

Term 2, Week 1: Men of Detection - Sherlock and Beyond

You may wish to still acquire the Arthur Conan Doyle [Sherlock short stories in the complete Penguin Sherlock](#) and read more than we cover in this session because I have chosen some that are anomalies - exceptions rather than the rule.

REQUIRED:

- The Adventure of the Yellow Face (*The Strand*, Feb 1893);
The Adventure of the Empty House (1903)
The Adventure of the Blanched Soldier (1926)
- T. Meade and Clifford Halifax, M.D 's *The Adventures of a Man of Science: "The Sleeping Sickness"* in *Strand Magazine*; 12, Jul 1896; pp.401-414.
- Austin Freeman's Dr. Thorndyke: "The Anthropologist at Large" in *McClure's Magazine*, vo.35, no.1 (May 1910), pp.57-67.

REQUIRED CRITICAL READING - [This introduction](#) to Christopher Pittard, *Purity and contamination in late Victorian detective fiction*. Routledge, 2016. Try and make some connections with reading this week and in term 1 where pertinent.



The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes.

XV.—THE ADVENTURE OF THE YELLOW FACE.

BY A. CONAN DOYLE.

IN publishing these short sketches, based upon the numerous cases which my companion's singular gifts have made me the listener to, and eventually the actor in some strange drama, it is only natural that I should dwell rather upon his successes than upon his failures. And this not so much for the sake of his reputation, for indeed it was when he was at his wits' end that his energy and his versatility were most admirable, but because where he failed it happened too often that no one else succeeded, and that the tale was left for ever without a conclusion. Now and again, however, it chanced that even when he erred the truth was still discovered. I have notes of some half-dozen cases of the kind of which "The Adventure of the Musgrave Ritual" and that which I am now about to recount are the two which present the strongest features of interest.

Sherlock Holmes was a man who seldom took exercise for exercise's sake. Few men were capable of greater muscular effort, and he was undoubtedly one of the finest boxers of his weight that I have ever seen, but he looked upon aimless bodily exertion as a waste of energy, and he seldom bestirred himself save where there was some professional object to be served. Then he was absolutely untiring and indefatigable. That he should have kept himself in training under such circumstances is remarkable, but his diet was usually of the sparest, and his habits were simple to the verge of austerity. Save for the occasional use of cocaine he had no vices, and he only turned to the drug as a protest against the monotony of existence when cases were scanty and the papers uninteresting.

One day in early spring he had so far relaxed as to go for a walk with me in the Park, where the first faint shoots of green were breaking out upon the elms, and the sticky spearheads of the chestnuts were just beginning to burst into their five-fold leaves. For two hours we rambled about together, in

silence for the most part, as befits two men who know each other intimately. It was nearly five before we were back in Baker Street once more.

"Beg pardon, sir," said our page-boy, as he opened the door; "there's been a gentleman here asking for you, sir."

Holmes glanced reproachfully at me. "So much for afternoon walks!" said he. "Has this gentleman gone, then?"

"Yes, sir."

"Didn't you ask him in?"

"Yes, sir; he came in."

"How long did he wait?"

"Half an hour, sir. He was a very restless gentleman, sir, a-walkin' and a-stampin' all the time he was here. I was waitin' outside the door, sir, and I could hear him. At last he goes out into the passage and he cries: 'Is that man never goin' to come?' Those were his very words, sir. 'You'll only need to wait a little longer,' says I. 'Then I'll wait in the open air, for I feel half choked,' says he. 'I'll be back before long,' and with that he ups and he outs, and all I could say wouldn't hold him back."

"Well, well, you did your best," said Holmes, as we walked into our room. "It's very annoying though, Watson. I was badly in need of a case, and this looks, from the man's impatience, as if it were of importance. Halloa! that's not your pipe on the table! He must have left his behind him. A nice old briar, with a good long stem of what the tobacconists call amber. I wonder how many real amber mouthpieces there are in London. Some people think a fly in it is a sign. Why, it is quite a branch of trade the putting of sham flies into the sham amber. Well, he must have been disturbed in his mind to leave a pipe behind him which he evidently values highly."

"How do you know that he values it highly?" I asked.

"Well, I should put the original cost of the pipe at seven-and-sixpence. Now it has, you see, been twice mended: once in the wooden stem and once in the amber. Each

of these mends, done, as you observe, with silver bands, must have cost more than the pipe did originally. The man must value the pipe highly when he prefers to patch it up rather than buy a new one with the same money."

"Anything else?" I asked, for Holmes

that it is quite charred all down one side. Of course, a match could not have done that. Why should a man hold a match to the side of his pipe? But you cannot light it at a lamp without getting the bowl charred. And it is all on the right side of the pipe. From that I gather that he is a left-handed man.

You hold your own pipe to the lamp, and see how naturally you, being right-handed, hold the left side to the flame. You might do it once the other way, but not as a constancy. This has always been held so. Then he has bitten through his amber. It takes a muscular, energetic fellow, and one with a good set of teeth to do that. But if I am not mistaken I hear him upon the stair, so we shall have something more interesting than his pipe to study."

An instant later our door opened, and a tall young man entered the room. He was well but quietly dressed in a dark-grey suit, and carried a brown wideawake in his hand. I should have put him at about thirty, though he was really some years older.

"I beg your pardon," said he, with some embarrassment; "I suppose I should have knocked. Yes, of course I should have knocked. The fact is that I am a little upset, and you must put it all down to that." He passed his hand over his forehead like a man who is half dazed, and then fell, rather than sat, down upon a chair.

"I can see that you have not slept for a night or two," said Holmes, in his easy, genial way. "That tries a man's nerves more than work, and more even than pleasure. May I ask how I can help you?"

"I wanted your advice, sir. I don't know what to do, and my whole life seems to have gone to pieces."

"You wish to employ me as a consulting detective?"

"Not that only. I want your opinion as a judicious man—as a man of the world. I want to know what I ought to do next. I hope to God you'll be able to tell me."



"HE HELD IT UP."

was turning the pipe about in his hand and staring at it in his peculiar, pensive way.

He held it up and tapped on it with his long, thin forefinger as a professor might who was lecturing on a bone.

"Pipes are occasionally of extraordinary interest," said he. "Nothing has more individuality save, perhaps, watches and bootlaces. The indications here, however, are neither very marked nor very important. The owner is obviously a muscular man, left-handed, with an excellent set of teeth, careless in his habits, and with no need to practise economy."

My friend threw out the information in a very off-hand way, but I saw that he cocked his eye at me to see if I had followed his reasoning.

"You think a man must be well-to-do if he smokes a seven-shilling pipe?" said I.

"This is Grosvenor mixture at eightpence an ounce," Holmes answered, knocking a little out on his palm. "As he might get an excellent smoke for half the price, he has no need to practise economy."

"And the other points?"

"He has been in the habit of lighting his pipe at lamps and gas-jets. You can see

He spoke in little, sharp, jerky outbursts, and it seemed to me that to speak at all was very painful to him, and that his will all through was overriding his inclinations.

