence —"

"Your what?"

"My reticence," repeated the Great Detective, "on this matter —"

"I found it by elimination," J. Smith said. "It was the sole West End appearance this season of your reticence."

"Only my modesty has prevented me —"

"Your —"

"My modesty."

"That, I take it," said J. Smith carefully, "is another middle name of yours that has hitherto escaped my notice. You wish me to assume, I suppose, that you notably distinguished yourself against this bloke?"

The Great Detective looked displeased.

"I should hardly have called him a bloke," he replied. "He was a graduate of one of the older universities and an extremely rich man. He had gold-rimmed ventilation holes in his hat. That was what first attracted my attention to him; it was only later that I began to get some glimmering of his diabolical plot."

"To overthrow the British Empire?"

"To strike," said the Great Detective, "at its very roots."

"I knew it would be one or the other," J. Smith nodded. "How?"

"It was a long time before I found out —"

"You didn't have to tell me that, either."

"The country was being terrorized by an infamous secret society," went on the Great Detective, "known as the Hippy Hops. I see you smile; there is, I admit, something humorous about the name. It was originally a band of children — those children who read every day of the adventures of Hippety Hop, Hoppety Hip and Boomph, on the Children's Page of that great London newspaper the *Daily*. Hippety Hop and Hoppety Hip, if I remember rightly, were badgers."

"Badgers?"

"Badgers. Boomph, on the other hand, was a South Australian wombat. Their adventures were bizarre in the extreme. But when I

was on the case the Hippy Hops as a children's society had long ceased to exist; the name was now applied to a band of ruthless men who were terrorizing the country at the bidding of a master-mind. Every morning there was news of some fresh criminal act of theirs. Every morning some householder would complain that he had lost the keys of his piano."

"Lost the keys of his *piano*?"

"To the last sharp — to the last flat."

"Do you mean to tell me," enquired J. Smith hoarsely, "that these Hiccups or whatever they were galloped about the country pinching piano keys?"

The Great Detective nodded with gravity. "I do. That was the most curious aspect of the matter. No one could imagine what they meant to do with all these piano keys. At the same time robberies of circus elephants began to increase to an alarming extent. Losses were reported from circus after circus throughout the land; and the crowning touch came one morning when all the elephants at the Zoo were found to have vanished without trace during the night. It was when the billiard-saloon outrages started that I had my inspiration. Men disguised as badgers —"

"And wombats?"

"Possibly — broke into billiard halls and billiard rooms all over the country, held up the players, if necessary with revolvers, and stole all the billiard balls they could lay their hands on. Thousands upon thousands of billiard balls disappeared utterly in this way within a day or two."

"And what did you do with your inspiration?"

The Great Detective drew himself up. "I acted upon it swiftly and — ahem! — terribly. The Foreign Office had given me a free hand. Realizing where the next blow would fall, I put an armed policeman in the bedrooms and the library of practically every well-to-do household in the country. I was triumphantly justified. That very night each of those policemen was in a position to arrest a member of the Hippy Hops. Each bedroom was visited by one of these ruthless criminals in search of ivory-backed hair-brushes; each library by one hoping to steal some ivory chessmen. This," the Great Detective explained, coughing pompously, "I had foreseen. The master criminal behind the Hippy Hops was out to corner ivory."

"This cheese whom you dignify by the title of master criminal," remarked J. Smith, "seems to me to have suffered from divided aims. How could he hope to do well with his ivory cornering when all the time his heart was in striking at the very roots of the British Empire?"

"One aim," explained the Great Detective, "was incidental to the other. Investigating further, I was amazed at the grandiosity of the scheme. Soon after this, if I had not acted, table-knives, paper-knives and napkin-rings would have begun to go; and in due course practically all the ivory in the country would have been in the hands of that criminal."

"But the sources of supply —"

"Teeming," said the Great Detective, "with his agents. Had I not broken up the gang one trembles to think of the result, for a satellite or minion of the leader had the ear of the Prime Minister. Egged on by him, the Government had entered into a contract to supply a foreign Power with vast quantities of ivory. Had they been unable to fulfil it there would probably have been a war. And in a war —"

"Don't tell me — don't tell me!" said J. Smith. "In a war we should have been defeated, because ivory was the only thing that could stand against a deadly ray invented by this feller and sold to the foreign Power beforehand. Am I right?"

"You are," said the Great Detective complacently.

"Ha!" J. Smith remarked. "Now tell me that tin tie-pin of yours was given you as a memento by the Prime Minister and then perhaps I can get some sleep."

CHRISTMAS EVE

by S. C. ROBERTS

Until now "Christmas Eve" has been to all intents and purposes unavailable to the general public. Its only previous appearance was the author's private edition, printed in 1936 by the University Press of Cambridge, England, and limited to 100 copies.

We are happy to bring you this coveted collector's item, one of the rarest pastiches of Sherlock Holmes.

(SHERLOCK HOLMES, disguised as a loafer, is discovered probing in a sideboard cupboard for something to eat and drink.)

HOLMES: Where in the world is that decanter? I'm sure I —

(Enter DR. WATSON, who sees only the back of
HOLMES's stooping figure)

WATSON: (Turning quickly and whispering hoarsely off stage) Mrs. Hudson! Mrs. Hudson! My revolver, quick. There's a burglar in Mr. Holmes's room. (WATSON exits)

HOLMES: Ah, there's the decanter at last. But first of all I may as well discard some of my properties. (Takes off cap, coat, beard, etc., and puts on dressing gown) My word, I'm hungry. (Begins to eat sandwich) But, bless me, I've forgotten the siphon! (Stoops at cupboard in same attitude as before)

(Enter WATSON, followed by MRS. HUDSON)

WATSON: (Sternly) Now, my man, put those hands up.

HOLMES: (Turning round) My dear Watson, why this sudden passion for melodrama?

WATSON: Holmes!

HOLMES: Really, Watson, to be the victim of a murderous attack at your hands, of all people's — and on Christmas Eve, too.

WATSON: But a minute ago, Holmes, there was a villainous-looking scoundrel trying to wrench open that cupboard — a really criminal type. I caught a glimpse of his face.

HOLMES: Well, well, my dear Watson, I suppose I ought to be grateful for the compliment to my make-up. The fact is that I have spent the day loafing at the corner of a narrow street leading out of the Waterloo Road. They were all quite friendly to me there. . . . Yes, I obtained the last little piece of evidence that I wanted to clear up that case of the Kentish Town safe robbery — you remember? Quite an interesting case, but all over now.

MRS. HUDSON: Lor', Mr. 'Olmes, how you do go on. Still, I'm learnin' never to be surprised at anything now.

HOLMES: Capital, Mrs. Hudson. That's what every criminal investigator has to learn, isn't it, Watson? (MRS. HUDSON *leaves*)

WATSON: Well, I suppose so, Holmes. But you must feel very pleased to think you've got that Kentish Town case off your mind before Christmas.

HOLMES: On the contrary, my dear Watson, I'm miserable. I like having things on my mind — it's the only thing that makes life tolerable. A mind empty of problems is worse even than a stomach empty of food. (*Eats sandwich*) But Christmas is commonly a slack season. I suppose even criminals' hearts are softened. The result is that I have nothing to do but to look out of the window and watch other people being busy. That little pawnbroker at the corner, for instance, you know the one, Watson?

WATSON: Yes, of course.

HOLMES: One of the many shops you have often seen, but never observed, my dear Watson. If you had watched that pawnbroker's front door as carefully as I have during the last ten days, you would have noted a striking increase in his trade; you might have observed also some remarkably well-to-do people going into the shop. There's one well-set-up young woman whom I have seen at least four times. Curious to think what her business may have been.

. . . But it's a shame to depress your Christmas spirit, Watson. I see that you are particularly cheerful this evening.

WATSON: Well, yes, I don't mind admitting that I am feeling quite pleased with things today.

HOLMES: So "Rio Tintos" have paid a good dividend, have they?

WATSON: My dear Holmes, how on earth do you know that?

HOLMES: Elementary, my dear Watson. You told me years ago that "Rio Tintos" was the one dividend which was paid in through your bank and not direct to yourself. You come into my room with an envelope of a peculiar shade of green sticking out of your coat pocket. That particular shade is used by your bank — Cox's — and by no other, so far as I am aware. Clearly, then, you have just obtained your pass-book from the bank and your cheerfulness must proceed from the good news which it contains. *Ex hypothesi*, that news must relate to "Rio Tintos."

WATSON: Perfectly correct, Holmes; and on the strength of the good dividend, I have deposited ten good, crisp, five-pound notes in the drawer of my dressing table just in case we should feel like a little jaunt after Christmas.

HOLMES: That was charming of you, Watson. But in my present state of inertia I should be a poor holiday companion. Now if only — (*Knock at door*) Come in.

Mrs. HUDSON: Please sir, there's a young lady to see you.

HOLMES: What sort of young lady, Mrs. Hudson? Another of these young women wanting half a crown towards some Christmas charity? If so, Dr. Watson's your man, Mrs. Hudson. He's bursting with bank-notes today.

Mrs. HUDSON: I'm sure I'm very pleased to 'ear it, sir; but this lady ain't that kind at all, sir. She's sort of agitated, like . . . very anxious to see you and quite scared of meeting you at the same time, if you take my meaning, sir.

HOLMES: Perfectly, Mrs. Hudson. Well, Watson, what are we to do? Are we to interview this somewhat unbalanced young lady?

WATSON: If the poor girl is in trouble, Holmes, I think you might at least hear what she has to say.

HOLMES: Chivalrous as ever, my dear Watson — bring the lady up, Mrs. Hudson.

MRS. HUDSON: Very good, sir (*To the lady outside*) This way, Miss.

(*Enter Miss VIOLET DE VINNE, an elegant but distracted girl of about twenty-two*)

HOLMES: (*Bowing slightly*) You wish to consult me?

MISS DE VINNE: (*Nervously*) Are you Mr. Sherlock Holmes?

HOLMES: I am — and this is my friend and colleague, Dr. Watson.

WATSON: (*Coming forward and holding out hand*) Charmed, I am sure, Miss —

HOLMES: (*To MISS DE VINNE*) You have come here, I presume, because you have a story to tell me. May I ask you to be as concise as possible?

MISS DE VINNE: I will try, Mr. Holmes. My name is de Vinne. My mother and I live together in Bayswater. We are not very well off, but my father was . . . well . . . a gentleman. The Countess of Barton is one of our oldest friends —

HOLMES: (*Interrupting*) And the owner of a very wonderful pearl necklace.