"It's a very delicate thing," said he. "One does not like to speak of one's domestic affairs to strangers. It seems dreadful to discuss the conduct of one's wife with two men whom I have never seen before. It's horrible to have to do it. But I've got to the end of my tether, and I must have advice."

"My dear Mr. Grant Munro" began Holmes.

Our visitor sprang from his chair. "What!" he cried. "You know my name?"

"If you wish to preserve your *incognito*," said Holmes, smiling, "I should suggest that you cease to write your name upon the lining of your hat, or else that you turn the

crown towards the person whom you are addressing. I was about to say that my friend and I have listened to many strange secrets in this room, and that we have had the good fortune to bring peace to many troubled souls. I trust that we may do as much for you. Might I beg you, as time may prove to be of importance, to furnish me with the facts of your case without further delay?"

Our visitor again passed his hand over his forehead as if he found it bitterly hard. From every gesture and expression I could see that he was a reserved, self-contained man, with a dash of pride in his nature, more likely to hide his wounds than to expose them. Then suddenly with a fierce gesture of his closed hand, like one who throws reserve to the winds, he began.

"The facts are these, Mr. Holmes," said he. "I am a married man, and have been so

for three years. During that time my wife and I have loved each other as fondly, and lived as happily, as any two that ever were joined. We have not had a difference, not one, in thought, or word, or deed. And now, since last Monday, there has suddenly

sprung up a barrier between us, and I find that there is something in her life and in her thoughts of which I know as little as if she were the woman who brushes by me in the street. We are estranged, and I want to know why.

"Now there is one thing that I want to impress upon you before I go any further, Mr. Holmes. Effie loves me. Don't let there be any mistake about that. She loves me with her whole heart and soul, and never more than now. I know it—I feel it. I don't want to argue about that. A man can

tell easily enough when a woman loves him. But there's this secret between us, and we can never be the same until it is cleared."

"Kindly let me have the facts, Mr. Munro," said Holmes, with some impatience.

"I'll tell you what I know about Effie's history. She was a widow when I met her first, though quite young—only twenty-five. Her name then was Mrs. Hebron. She went out to America when she was young and lived in the town of Atlanta, where she married this Hebron, who was a lawyer with a good practice. They had one child, but the yellow fever broke out badly in the place, and both husband and child died of it. I have seen his death certificate. This sickened her of America, and she came back to live with a maiden aunt at Pinner, in Middlesex. I may mention that her husband had left her comfortably off, and that she had a capital of



"OUR VISITOR SPRANG FROM HIS CHAIR."

about four thousand five hundred pounds, which had been so well invested by him that it returned an average of 7 per cent. She had only been six months at Pinner when I met her; we fell in love with each other, and we married a few weeks afterwards.

"I am a hop merchant myself, and as I have an income of seven or eight hundred, we found ourselves comfortably off, and took a nice eighty-pound-a-year villa at Norbury. Our little place was very countrified, considering that it is so close to town. We had an inn and two houses a little above us, and a single cottage at the other side of the field which faces us, and except those there were no houses until you got half-way to the station. My business took me into town at certain seasons, but in summer I had less to do, and then in our country home my wife and I were just as happy as could be wished. I tell you that there never was a shadow between us until this accursed affair began.

"There's one thing I ought to tell you before I go further. When we married, my wife made over all her property to me—rather against my will, for I saw how awkward it would be if my business affairs went wrong. However, she would have it so, and it was done. Well, about six weeks ago she came to me.

"'Jack,' said she, 'when you took my money you said that if ever I wanted any I was to ask you for it.'

"'Certainly,' said I, 'it's all your own.'

"'Well,' said she, 'I want a hundred pounds.'

"I was a bit staggered at this, for I had imagined it was simply a new dress or something of the kind that she was after.

"'What on earth for?' I asked.

"'Oh,' said she, in her playful way, 'you said that you were only my banker, and bankers never ask questions, you know.'

"'If you really mean it, of course you shall have the money,' said I.

"'Oh, yes, I really mean it.'

"'And you won't tell me what you want it for?'

"'Some day, perhaps, but not just at present, Jack.'

"So I had to be content with that, though it was the first time that there had ever been any secret between us. I gave her a cheque, and I never thought any more of the matter. It may have nothing to do with what came afterwards, but I thought it only right to mention it.

"Well, I told you just now that there is a cottage not far from our house. There is

just a field between us, but to reach it you have to go along the road and then turn down a lane. Just beyond it is a nice little grove of Scotch firs, and I used to be very fond of strolling down there, for trees are always neighbourly kinds of things. The cottage had been standing empty this eight months, and it was a pity, for it was a pretty two-storied place, with an old-fashioned porch and honeysuckle about it. I have stood many a time and thought what a neat little homestead it would make.

"Well, last Monday evening I was taking a stroll down that way when I met an empty van coming up the lane, and saw a pile of carpets and things lying about on the grass-plot beside the porch. It was clear that the cottage had at last been let. I walked past it, and then stopping, as an idle man might, I ran my eye over it, and wondered what sort of folk they were who had come to live so near us. And as I looked I suddenly became aware that a face was watching me out of one of the upper windows.

"I don't know what there was about that face, Mr. Holmes, but it seemed to send a chill right down my back. I was some little way off, so that I could not make out the features, but there was something unnatural and inhuman about the face. That was the impression I had, and I moved quickly forwards to get a nearer view of the person who was watching me. But as I did so the face suddenly disappeared, so suddenly that it seemed to have been plucked away into the darkness of the room. I stood for five minutes thinking the business over, and trying to analyze my impressions. I could not tell if the face was that of a man or a woman. It had been too far from me for that. But its colour was what had impressed me most. It was of a livid, dead yellow, and with something set and rigid about it, which was shockingly unnatural. So disturbed was I, that I determined to see a little more of the new inmates of the cottage. I approached and knocked at the door, which was instantly opened by a tall, gaunt woman, with a harsh, forbidding face.

"'What may you be wantin'?' she asked, in a northern accent.

"'I am your neighbour over yonder,' said I, nodding towards my house. 'I see that you have only just moved in, so I thought that I could be of any help to you in any—'

"'Aye, we'll just ask ye when we want ye,' said she, and shut the door in my face. Annoyed at the churlish rebuff, I turned my back and walked home. All the evening,

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"WHAT MAY YOU BE WANTIN'?"

though I tried to think of other things, my mind would still turn to the apparition at the window and the rudeness of the woman. I determined to say nothing about the former to my wife, for she is a nervous, highly-strung woman, and I had no wish that she should share the unpleasant impression which had been produced upon myself. I remarked to her, however, before I fell asleep that the cottage was now occupied, to which she returned no reply.