MISS DE VINNE: (*Startled*) How do you know that, Mr. Holmes?

HOLMES: I am afraid it is my business to know quite a lot about other people's affairs. But I'm sorry. I interrupted. Go on.

MISS DE VINNE: Two or three times a week I spend the day with Lady Barton and act as her secretary in a casual, friendly way. I write letters for her and arrange her dinner-tables when she has a party and do other little odd jobs.

HOLMES: Lady Barton is fortunate, eh, Watson?

WATSON: Yes, indeed, Holmes.

MISS DE VINNE: This afternoon a terrible thing happened. I was ar-

ranging some flowers when Lady Barton came in looking deathly white. "Violet," she said, "the pearls are gone." "Heavens," I cried, "what do you mean?" "Well," she said, "having quite unexpectedly had an invitation to a reception on January 5th, I thought I would make sure that the clasp was all right. When I opened the case (you know the special place where I keep it) it was empty — that's all." She looked as if she was going to faint, and I felt much the same.

HOLMES: (*Quickly*) And did you faint?

MISS DE VINNE: No, Mr. Holmes, we pulled ourselves together somehow and I asked her whether she was going to send for the police, but she wouldn't hear of it. She said Jim (that's her husband) hated publicity and would be furious if the pearls became "copy" for journalists. But of course she agreed that something had to be done and so she sent me to you.

HOLMES: Oh, Lady Barton sent you?

MISS DE VINNE: Well, not exactly. You see, when she refused to send for the police, I remembered your name and implored her to write you . . . and . . . well . . . here I am and here's the letter. That's all, Mr. Holmes.

HOLMES: I see. (*Begins to read letter*) Well, my dear lady, neither you nor Lady Barton has given me much material on which to work at present.

MISS DE VINNE: I am willing to answer any questions, Mr. Holmes.

HOLMES: You live in Bayswater, Miss Winnie?

WATSON: (*Whispering*) "De Vinne," Holmes.

HOLMES: (*Ignoring WATSON*) You said Bayswater, I think, Miss Winnie?

MISS DE VINNE: Quite right, Mr. Holmes, but — forgive me, my name is de Vinne.

HOLMES: I'm sorry, Miss Dwinney —

MISS DE VINNE: DE VINNE, Mr. Holmes, D . . . E . . . V . . .

HOLMES: How stupid of me. I think the chill I caught last week must

have left a little deafness behind it. But to save further stupidity on my part, just write your name and address for me, will you? (*Hands her pen and paper, on which MISS DE VINNE writes*) That's better. Now, tell me, Miss de Vinne, how do you find Bayswater for shopping?

MISS DE VINNE: (*Surprised*) Oh, I don't know. Mr. Holmes, I hardly —

HOLMES: You don't care for Whiteley's, for instance?

MISS DE VINNE: Well, not very much. But I can't see . . .

HOLMES: I entirely agree with you, Miss de Vinne. Yet Watson, you know, is devoted to that place — spends hours there . . .

WATSON: Holmes, what nonsense are you —

HOLMES: But I think you are quite right, Miss de Vinne. Harrod's is a great deal better in my opinion.

MISS DE VINNE: But I never go to Harrod's, Mr. Holmes, in fact I hardly ever go to any big store, except for one or two things. But what has this got to do —

HOLMES: Well, in principle, I don't care for them much either, but they're convenient sometimes.

MISS DE VINNE: Yes, I find the Army and Navy stores useful now and then, but why on earth are we talking about shops and stores when the thing that matters is Lady Barton's necklace?

HOLMES: Ah, yes, I was coming to that. (*Pauses*) I'm sorry, Miss de Vinne, but I'm afraid I can't take up this case.

MISS DE VINNE: You refuse, Mr. Holmes?

HOLMES: I am afraid I am obliged to do so. It is a case that would inevitably take some time. I am in sore need of a holiday and only today my devoted friend Watson has made all arrangements to take me on a Mediterranean cruise immediately after Christmas.

WATSON: Holmes, this is absurd. You know that I merely —

MISS DE VINNE: Dr. Watson, if Mr. Holmes can't help me, won't you? You don't know how terrible all this is for me as well as for Lady Barton.

WATSON: My dear lady, I have some knowledge of my friend's methods and they often seem incomprehensible. Holmes, you can't mean this?

HOLMES: Certainly I do, my dear Watson. But I am unwilling that any lady should leave this house in a state of distress. (*Goes to door*) Mrs. Hudson!

MRS. HUDSON: Coming, sir. (MRS. HUDSON *enters*)

HOLMES: Mrs. Hudson, be good enough to conduct this lady to Dr. Watson's dressing room. She is tired and a little upset. Let her rest on the sofa there while Dr. Watson and I have a few minutes' quiet talk.

MRS. HUDSON: Very good, sir.

(*Exeunt* MRS. HUDSON and MISS DE VINNE, the latter looking appealingly at DR. WATSON)

HOLMES: (*Lighting cherry-wood pipe*) Well, Watson?

WATSON: Well, Holmes, in all my experience I don't think I have ever seen you so unaccountably ungracious to a charming girl.

HOLMES: Oh, yes, she has charm, Watson — they always have. What do you make of her story?

WATSON: Not very much, I confess. It seemed fairly clear as far as it went, but you wouldn't let her tell us any detail. Instead, you began a perfectly ridiculous conversation about the comparative merits of various department stores. I've seldom heard you so inept.

HOLMES: Then you accept her story?

WATSON: Why not?

HOLMES: Why not, my dear Watson? Because the whole thing is a parcel of lies.

WATSON: But, Holmes, this is unreasoning prejudice.

HOLMES: Unreasoning, you say? Listen, Watson. This letter purports to have come from the Countess of Barton. I don't know her Ladyship's handwriting, but I was struck at once by its labored character, as exhibited in this note. It occurred to me, further, that

it might be useful to obtain a specimen of Miss de Vinne's to put alongside it — hence my tiresome inability to catch her name. Now, my dear Watson, I call your particular attention to the capital B's which happen to occur in both specimens.

WATSON: They're quite different, Holmes, but — yes, they've both got a peculiar curl where the letter finishes.

HOLMES: Point No. 1, my dear Watson, but an isolated one. Now, although I could not recognize the handwriting, I knew this note-paper as soon as I saw and felt it. Look at the watermark, Watson, and tell me what you find.

WATSON: (*Holding the paper to the light*) A. and N. (*After a pause*) Army and Navy . . . Why, Holmes, d'you mean that —

HOLMES: I mean that this letter was written by your charming friend in the name of the Countess of Barton.

WATSON: And what follows?

HOLMES: Ah, that is what we are left to conjecture. What will follow immediately is another interview with the young woman who calls herself Violet de Vinne. By the way, Watson, after you had finished threatening me with that nasty-looking revolver a little while ago, what did you do with the instrument?

WATSON: It's here, Holmes, in my pocket.

HOLMES: Then, having left my own in my bedroom, I think I'll borrow it, if you don't mind.

WATSON: But surely, Holmes, you don't suggest that —

HOLMES: My dear Watson, I suggest nothing — except that we may possibly find ourselves in rather deeper waters than Miss de Vinne's charm and innocence have hitherto led you to expect. (*Goes to door*) Mrs. Hudson, ask the lady to be good enough to rejoin us.

MRS. HUDSON: (*Off*) Very good, sir.

(*Enter MISS DE VINNE*)

HOLMES: (*Amiably*) Well, Miss de Vinne, are you rested?

MISS DE VINNE: Well, a little perhaps, but as you can do nothing for me, hadn't I better go?

HOLMES: You look a little flushed, Miss de Vinne; do you feel the room rather too warm?

MISS DE VINNE: No, Mr. Holmes, thank you, I—

HOLMES: Anyhow, won't you slip your coat off and—

MISS DE VINNE: Oh no, really. (*Gathers coat round her*)

HOLMES: (*Threateningly*) Then, if you won't take your coat off, d'you mind showing me what is in the right-hand pocket of it? (*A look of terror comes on MISS DE VINNE's face*) The game's up, Violet de Vinne. (*Points revolver, at which MISS DE VINNE screams and throws up her hands*) Watson, oblige me by removing whatever you may discover in the right-hand pocket of Miss de Vinne's coat.

WATSON: (*Taking out note-case*) My own note-case, Holmes, with the ten five-pound notes in it!

HOLMES: Ah!

MISS DE VINNE: (*Distractedly*) Let me speak, let me speak. I'll explain everything.

HOLMES: Silence! Watson, was there anything else in the drawer of your dressing table besides your note-case?

WATSON: I'm not sure, Holmes.

HOLMES: Then I think we had better have some verification.

MISS DE VINNE: No, no. Let me—

HOLMES: Mrs. Hudson!

MRS. HUDSON: (*Off*) Coming, sir.

HOLMES: (*To MRS. HUDSON off*) Kindly open the right-hand drawer of Dr. Watson's dressing table and bring us anything that you may find in it.

MISS DE VINNE: Mr. Holmes, you are torturing me. Let me tell you everything.

HOLMES: Your opportunity will come in due course, but in all probability before a different tribunal. I am a private detective, not a Criminal Court judge. (*MISS DE VINNE weeps*)

(Enter MRS. HUDSON with jewel case)

MRS. HUDSON: I found this, sir. But it must be something new that the doctor's been buying. I've never seen it before. (MRS. HUDSON leaves)

HOLMES: Ah, Watson, more surprises! (*Opens case and holds up a string of pearls*) The famous pearls belonging to the Countess of Barton, if I'm not mistaken.

MISS DE VINNE: For pity's sake, Mr. Holmes, let me speak. Even the lowest criminal has that right left him. And this time I will tell you the truth.

HOLMES: (*Sceptically*) The truth? Well?