"I am usually an extremely sound sleeper. It has been a standing jest in the family that nothing could ever wake me during the night; and yet somehow on that particular night, whether it may have been the slight excitement produced by my little adventure or not, I know not, but I slept much more lightly than usual. Half in my dreams I was dimly conscious that something was going on in the room, and gradually became aware that my wife had dressed herself and was slipping on her mantle and her bonnet. My lips were parted to murmur out some sleepy words of surprise or remonstrance at this untimely preparation,

when suddenly my half-opened eyes fell upon her face, illuminated by the candle light, and astonishment held me dumb. She wore an expression such as I had never seen before—such as I should have thought her incapable of assuming. She was deadly pale, and breathing fast, glancing furtively towards the bed, as she fastened her mantle, to see if she had disturbed me. Then, thinking that I was still asleep, she slipped noiselessly from the room, and an instant later I heard a sharp creaking, which could only come from the hinges of the front door. I sat up in bed and rapped my knuckles against the rail to make certain that I was truly awake. Then I took my watch from under the pillow. It was three in the morning. What on this earth could my wife be doing out on the country road at three in the morning?

"I had sat for about twenty minutes turning the thing over in my mind and trying to find some possible explanation. The more I thought the more extraordinary and inexplicable did it appear. I was still puzzling over it when I heard the door gently close again and her footsteps coming up the stairs.

"'Where in the world have you been, Effie?' I asked, as she entered.

"She gave a violent start and a kind of gasping cry when I spoke, and that cry and start troubled me more than all the rest, for there was something indescribably guilty about them. My wife had always been a woman of a frank, open nature, and it gave me a chill to see her slinking into her own room, and crying out and wincing when her own husband spoke to her.

"'You awake, Jack?' she cried, with a nervous laugh. 'Why, I thought that nothing could awaken you.'

"'Where have you been?' I asked, more sternly.

"'I don't wonder that you are surprised,' said she, and I could see that her fingers were trembling as she undid the fastenings of her mantle. 'Why, I never remember having done such a thing in my life before. The fact is, that I felt as though I were choking, and had a perfect longing for a breath of fresh air. I really think that I should have fainted if I had not gone out. I stood at the door for a few minutes, and now I am quite myself again.'

"All the time that she was telling me this story she never once looked in my direction, and her voice was quite unlike her usual

tones. It was evident to me that she was saying what was false. I said nothing in reply, but turned my face to the wall, sick at heart, with my mind filled with a thousand venomous doubts and suspicions. What was it that my wife was concealing from me? Where had she been during that strange expedition? I felt that I should have no peace until I knew, and yet I shrank from asking her again after once she had told me what was false. All the rest of the night I tossed and tumbled, framing theory after theory, each more unlikely than the last.

"I should have gone to the City that day, but I was too perturbed in my mind to be able to pay attention to business matters. My wife seemed to be as upset as myself, and I could see from the little questioning glances which she kept shooting at me, that she understood that I disbelieved her statement and that she was at her wits' ends what to do. We hardly exchanged a word during breakfast, and immediately afterwards I went out for a walk that I might think the matter out in the fresh morning air.

"I went as far as the Crystal Palace, spent an hour in the grounds, and was back in Norbury by one o'clock. It happened that my way took me past the cottage, and I stopped for an instant to look at the windows and to see if I could catch a glimpse of the strange face which had looked out at me on the day before. As I stood there, imagine my surprise, Mr. Holmes, when the door suddenly opened and my wife walked out!

"I was struck dumb with astonishment at the sight of her, but my emotions were

nothing to those which showed themselves upon her face when our eyes met. She seemed for an instant to wish to shrink back inside the house again, and then, seeing how useless all concealment must be, she came forward with a very white face and frightened eyes which belied the smile upon her lips.

"'Oh, Jack!' she said, 'I have just been in to see if I can be of any assistance to our new neighbours. Why do you look at me like that, Jack? You are not angry with me?'

"'So,' said I, 'this is where you went during the night?'

"'What do you mean?' she cried.

"'You came here. I am sure of it. Who are these people that you should visit them at such an hour?'

"'I have not been here before.'

"'How can you tell me what you know is false?' I cried. 'Your very voice changes as you speak. When have I ever had a secret from you? I shall enter that cottage and I shall probe the matter to the bottom.'

"'No, no, Jack, for God's sake!' she gasped, in uncontrollable emotion. Then as I approached the door she seized

my sleeve and pulled me back with convulsive strength.

"'I implore you not to do this, Jack,' she cried. 'I swear that I will tell you everything some day, but nothing but misery can come of it if you enter that cottage.' Then, as I tried to shake her off, she clung to me in a frenzy of entreaty.

"'Trust me, Jack!' she cried. 'Trust me only this once. You will never have cause to regret it. You know that I would not have a secret from you if it were not for your own sake. Our whole lives are at stake



"'TRUST ME, JACK!' SHE CRIED."

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on this. If you come home with me all will be well. If you force your way into that cottage, all is over between us.'

"There was such earnestness, such despair in her manner that her words arrested me, and I stood irresolute before the door.

"'I will trust you on one condition, and on one condition only,' said I at last. 'It is that this mystery comes to an end from now. You are at liberty to preserve your secret, but you must promise me that there shall be no more nightly visits, no more doings which are kept from my knowledge. I am willing to forget those which are passed if you will promise that there shall be no more in the future.'

"'I was sure that you would trust me,' she cried, with a great sigh of relief. 'It shall be just as you wish. Come away, oh, come away up to the house!' Still pulling at my sleeve she led me away from the cottage. As we went I glanced back, and there was that yellow livid face watching us out of the upper window. What link could there be between that creature and my wife? Or how could the coarse, rough woman whom I had seen the day before be connected with her? It was a strange puzzle, and yet I knew that my mind could never know ease again until I had solved it.

"For two days after this I stayed at home, and my wife appeared to abide loyally by our engagement, for, as far as I know, she never stirred out of the house. On the third day, however, I had ample evidence that her solemn promise was not enough to hold her back from this secret influence which drew her away from her husband and her duty.

"I had gone into town on that day, but I returned by the 2.40 instead of the 3.36, which is my usual train. As I entered the house the maid ran into the hall with a startled face.

"'Where is your mistress?' I asked.

"'I think that she has gone out for a walk,' she answered.

"My mind was instantly filled with suspicion. I rushed upstairs to make sure that she was not in the house. As I did so I happened to glance out of one of the upper windows, and saw the maid with whom I had just been speaking running across the field in the direction of the cottage. Then, of course, I saw exactly what it all meant. My wife had gone over there and had asked the servant to call her if I should return. Tingling with anger, I rushed down and hurried across, determined to end the matter once and for ever. I saw my wife and the

maid hurrying back together along the lane, but I did not stop to speak with them. In the cottage lay the secret which was casting a shadow over my life. I vowed that, come what might, it should be a secret no longer. I did not even knock when I reached it, but turned the handle and rushed into the passage.

"It was all still and quiet upon the ground-floor. In the kitchen a kettle was singing on the fire, and a large black cat lay coiled up in a basket, but there was no sign of the woman whom I had seen before. I ran into the other room, but it was equally deserted. Then I rushed up the stairs, but only to find two other rooms empty and deserted at the top. There was no one at all in the whole house. The furniture and pictures were of the most common and vulgar description save in the one chamber at the window of which I had seen the strange face. That was comfortable and elegant, and all my suspicions rose into a fierce, bitter blaze when I saw that on the mantelpiece stood a full-length photograph of my wife, which had been taken at my request only three months ago.