MISS DE VINNE: Mr. Holmes, I have an only brother. He's a dear — I love him better than anyone in the world — but, God forgive him, he's a scamp . . . always in trouble, always in debt. Three days ago he wrote to me that he was in an even deeper hole than usual. If he couldn't raise fifty pounds in the course of a week, he would be done for and, worse than that, dishonored and disgraced forever. I couldn't bear it. I'd no money. I daren't tell my mother. I swore to myself that I'd get that fifty pounds if I had to steal it. That same day at Lady Barton's, I was looking, as I'd often looked, at the famous pearls. An idea suddenly came to me. They were worn only once or twice a year on special occasions. Why shouldn't I pawn them for a month or so? I could surely get fifty pounds for them and then somehow I would scrape together the money to redeem them. It was almost certain that Lady Barton wouldn't want them for six months. Oh, I know I was mad, but I did it. I found a fairly obscure little pawnbroker quite near here, but to my horror he wouldn't take the pearls — looked at me very suspiciously and wouldn't budge, though I went to him two or three times. Then, this afternoon, the crash came. When Lady Barton discovered that the pearls were missing I rushed out of the house, saying that I would tell the police. But actually I went home and tried to think. I remembered your name. A wild scheme came into my head. If I could pretend to consult you and somehow leave the pearls in your house, then you could pretend that you had recovered them and return them to Lady Barton. Oh, I know you'll

laugh, but you don't know how distraught I was. Then, when you sent me into that dressing room, I prowled about like a caged animal. I saw those banknotes and they seemed like a gift from Heaven. Why shouldn't I leave the necklace in their place? You would get much more than fifty pounds for recovering them from Lady Barton and I should save my brother. There, that's all . . . and now, I suppose, I exchange Dr. Watson's dressing room for a cell at the police station!

HOLMES: Well, Watson?

WATSON: What an extraordinary story, Holmes!

HOLMES: Yes, indeed. (*Turning to MISS DE VINNE*) Miss de Vinne, you told us in the first instance a plausible story of which I did not believe a single word; now you have given us a version which in many particulars seems absurd and incredible. Yet I believe it to be the truth. Watson, haven't I always told you that fact is immeasurably stranger than fiction?

WATSON: Certainly, Holmes. But what are you going to do?

HOLMES: Going to do? Why — er — I'm going to send for Mrs. Hudson (*Calling off stage*) Mrs. Hudson!

MRS. HUDSON: (*Off*) Coming, sir. (*Enters*) Yes, sir.

HOLMES: Oh, Mrs. Hudson, what are your views about Christmas?

WATSON: Really, Holmes.

HOLMES: My dear Watson, please don't interrupt. As I was saying, Mrs. Hudson, I should be very much interested to know how you feel about Christmas.

MRS. HUDSON: Lor', Mr. 'Olmes, what questions you do ask. I don't hardly know exactly how to answer but . . . well . . . I suppose Christmas is the season of good will towards men — and women too, sir, if I may say so.

HOLMES: (*Slowly*) "And women too." You observe that, Watson.

WATSON: Yes, Holmes, and I agree.

HOLMES: (*To MISS DE VINNE*) My dear young lady, you will observe that the jury are agreed upon their verdict.

MISS DE VINNE: Oh, Mr. Holmes, how can I ever thank you?

HOLMES: Not a word. You must thank the members of the jury . . .
Mrs. Hudson!

MRS. HUDSON: Yes, sir.

HOLMES: Take Miss de Vinne, not into Dr. Watson's room this time, but into your own comfortable kitchen and give her a cup of your famous tea.

MRS. HUDSON: How do the young lady take it, sir? Rather stronglike, with a bit of a tang to it?

HOLMES: You must ask her that yourself. Anyhow Mrs. Hudson, give her a cup that cheers.

(Exeunt MRS. HUDSON and MISS DE VINNE)

WATSON: *(In the highest spirits)* Half a minute, Mrs. Hudson. I'm coming to see that Miss de Vinne has her tea as she likes it. And I tell you what, Holmes *(Looking towards MISS DE VINNE and holding up note-case)*, you are not going to get your Mediterranean cruise.

(As WATSON goes out, carol-singers are heard in the distance singing "Good King Wenceslas.")

HOLMES: *(Relighting his pipe and smiling meditatively)* Christmas Eve!

CURTAIN

THE MAN WHO WAS NOT DEAD

by MANLY WADE WELLMAN

It is singularly fitting that the last story in our book, reprinted from "Argosy" magazine, August 9, 1941, should have as its underlying theme the most important issue in our lives — the winning of the war.

Mr. Sherlock Holmes, you'll remember, did his bit in World War I, but it was not, thank the Lord, His Last Bow.

Holmes will never die — he is unconquered and unconquerable. For Sherlock Holmes is England.

OUT OF the black sky plummeted Boling, toward the black earth. He knew nothing of the ground toward which he fell, save that it was five miles inland from the Sussex coast and, according to Dr. Goebbels's best information, sparsely settled.

The night air hummed in his parachute rigging, and he seemed to drop faster than ten feet a second, but to think of that was unworthy of a trusted agent of the German Intelligence. Though the pilot above had not dared drop him a light, Boling could land without much mishap. . . . Even as he told himself that, land he did. He struck heavily on hands and knees, and around him settled the limp folds of the parachute.

At once he threw off the harness, wadded the fabric and thrust it out of sight between a boulder and a bush. Standing up, he took stock of himself. The left leg of his trousers was torn, and the knee skinned — that was all. He remembered that William the Conqueror had also gone sprawling when he landed at Hastings, not so far from here. The omen was good. Boling stooped, like Duke William, and clutched a handful of pebbles.

"Thus do I seize the land!" he quoted aloud, for he was at heart theatrical.