"I stayed long enough to make certain that the house was absolutely empty. Then I left it, feeling a weight at my heart such as I had never had before. My wife came out into the hall as I entered my house, but I was too hurt and angry to speak with her, and pushing past her I made my way into my study. She followed me, however, before I could close the door.

"'I am sorry that I broke my promise, Jack,' said she, 'but if you knew all the circumstances I am sure that you would forgive me.'

"'Tell me everything, then,' said I.

"'I cannot, Jack, I cannot!' she cried.

"'Until you tell me who it is that has been living in that cottage, and who it is to whom you have given that photograph, there can never be any confidence between us,' said I, and breaking away from her I left the house. That was yesterday, Mr. Holmes, and I have not seen her since, nor do I know anything more about this strange business. It is the first shadow that has come between us, and it has so shaken me that I do not know what I should do for the best. Suddenly this morning it occurred to me that you were the man to advise me, so I have hurried to you now, and I place myself unreservedly in your hands. If there is any point which I have not made clear, pray question me about it. But above all tell me



"TELL ME EVERYTHING," SAID I.

quickly what I have to do, for this misery is more than I can bear."

Holmes and I had listened with the utmost interest to this extraordinary statement, which had been delivered in the jerky, broken fashion of a man who is under the influence of extreme emotion. My companion sat silent now for some time, with his chin upon his hand, lost in thought.

"Tell me," said he at last, "could you swear that this was a man's face which you saw at the window?"

"Each time that I saw it I was some distance away from it, so that it is impossible for me to say."

"You appear, however, to have been disagreeably impressed by it."

"It seemed to be of an unnatural colour and to have a strange rigidity about the features. When I approached, it vanished with a jerk."

"How long is it since your wife asked you for a hundred pounds?"

"Nearly two months."

"Have you ever seen a photograph of her first husband?"

"No, there was a great fire at Atlanta very shortly after his death, and all her papers were destroyed."

"And yet she had a certificate of death. You say that you saw it?"

"Yes, she got a duplicate after the fire."

"Did you ever meet anyone who knew her in America?"

"No."

tered yesterday, then they may be back now, and we should clear it all up easily. Let me advise you, then, to return to Norbury and to examine the windows of the cottage again. If you have reason to believe that it is inhabited do not force your way in, but send a wire to my friend and me. We shall be with you within an hour of receiving it, and we shall then very soon get to the bottom of the business."

"And if it is still empty?"

"In that case I shall come out to-morrow and talk it over with you. Good-bye, and above all do not fret until you know that you really have a cause for it."

"I am afraid that this is a bad business, Watson," said my companion, as he returned after accompanying Mr. Grant Munro to the door. "What did you make of it?"

"It had an ugly sound," I answered.

"Yes. There's blackmail in it, or I am much mistaken."

"And who is the blackmailer?"

"Well, it must be this creature who lives in the only comfortable room in the place, and has her photograph above his fireplace. Upon my word, Watson, there is something very attractive about that livid face at the window, and I would not have missed the case for worlds."

"You have a theory?"

"Yes, a provisional one. But I shall be surprised if it does not turn out to be correct. This woman's first husband is in that cottage."

"Why do you think so?"

"Did she ever talk of revisiting the place?"

"No."

"Or get letters from it?"

"Not to my knowledge."

"Thank you. I should like to think over the matter a little now. If the cottage is permanently deserted we may have some difficulty; if on the other hand, as I fancy is more likely, the inmates were warned of your coming, and left before you entered yesterday, then they may be back now, and we should clear it all up easily. Let me advise you, then, to return to Norbury and to examine the windows of the cottage again. If you have reason to believe that it is inhabited do not force your way in, but send a wire to my friend and me. We shall be with you within an hour of receiving it, and we shall then very soon get to the bottom of the business."

"How else can we explain her frenzied anxiety that her second one should not enter it? The facts, as I read them, are something like this: This woman was married in America. Her husband developed some hateful qualities, or, shall we say, that he contracted some loathsome disease, and became a leper or an imbecile. She fled from him at last, returned to England, changed her name, and started her life, as she thought, afresh. She had been married three years, and believed that her position was quite secure—having shown her husband the death certificate of some man, whose name she had assumed—when suddenly her whereabouts was discovered by her first husband, or, we may suppose, by some unscrupulous woman, who had attached herself to the invalid. They write to the wife and threaten to come and expose her. She asks for a hundred pounds and endeavours to buy them off. They come in spite of it, and when the husband mentions casually to the wife that there are new-comers in the cottage, she knows in some way that they are her pursuers. She waits until her husband is asleep, and then she rushes down to endeavour to persuade them to leave her in peace. Having no success, she goes again next morning, and her husband meets her, as he has told us, as she came out. She promises him then not to go there again, but two days afterwards, the hope of getting rid of those dreadful neighbours is too strong for her, and she makes another attempt, taking down with her the photograph which had probably been demanded from her. In the midst of this interview the maid rushes in to say that the master has come home, on which the wife, knowing that he would come straight down to the cottage, hurries the inmates out at the back door, into that grove of fir trees probably which was mentioned as standing near. In this way he finds the place deserted. I shall be very much surprised, however, if it is still so when he reconnoitres it this evening. What do you think of my theory?"

"It is all surmise."

"But at least it covers all the facts. When new facts come to our knowledge, which cannot be covered by it, it will be time enough to reconsider it. At present we can do nothing until we have a fresh message from our friend at Norbury."

But we had not very long to wait. It came just as we had finished our tea. "The cottage is still tenanted," it said. "Have seen the face against the window. I'll meet the seven o'clock train, and take no steps until you arrive."

He was waiting on the platform when we stepped out, and we could see in the light of the station lamps that he was very pale, and quivering with agitation.

"They are still there, Mr. Holmes," said he, laying his hand upon my friend's sleeve. "I saw lights in the cottage as I came down. We shall settle it now, once and for all."

"What is your plan, then?" asked Holmes, as we walked down the dark, tree-lined road.

"I am going to force my way in, and see for myself who is in the house. I wish you both to be there as witnesses."

"You are quite determined to do this, in spite of your wife's warning that it was better that you should not solve the mystery?"

"Yes, I am determined."

"Well, I think that you are in the right. Any truth is better than indefinite doubt. We had better go up at once. Of course, legally we are putting ourselves hopelessly in the wrong, but I think that it is worth it."

It was a very dark night and a thin rain began to fall as we turned from the high road into a narrow lane, deeply rutted, with hedges on either side. Mr. Grant Munro pushed impatiently forward, however, and we stumbled after him as best we could.

"There are the lights of my house," he murmured, pointing to a glimmer among the trees, "and here is the cottage which I am going to enter."

We turned a corner in the lane as he spoke, and there was the building close beside us. A yellow bar falling across the black foreground showed that the door was not quite closed, and one window in the upper story was brightly illuminated. As we looked we saw a dark blur moving across the blind.

"There is that creature," cried Grant Munro; "you can see for yourselves that someone is there. Now follow me, and we shall soon know all."

We approached the door, but suddenly a woman appeared out of the shadow and stood in the golden track of the lamp light. I could not see her face in the darkness, but her arms were thrown out in an attitude of entreaty.