His name was not really Boling, though he had prospered under that and other aliases. Nor, though he wore the uniform of a British private, was he British. Born in Chicago late in 1917, of unsavory parents, he had matured to a notable career of imposture and theft. He had entered the employment of the Third Reich, not for love of its cause or thirst for adventure, but for the very high rate of pay. Boling was practical as well as gifted. He had gladly accepted the present difficult and dangerous mission, which might well be the making of his fortune.

Now the early gray dawn came and peered over his shoulder. Boling saw that he was on a grassy slope, with an ill-used gravel road below it. Just across that road showed lighted windows — a house with early risers. He walked toward those lights.

Which way was Eastbourne, was his first problem. He had never seen the town; he had only the name and telephone number there of one Philip Davis who, if addressed by him as "Uncle," would know that the time had arrived to muster fifteen others.

They, in turn, would gather waiting comrades from the surrounding community, picked, hard men who whole years ago had taken lodging and stored arms thereabouts. These would organize and operate as a crack infantry battalion. After that, the well-tested routine that had helped to conquer Norway, Holland, Belgium, France — seizure of communications, blowing up of rails and roads, capture of airdromes.

Re-enforcements would drop in parachutes from overhead, as he, Boling, had done. At dusk this would be done. In the night, Eastbourne would be firmly held, with a picked invasion corps landing from barges.

Crossing the road toward the house, Boling considered the matter as good as accomplished. He needed only a word from the house-dwellers to set him on his way.

He found the opening in the chin-high hedge of brambles and flowering bushes, and in the strengthening light he trod warily up the flagged path. The house, now visible, was only a one-story cottage of white plaster, with a roof of dark tiling. Gaining the doorstep, Boling swung the tarnished knocker against the stout oak panel.

Silence. Then heavy steps and a mumbling voice. The door creaked

open. A woman in shawl and cap, plump and very old — past ninety, it seemed to Boling — put out a face like a cheerful walnut.

"Good morning," she said. "Yes, who is that?" Her ancient eyes blinked behind small, thick lenses like bottle bottoms. "Soldier, ain't you?"

"Right you are," he responded in his most English manner, smiling to charm her. This crone had a London accent, and looked simple and good-humored. "I'm tramping down to Eastbourne to visit my uncle," he went on plausibly, "and lost my way on the downs in the dark. Can you direct me on?"

Before the old woman could reply, a dry voice had spoken from behind her: "Ask the young man to step inside, Mrs. Hudson."

The old woman drew the door more widely open. Boling entered one of those living rooms that have survived their era. In the light of a hanging oil lamp he could see walls papered in blue with yellow flowers, above gray-painted wainscoting. On a center table lay some old books, guarded by a pudgy china dog. At the rear, next a dark inner doorway, blazed a small but cheerful fire, and from a chair beside it rose the man who had spoken.

"If you have walked all night, you will be tired," he said to Boling. "Stop and rest. We're about to have some tea. Won't you join us?"

"Thank you, sir," accepted Boling heartily. This was another Londoner, very tall and as gaunt as a musket. He could not be many years younger than the woman called Mrs. Hudson, but he still had vigor and presence.

He stood quite straight in his shabbiest of blue dressing gowns. The lamplight revealed a long hooked nose and a long lean chin, with bright eyes of blue under a thatch of thistledown hair. Boling thought of Dr. Punch grown old, dignified and courteous. The right hand seemed loosely clenched inside a pocket of the dressing gown. The left, lean and fine, held a blackened old briar with a curved stem.

"I see," said this old gentleman, his eyes studying Boling's insignia, "that you're a Fusilier — Northumberland."

"Yes, sir, Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers," rejoined Boling, who had naturally chosen for his disguise the badges of a regiment lying far from Sussex. "As I told your good housekeeper, I'm going to Eastbourne. If you can direct me, or let me use your telephone —"

"I am sorry, we have no telephone," the other informed him.

Mrs. Hudson gulped and goggled at that, but the old blue eyes barely flickered a message at her. Again the gaunt old man spoke: "There is a telephone, however, in the house just behind us—the house of Constable Timmons."

Boling had no taste for visiting a policeman, especially an officious country one, and so he avoided comment on the last suggestion. Instead he thanked his host for the invitation to refreshment. The old woman brought in a tray with dishes and a steaming kettle, and a moment later they were joined by another ancient man.

This one was plump and tweedy, with a drooping gray mustache and wide eyes full of childish innocence. Boling set him down as a doctor, and felt a glow of pride in his own acumen when the newcomer was so introduced. So pleased was Boling with himself, indeed, that he did not bother to catch the doctor's surname.

"This young man is of your old regiment, I think," the lean man informed the fat one. "Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers."

"Oh, really? Quite so, quite so," chirruped the doctor, in a katydid fashion that impelled Boling to classify him as a simpleton. "Quite. I was with the old Fifth—but that would be well before your time, young man. I served in the Afghan War." This last with a proud protruding of the big eyes. For a moment Boling dreaded a torrent of reminiscence; but the Punch-faced man had just finished relighting his curved briar, and now called attention to the tea which Mrs. Hudson was pouring.

The three men sipped gratefully. Boling permitted himself a moment of ironic meditation on how snug it was, so shortly before bombs and bayonets would engulf this and all other houses in the neighborhood of Eastbourne.

Mrs. Hudson waddled to his elbow with toasted muffins. "Poor lad," she said maternally, "you've torn them lovely trousers."