"For God's sake, don't, Jack!" she cried.

"I had a presentiment that you would come this evening. Think better of it, dear! Trust me again, and you will never have cause to regret it."

"I have trusted you too long, Effie!" he cried, sternly. "Leave go of me! I must pass you. My friends and I are going to settle this matter once and for ever." He pushed her to one side and we followed

closely after him. As he threw the door open, an elderly woman ran out in front of him and tried to bar his passage, but he thrust her back, and an instant afterwards we were all upon the stairs. Grant Munro rushed into the lighted room at the top, and we entered it at his heels.

It was a cosy, well-furnished apartment, with two candles burning upon the table and two upon the mantelpiece. In the corner, stooping over a desk, there sat what appeared to be a little girl. Her face was turned away as we entered, but we could see that she was dressed in a red frock, and that she had long white gloves on. As she whisked round to us I gave a cry of surprise and horror. The face which she turned towards us was of the strangest livid tint, and the features were absolutely devoid of any expression. An instant later the mystery was explained. Holmes, with a laugh, passed his hand behind the child's ear, a mask peeled off from her countenance, and there was a little coal-black negress with all her white teeth flashing in amusement at our amazed faces. I burst out laughing out



"THERE WAS A LITTLE COAL-BLACK NEGRESS."

of sympathy with her merriment, but Grant Munro stood staring, with his hand clutching at his throat.

"My God!" he cried, "what can be the meaning of this?"

"I will tell you the meaning of it," cried the lady, sweeping into the room with a

proud, set face. "You have forced me against my own judgment to tell you, and now we must both make the best of it. My husband died at Atlanta. My child survived."

"Your child!"

She drew a large silver locket from her bosom. "You have never seen this open."

"I understood that it did not open."

She touched a spring, and the front hinged back. There was a portrait within of a man, strikingly handsome and intelligent, but bearing unmistakable signs upon his features of his African descent.

"That is John Hebron, of Atlanta," said the lady, "and a nobler man never walked the earth. I cut myself off from my race in order to wed him; but never once while he lived did I for one instant regret it. It was our misfortune that our only child took after his people rather than mine. It is often so in such matches, and little Lucy is darker far than ever her father was. But, dark or fair, she is my own dear little girlie, and her mother's pet." The little creature ran across at the

words and nestled up against the lady's dress.

"When I left her in America," she continued, "it was only because her health was weak, and the change might have done her harm. She was given to the care of a faithful Scotch-woman who had once been our servant. Never for an instant did I dream of disowning her as my child. But when chance threw you in my way, Jack, and I learned to love you, I feared to tell you about my child. God for-

give me, I feared that I should lose you, and I had not the courage to tell you. I had to choose between you, and in my weakness I turned away from my own little girl. For three years I have kept her existence a secret from you, but I heard from the nurse, and I knew that all was

well with her. At last, however, there came an overwhelming desire to see the child once more. I struggled against it, but in vain. Though I knew the danger I determined to have the child over, if it were but for a few weeks. I sent a hundred pounds to the nurse, and I gave her instructions about this cottage, so that she might come as a neighbour without my appearing to be in any way

child only just escaped from the back door as you rushed in at the front one. And now to-night you at last know all, and I ask you what is to become of us, my child and me?" She clasped her hands and waited for an answer.

It was a long two minutes before Grant Munro broke the silence, and when his answer came it was one of which I love to think. He lifted the little child, kissed her, and



"HE LIFTED THE LITTLE CHILD."

connected with her. I pushed my precautions so far as to order her to keep the child in the house during the daytime, and to cover up her little face and hands, so that even those who might see her at the window should not gossip about there being a black child in the neighbourhood. If I had been less cautious I might have been more wise, but I was half crazy with fear lest you should learn the truth.

"It was you who told me first that the cottage was occupied. I should have waited for the morning, but I could not sleep for excitement, and so at last I slipped out, knowing how difficult it is to awaken you. But you saw me go, and that was the beginning of my troubles. Next day you had my secret at your mercy, but you nobly refrained from pursuing your advantage. Three days later, however, the nurse and

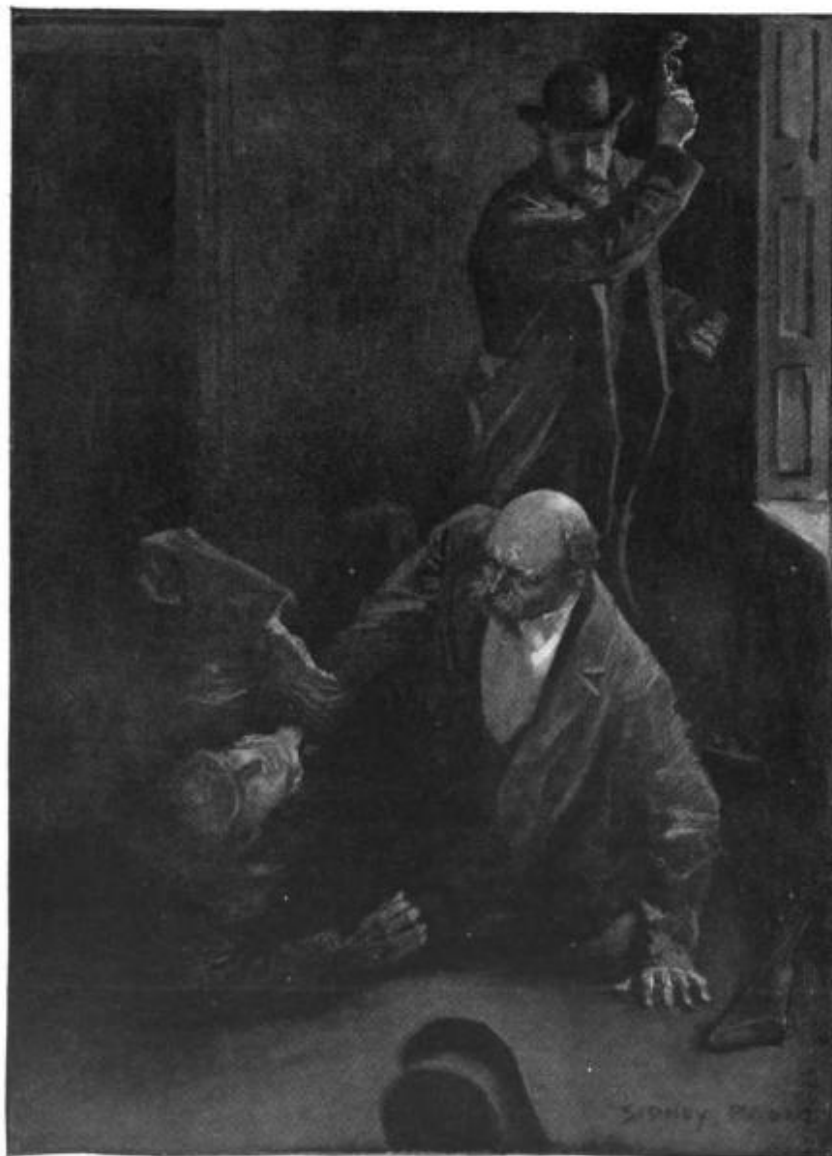
then, still carrying her, he held his other hand out to his wife and turned towards the door.

"We can talk it over more comfortably at home," said he. "I am not a very good man, Effie, but I think that I am a better one than you have given me credit for being."

Holmes and I followed them down to the lane, and my friend plucked at my sleeve as we came out. "I think," said he, "that we shall be of more use in London than in Norbury."

Not another word did he say of the case until late that night when he was turning away, with his lighted candle, for his bedroom.

"Watson," said he, "if it should ever strike you that I am getting a little overconfident in my powers, or giving less pains to a case than it deserves, kindly whisper 'Norbury' in my ear, and I shall be infinitely obliged to you."



"HE SEIZED HOLMES BY THE THROAT."

(See page 372.)

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THE RETURN OF SHERLOCK HOLMES.

By A. CONAN DOYLE.

I.—The Adventure of the Empty House.



It was in the spring of the year 1894 that all London was interested, and the fashionable world dismayed, by the murder of the Honourable Ronald Adair under most unusual and inexplicable circumstances. The public has already learned those particulars of the crime which came out in the police investigation; but a good deal was suppressed upon that occasion, since the case for the prosecution was so overwhelmingly strong that it was not necessary to bring forward all the facts. Only now, at the end of nearly ten years, am I allowed to supply those missing links which make up the whole of that remarkable chain. The crime was of interest in itself, but that interest was as nothing to me compared to the inconceivable sequel, which afforded me the greatest shock and surprise of any event in my adventurous life. Even now, after this long interval, I find myself thrilling as I think of it, and feeling once more that sudden flood of joy, amazement, and incredulity which utterly submerged my mind. Let me say to that public which has shown some interest in those glimpses which I have occasionally given them of the thoughts and actions of a very remarkable man that they are not to blame me if I have not shared my knowledge with them, for I should have considered it my first duty to have done so had I not been barred by a positive prohibition from his own lips, which was only withdrawn upon the third of last month.

It can be imagined that my close intimacy with Sherlock Holmes had interested me

deeply in crime, and that after his disappearance I never failed to read with care the various problems which came before the public, and I even attempted more than once for my own private satisfaction to employ his methods in their solution, though with indifferent success. There was none, however, which appealed to me like this tragedy of Ronald Adair. As I read the evidence at the inquest, which led up to a verdict of wilful murder against some person or persons unknown, I realized more clearly than I had ever done the loss which the community had sustained by the death of Sherlock Holmes. There were points about this strange business which would, I was sure, have specially appealed to him, and the efforts of the police would have been supplemented, or more probably anticipated, by the trained observation and the alert mind of the first criminal agent in Europe. All day as I drove upon my round I turned over the case in my mind, and found no explanation which appeared to me to be adequate. At the risk of telling a twice-told tale I will recapitulate the facts as they were known to the public at the conclusion of the inquest.

The Honourable Ronald Adair was the second son of the Earl of Maynooth, at that time Governor of one of the Australian Colonies. Adair's mother had returned from Australia to undergo the operation for cataract, and she, her son Ronald, and her daughter Hilda were living together at 427, Park Lane. The youth moved in the best society, had, so far as was known, no enemies, and no particular vices. He had been

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engaged to Miss Edith Woodley, of Carstairs, but the engagement had been broken off by mutual consent some months before, and there was no sign that it had left any very profound feeling behind it. For the rest the man's life moved in a narrow and conventional circle, for his habits were quiet and his nature unemotional. Yet it was upon this easy-going young aristocrat that death came in most strange and unexpected form between the hours of ten and eleven-twenty on the night of March 30th, 1894.

Ronald Adair was fond of cards, playing continually, but never for such stakes as would hurt him. He was a member of the Baldwin, the Cavendish, and the Bagatelle card clubs. It was shown that after dinner on the day of his death he had played a rubber of whist at the latter club. He had also played there in the afternoon. The evidence of those who had played with him—Mr. Murray, Sir John Hardy, and Colonel Moran—showed that the game was whist, and that there was a fairly equal fall of the cards. Adair might have lost five pounds, but not more. His fortune was a considerable one, and such a loss could not in any way affect him. He had played nearly every day at one club or other, but he was a cautious player, and usually rose a winner. It came out in evidence that in partnership with Colonel Moran he had actually won as much as four hundred and twenty pounds in a sitting some weeks before from Godfrey Milner and Lord Balmoral. So much for his recent history, as it came out at the inquest.

On the evening of the crime he returned from the club exactly at ten. His mother and sister were out spending the evening with a relation. The servant deposed that she heard him enter the front room on the second floor, generally used as his sitting-room. She had lit a fire there, and as it smoked she had opened the window. No sound was heard from the room until eleven-twenty, the hour of the return of Lady Maynooth and her daughter. Desiring to say good-night, she had attempted to enter her son's room. The door was locked on the inside, and no answer could be got to their cries and knocking. Help was obtained and the door forced. The unfortunate young man was found lying near the table. His head had been horribly mutilated by an expanding revolver bullet, but no weapon of any sort was to be found in the room. On the table lay two bank-notes for ten pounds each and seventeen pounds ten in silver and gold, the money arranged in little piles of varying

amount. There were some figures also upon a sheet of paper with the names of some club friends opposite to them, from which it was conjectured that before his death he was endeavouring to make out his losses or winnings at cards.

A minute examination of the circumstances served only to make the case more complex. In the first place, no reason could be given why the young man should have fastened the door upon the inside. There was the possibility that the murderer had done this and had afterwards escaped by the window. The drop was at least twenty feet, however, and a bed of crocuses in full bloom lay beneath. Neither the flowers nor the earth showed any sign of having been disturbed, nor were there any marks upon the narrow strip of grass which separated the house from the road. Apparently, therefore, it was the young man himself who had fastened the door. But how did he come by his death? No one could have climbed up to the window without leaving traces. Suppose a man had fired through the window, it would indeed be a remarkable shot who could with a revolver inflict so deadly a wound. Again, Park Lane is a frequented thoroughfare, and there is a cab-stand within a hundred yards of the house. No one had heard a shot. And yet there was the dead man, and there the revolver bullet, which had mushroomed out, as soft-nosed bullets will, and so inflicted a wound which must have caused instantaneous death. Such were the circumstances of the Park Lane Mystery, which were further complicated by entire absence of motive, since, as I have said, young Adair was not known to have any enemy, and no attempt had been made to remove the money or valuables in the room.

All day I turned these facts over in my mind, endeavouring to hit upon some theory which could reconcile them all, and to find that line of least resistance which my poor friend had declared to be the starting-point of every investigation. I confess that I made little progress. In the evening I strolled across the Park, and found myself about six o'clock at the Oxford Street end of Park Lane. A group of loafers upon the pavements, all staring up at a particular window, directed me to the house which I had come to see. A tall, thin man with coloured glasses, whom I strongly suspected of being a plain-clothes detective, was pointing out some theory of his own, while the others crowded round to listen to what he said. I got as near him as I could, but his

observations seemed to me to be absurd, so I withdrew again in some disgust. As I did so I struck against an elderly deformed man, who had been behind me, and I knocked down several books which he was carrying.