From the other side of the fire bright blue eyes gazed through the smoke of strong shag. "Oh, yes," said the dry voice, "you walked over the downs at night, I think I heard you say when you came. And you fell?"

"Yes, sir," replied Boling, and thrust his skinned knee into view through the rip. "No great injury, however, except to my uniform. The King will give me a new one, what?"

"I daresay," agreed the doctor, lifting his mustache from his tea-cup. "Nothing too good for the old regiment."

That led to discussion of the glorious past of the Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers, and the probable triumphant future. Boling made the most guarded of statements, lest the pudgy old veteran find something of which to be suspicious; but, to bolster his pose, he fished forth a wad of painstakingly forged papers — pay-book, billet assignment, pass through lines, and so on. The gaunt man in blue studied them with polite interest.

"And now," said the doctor, "how is my old friend Major Amidon?"

"Major Amidon?" repeated Boling to gain time, and glanced as sharply as he dared at his interrogator. Such a question might well be a trap, simple and dangerous, the more so because his research concerning the Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers had not supplied him with any such name among the officers.

But then he took stock once more of the plump, mild, guileless face. Boling, cunning and criminal, knew a man incapable of lying or deception when he saw one. The doctor was setting no trap whatever; in fact, his next words provided a valuable cue to take up.

"Yes, of course — he must be acting chief of brigade by now. Tall, red-faced, monocle —"

"Oh, Major Amidon!" cried Boling, as if remembering. "I know him only by sight, naturally. As you say, he's acting chief of battalion; probably he'll get a promotion soon. He's quite well, and very much liked by the men."

The thin old man passed back Boling's papers and inquired courteously after the uncle in Eastbourne. Boling readily named Philip Davis, who would have been at pains to make for himself a good reputation. It developed that both of Boling's entertainers knew Mr. Davis slightly — proprietor of the Royal Oak, a fine old public house. Public houses, amplified the doctor, weren't what they had been in the eighties, but the Royal Oak was a happy survival from that golden age. And so on.

With relish Boling drained his last drop of tea, ate his last crumb of muffin. His eyes roamed about the room, which he already regarded as an ideal headquarters. Even his momentary nervousness about the constable in the house behind had left him. He reflected that the very closeness of an official would eliminate any prying or searching by the

enemy. He'd get on to Eastbourne, have Davis set the machinery going, and then pop back here to wait in comfort for the ripe moment when, the chief dangers of conquest gone by, he could step forth. . . .

He rose with actual regret that he must get about his business. "I thank you all so much," he said. "And now it's quite light—I really must be on my way."

"Private Boling," said the old man with the blue gown, "before you go, I have a confession to make."

"Confession?" spluttered the doctor, and Mrs. Hudson stared in amazement.

"Exactly." Two fine, gaunt old hands rose and placed their finger tips together. "When you came here I couldn't be sure about you, things being as they are these days."

"Quite so, quite so," interjected the doctor. "Alien enemies and all that. You understand, young man."

"Of course," Boling smiled winningly.

"And so," continued his host, "I was guilty of a lie. But now that I've had a look at you, I am sure of what you are. And let me say that I do have a telephone, after all. You are quite free to use it. Through the door there."

Boling felt his heart warm with self-satisfaction. He had always considered himself a prince of deceivers; this admission on the part of the scrawny dotard was altogether pleasant. Thankfully he entered a dark little hallway from the wall of which sprouted the telephone. He lifted the receiver and called the number he had memorized.

"Hello," he greeted the man who made guarded answer. "Is that Mr. Philip Davis? . . . Your nephew, Amos Boling, here. I'm coming to town at once. I'll meet you and the others wherever you say . . . What's the name of your pub again? . . . The Royal Oak? Very good, we'll meet there at nine o'clock."

"That will do," said the dry voice of his host behind his very shoulder. "Hang up, Mr. Boling. At once."

Boling spun around, his heart somersaulting with sudden terror. The gaunt figure stepped back very smoothly and rapidly for so aged a man. The right hand dropped again into the pocket of the old blue dressing gown. It brought out a small, broad-muzzled pistol, which the man held leveled at Boling's belly.

"I asked you to telephone, Mr. Boling, in hopes that you would

somehow reveal your fellow agents. We know that they'll be at the Royal Oak at nine. A party of police will appear to take them in charge. As for you — Mrs. Hudson, please step across the back yard and ask Constable Timmons to come at once."

Boling glared. His right hand moved, as stealthily as a snake, toward his hip.

"None of that," barked the doctor from the other side of the sitting room. He, too, was on his feet, jerking open a drawer in the center table. From it he took a big service revolver, of antiquated make but uncommonly well kept. The plump old hand hefted the weapon knowingly. "Lift your arms, sir, and at once."

Fuming, Boling obeyed. The blue dressing gown glided toward him, the left hand snatched away the flat automatic in his hip pocket.

"I observed that bulge in your otherwise neat uniform," commented the lean old man, "and pondered that pocket pistols are not regulation for infantry privates. It was one of several inconsistencies that branded you as an enemy agent. Will you take the armchair, Mr. Boling? I will explain."

There was nothing to do, under the muzzles of those guns, but to sit and listen.