I remember that as I picked them up I observed the title of one of them, "The Origin of Tree Worship," and it struck me that the fellow must be some poor bibliophile who, either as a trade or as a hobby, was a collector of obscure volumes. I endeavoured to apologize for the accident, but it was evident that these books which I had so unfortunately maltreated were very precious objects in the eyes of their owner. With a snarl of contempt he turned upon his heel, and I saw his curved back and white side-whiskers disappear among the throng.

My observations of No. 427, Park Lane, did little to clear up the problem in which I was interested. The house was separated from the street by a low wall and railing, the whole not more than five feet high. It was perfectly easy, therefore, for anyone to get into the garden, but the window was entirely inaccessible, since there was no water-pipe or anything which could help the most active man to climb it. More puzzled than ever I retraced my steps to Kensington. I had not been in my study five minutes when the maid entered to say that a person desired to see me. To my astonishment it was none other than my strange old book-collector, his sharp, wizened face peering out from a frame of white hair, and his precious volumes, a dozen of them at least, wedged under his right arm.

"You're surprised to see me, sir," said he, in a strange, croaking voice. I acknowledged that I was

"Well, I've a conscience, sir, and when I chanced to see you go into this house, as I came hobbling after you, I thought to myself, I'll just step in and see that kind gentleman, and tell him that if I was a bit



"I KNOCKED DOWN SEVERAL BOOKS WHICH HE WAS CARRYING."

gruff in my manner there was not any harm meant, and that I am much obliged to him for picking up my books."

"You make too much of a trifle," said I. "May I ask how you knew who I was?"

"Well, sir, if it isn't too great a liberty, I am a neighbour of yours, for you'll find my

little bookshop at the corner of Church Street, and very happy to see you, I am sure. Maybe you collect yourself, sir; here's 'British Birds,' and 'Catullus,' and 'The Holy War'—a bargain every one of them. With five volumes you could just fill that gap on that second shelf. It looks untidy, does it not, sir?"

I moved my head to look at the cabinet behind me. When I turned again Sherlock

tainly a grey mist swirled before my eyes, and when it cleared I found my collar-ends undone and the tingling after-taste of brandy upon my lips. Holmes was bending over my chair, his flask in his hand.

"My dear Watson," said the well-remembered voice, "I owe you a thousand apologies. I had no idea that you would be so affected."

I gripped him by the arm.

"Holmes!" I cried. "Is it really you? Can it indeed be that you are alive? Is it possible that you succeeded in climbing out of that awful abyss?"



"SHERLOCK HOLMES WAS STANDING SMILING AT ME ACROSS MY STUDY TABLE."

Holmes was standing smiling at me across my study table. I rose to my feet, stared at him for some seconds in utter amazement, and then it appears that I must have fainted for the first and the last time in my life. Cer-

"Wait a moment," said he. "Are you sure that you are really fit to discuss things? I have given you a serious shock by my unnecessarily dramatic reappearance."

"I am all right, but indeed, Holmes, I can

hardly believe my eyes. Good heavens, to think that you—you of all men—should be standing in my study!" Again I gripped him by the sleeve and felt the thin, sinewy arm beneath it. "Well, you're not a spirit, anyhow," said I. "My dear chap, I am overjoyed to see you. Sit down and tell me how you came alive out of that dreadful chasm."

He sat opposite to me and lit a cigarette in his old nonchalant manner. He was dressed in the seedy frock-coat of the book merchant, but the rest of that individual lay in a pile of white hair and old books upon the table. Holmes looked even thinner and keener than of old, but there was a dead-white tinge in his aquiline face which told me that his life recently had not been a healthy one.

"I am glad to stretch myself, Watson," said he. "It is no joke when a tall man has to take a foot off his stature for several hours on end. Now, my dear fellow, in the matter of these explanations we have, if I may ask for your co-operation, a hard and dangerous night's work in front of us. Perhaps it would be better if I gave you an account of the whole situation when that work is finished."

"I am full of curiosity. I should much prefer to hear now."

"You'll come with me to-night?"

"When you like and where you like."

"This is indeed like the old days. We shall have time for a mouthful of dinner before we need go. Well, then, about that chasm. I had no serious difficulty in getting out of it, for the very simple reason that I never was in it."

"You never were in it?"

"No, Watson, I never was in it. My note to you was absolutely genuine. I had little doubt that I had come to the end of my career when I perceived the somewhat sinister figure of the late Professor Moriarty standing upon the narrow pathway which led to safety. I read an inexorable purpose in his grey eyes. I exchanged some remarks with him, therefore, and obtained his courteous permission to write the short note which you afterwards received. I left it with my cigarette-box and my stick and I walked along the pathway, Moriarty still at my heels. When I reached the end I stood at bay. He drew no weapon, but he rushed at me and threw his long arms around me. He knew that his own game was up, and was only anxious to revenge himself upon me. We tottered together upon the brink of the fall. I have some knowledge, however, of baritsu, or the

Japanese system of wrestling, which has more than once been very useful to me. I slipped through his grip, and he with a horrible scream kicked madly for a few seconds and clawed the air with both his hands. But for all his efforts he could not get his balance, and over he went. With my face over the brink I saw him fall for a long way. Then he struck a rock, bounded off, and splashed into the water."

I listened with amazement to this explanation, which Holmes delivered between the puffs of his cigarette.

"But the tracks!" I cried. "I saw with my own eyes that two went down the path and none returned."

"It came about in this way. The instant that the Professor had disappeared it struck me what a really extraordinarily lucky chance Fate had placed in my way. I knew that Moriarty was not the only man who had sworn my death. There were at least three others whose desire for vengeance upon me would only be increased by the death of their leader. They were all most dangerous men. One or other would certainly get me. On the other hand, if all the world was convinced that I was dead they would take liberties, these men, they would lay themselves open, and sooner or later I could destroy them. Then it would be time for me to announce that I was still in the land of the living. So rapidly does the brain act that I believe I had thought this all out before Professor Moriarty had reached the bottom of the Reichenbach Fall."

"I stood up and examined the rocky wall behind me. In your picturesque account of the matter, which I read with great interest some months later, you assert that the wall was sheer. This was not literally true. A few small footholds presented themselves, and there was some indication of a ledge. The cliff is so high that to climb it all was an obvious impossibility, and it was equally impossible to make my way along the wet path without leaving some tracks. I might, it is true, have reversed my boots, as I have done on similar occasions, but the sight of three sets of tracks in one direction would certainly have suggested a deception. On the whole, then, it was best that I should risk the climb. It was not a pleasant business, Watson. The fall roared beneath me. I am not a fanciful person, but I give you my word that I seemed to hear Moriarty's voice screaming at me out of the abyss. A mistake would have been fatal. More than once, as tufts of grass came out in my hand

or my foot slipped in the wet notches of the rock, I thought that I was gone. But I struggled upwards, and at last I reached a ledge several feet deep and covered with soft green moss, where I could lie unseen in the most perfect comfort. There I was stretched when you, my dear Watson, and all your following were investigating in the most sympathetic and inefficient manner the circumstances of my death.