"The apparition of a British soldier trying hard to disguise an American accent intrigued me, but did not condemn you at first. However, the knee of your trousers — I always look first at the trouser knee of a stranger — was so violently torn as to suggest a heavy fall somewhere. The rest of your kit was disarranged as well. But your boots — I always look at boots second — were innocent of scuff or even much wear. I knew at once that your story of a long night's tramp, with trippings and tumblings, was a lie."

Boling summoned all his assurance. "See here," he cried harshly, "I don't mind a little joke or whatever, but this has gone far enough. I'm a soldier and as such a defender of the realm. If you offer me violence —"

"There will be no violence unless you bring it on yourself. Suffer me to continue: You caused me even more suspicion when, calling yourself a private of the Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers, you yet patently failed to recognize the name of my old friend here. He, too, was of the Fifth, and in civilian life has won such fame as few Fusiliers can boast. The whole world reads his writings —"

"Please, please," murmured the doctor gently.

"I do not seek to embarrass you, my dear fellow," assured the lean host, "only to taunt this sorry deceiver with his own clumsiness. After that, Mr. Boling, your anxiety to show your credentials to me, who had not asked for them and had no authority to examine them; your talk about the service, plainly committed to memory from a book; and, finally, your glib talk about one Major Amidon who does not exist — these were sufficient proof."

"Does not exist?" almost barked the doctor. "What do you mean? Of course Major Amidon exists. He and I served together . . ."

Then he broke off abruptly, and his eyes bulged foolishly. He coughed and snickered in embarrassed apology.

"Dear me, now I know that I'm doddering," he said more gently. "You're right, my dear fellow — Major Amidon exists no longer. He retired in 1910, and you yourself pointed out his death notice to me five years ago. Odd how old memories cling on and deceive us — good psychological point there somewhere . . ."

His voice trailed off, and his comrade triumphantly resumed the indictment of Boling:

"My mind returned to the problem of your disordered kit and well-kept shoes. By deductive reasoning I considered and eliminated one possibility after another. It was increasingly plain that you had fallen from a height, but had not walked far to get here. Had you traveled in a motor? But this is the only road hereabouts, and a bad one, running to a dead end two miles up the downs. We have been awake for hours, and would have heard a machine. A horse, then? Possible, even in these mechanized times, but your trousers bear no trace of sitting astride a saddle. Bicycle? But you would have worn a clip on the ankle next the sprocket, and that clip would have creased your trouser cuff. What does this leave?"

"What?" asked the fat doctor, as eagerly as a child hearing a story.

"What, indeed, but an airplane and a parachute? And what does a parachute signify in these days but German invasion — which has come to our humble door in the presence of Mr. Boling?" The white head bowed, like an actor's taking a curtain call, then turned toward the front door. "Ah, here returns Mrs. Hudson, with Constable Timmons. Constable, we have a German spy for you to take in charge."

Boling came to his feet, almost ready to brave the two pistols that covered him. "You're a devil!" he raged at his discoverer.

The blue eyes twinkled. "Not at all. I am an old man who has retained the use of his brains, even after long and restful idleness."

The sturdy constable approached Boling, a pair of gleaming manacles in his hands. "Will you come along quietly?" he asked formally, and Boling held out his wrists. He was beaten.

The old doctor dropped his revolver back into its drawer, and tramped across to his friend.

"Amazing!" he almost bellowed. "I thought I was past wondering at you, but — amazing, that's all I can say!"

A blue-sleeved arm lifted, the fine lean hand patted the doctor's tweed shoulder affectionately. And even before the words were spoken, as they must have been spoken so often in past years, Boling suddenly knew what they would be:

"Elementary, my dear Watson," said old Mr. Sherlock Holmes.

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INDEX

Sherlock Holmes's Other Names

- Bones, Thinlock, xi, 231-234
Bones, Warlock, xvii
Cohen, Sherlock, xi
Fu-erh-mo-hsi, ix
Great Detective, the, 218-226, 332-335
great detective, the, 227, 228
H-LM-s, xvii
Holes, Picklock, xi, 185-189, 235, 332, 362
Holmes, Hemlock, xvii
Holmès, Louflock, 360
Holmes, Raffles, 191, 256, 359
Holmes, Sherrinford, ix
Holmes, Sherringford, x
Holmes, Shirley, xi, 256, 257, 313-329
Holmes, Sir Sherlock, xvii, 363
Homes, F. H. A., xi
Homes, Padlock, xi
Homes, Shylock, xi, 191, 208-217, 359
Hone, Purlock, xi, 238-244
Hope, Sherrington, ix, x
Jolnes, Shamrock, xi, 175-181, 361
Jones, Hemlock, xi, 164-174
Kombs, Sherlaw, xi, 3-13, 359
Monk, Sherlock, xi
Mycroft, Mr., xviii
Ol-mes, Sherlock, xiii
Pons, Solar, xi, 261-274
Shears, Holmlock, xi, 14-38, 362
Sholmes, Herlock, xi, 15
Sholmès, Herlock, 15

Dr. Watson's Other Names

- Goswell, xvii
Jobson, xi, 238-244
Parker, 261-274
Potson, xi, 185-189
Sacker, Ormond, ix
Watsis, Dr., xi
Watson, Bertie, 66-69
Watson, Joan, 257, 313-329
Whatson, xi, 3-13
Whatsoname, xi, 231-234
Whatsup, xi, 175-181