"At last, when you had all formed your inevitable and totally erroneous conclusions, you departed for the hotel and I was left alone. I had imagined that I had reached the end of my adventures, but a very unexpected occurrence showed me that there were surprises still in store for me. A huge rock, falling from above, boomed past me, struck the path, and bounded over into the chasm. For an instant I thought that it was an accident; but a moment later, looking up, I saw a man's head against the darkening sky, and another stone struck the very ledge upon which I was stretched, within a foot of my head. Of course, the meaning of this was obvious. Moriarty had not been alone. A confederate—and even that one glance had told me how dangerous a man that confederate was—had kept guard while the Professor had attacked me. From a distance, unseen by me, he had been a witness of his friend's death and of my escape. He had waited, and then, making his way round to the top of the cliff, he had endeavoured to succeed where his comrade had failed.

"I did not take long to think about it, Watson. Again I saw that grim face look over the cliff, and I knew that it was the precursor of another stone. I scrambled down on to the path. I don't think I could have done it in cold blood. It was a hundred times more difficult than getting up. But I had no time to think of the danger, for another stone sang past me as I hung by my hands from the edge of the ledge. Half-way down I slipped, but by the blessing of God I landed, torn and bleeding, upon the path. I took to my heels, did ten miles over the mountains in the darkness, and a week later I found myself in Florence with the certainty that no one in the world knew what had become of me.

"I had only one confidant—my brother Mycroft. I owe you many apologies, my dear Watson, but it was all-important that it should be thought I was dead, and it is quite certain that you would not have written so convincing an account of my unhappy end

had you not yourself thought that it was true. Several times during the last three years I have taken up my pen to write to you, but always I feared lest your affectionate regard for me should tempt you to some indiscretion which would betray my secret. For that reason I turned away from you this evening when you upset my books, for I was in danger at the time, and any show of surprise and emotion upon your part might have drawn attention to my identity and led to the most deplorable and irreparable results. As to Mycroft, I had to confide in him in order to obtain the money which I needed. The course of events in London did not run so well as I had hoped, for the trial of the Moriarty gang left two of its most dangerous members, my own most vindictive enemies, at liberty. I travelled for two years in Tibet, therefore, and amused myself by visiting Lhasa and spending some days with the head Lama. You may have read of the remarkable explorations of a Norwegian named Sigerson, but I am sure that it never occurred to you that you were receiving news of your friend. I then passed through Persia, looked in at Mecca, and paid a short but interesting visit to the Khalifa at Khartoum, the results of which I have communicated to the Foreign Office. Returning to France I spent some months in a research into the coal-tar derivatives, which I conducted in a laboratory at Montpelier, in the South of France. Having concluded this to my satisfaction, and learning that only one of my enemies was now left in London, I was about to return when my movements were hastened by the news of this very remarkable Park Lane Mystery, which not only appealed to me by its own merits, but which seemed to offer some most peculiar personal opportunities. I came over at once to London, called in my own person at Baker Street, threw Mrs. Hudson into violent hysterics, and found that Mycroft had preserved my rooms and my papers exactly as they had always been. So it was, my dear Watson, that at two o'clock to-day I found myself in my old arm-chair in my own old room, and only wishing that I could have seen my old friend Watson in the other chair which he has so often adorned."

Such was the remarkable narrative to which I listened on that April evening—a narrative which would have been utterly incredible to me had it not been confirmed by the actual sight of the tall, spare figure and the keen, eager face, which I had never thought to see again. In some manner he had learned of my own sad bereavement, and

his sympathy was shown in his manner rather than in his words. "Work is the best antidote to sorrow, my dear Watson," said he, "and I have a piece of work for us both to-night which, if we can bring it to a successful conclusion, will in itself justify a man's life on this planet." In vain I begged him to tell me more. "You will hear and see enough before morning," he answered. "We have three years of the past to discuss. Let that suffice until half-past nine, when we start upon the notable adventure of the empty house."

It was indeed like old times when, at that hour, I found myself seated beside him in a hansom, my revolver in my pocket and the thrill of adventure in my heart. Holmes was cold and stern and silent. As the gleam of the street-lamps flashed upon his austere features I saw that his brows were drawn down in thought and his thin lips compressed. I knew not what wild beast we were about to hunt down in the dark jungle of criminal London, but I was well assured from the bearing of this master huntsman that the adventure was a most grave one, while the sardonic smile which occasionally broke through his ascetic gloom boded little good for the object of our quest.

I had imagined that we were bound for Baker Street, but Holmes stopped the cab at the corner of Cavendish Square. I observed that as he stepped out he gave a most searching glance to right and left, and at every subsequent street corner he took the utmost pains to assure that he was not followed. Our route was certainly a singular one. Holmes's knowledge of the byways of London was extraordinary, and on this occasion he passed rapidly, and with

an assured step, through a network of mews and stables the very existence of which I had never known. We emerged at last into a small road, lined with old, gloomy houses, which led us into Manchester Street, and so to Blandford Street. Here he turned swiftly down a narrow passage, passed through a wooden gate into a deserted yard, and then opened with a key the back door of a house. We entered together and he closed it behind us.

The place was pitch-dark, but it was



"I KEPT FORWARD AND LOOKED ACROSS AT THE FAMILIAR WINDOW."

evident to me that it was an empty house. Our feet creaked and crackled over the bare planking, and my outstretched hand touched a wall from which the paper was hanging in ribbons. Holmes's cold, thin fingers closed round my wrist and led me forwards down a long hall, until I dimly saw the murky fanlight over the door. Here Holmes turned suddenly to the right, and we found ourselves in a large, square, empty room, heavily shadowed in the corners, but faintly lit in the centre from the lights of the street beyond. There was no lamp near and the window was thick with dust, so that we could only just discern each other's figures within. My companion put his hand upon my shoulder and his lips close to my ear.

"Do you know where we are?" he whispered.

"Surely that is Baker Street," I answered, staring through the dim window.

"Exactly. We are in Camden House, which stands opposite to our own old quarters."

"But why are we here?"

"Because it commands so excellent a view of that picturesque pile. Might I trouble you, my dear Watson, to draw a little nearer to the window, taking every precaution not to show yourself, and then to look up at our old rooms—the starting-point of so many of our little adventures? We will see if my three years of absence have entirely taken away my power to surprise you."

I crept forward and looked across at the familiar window. As my eyes fell upon it I gave a gasp and a cry of amazement. The blind was down and a strong light was burning in the room. The shadow of a man who was seated in a chair within was thrown in hard, black outline upon the luminous screen of the window. There was no mistaking the poise of the head, the squareness of the shoulders, the sharpness of the features. The face was turned half-round, and the effect was that of one of those black silhouettes which our grandparents loved to frame. It was a perfect reproduction of Holmes. So amazed was I that I threw out my hand to make sure that the man himself was standing beside me. He was quivering with silent laughter.

"Well?" said he.

"Good heavens!" I cried. "It is marvellous."

"I trust that age doth not wither nor custom stale my infinite variety," said he, and I recognised in his voice the joy and pride which the artist takes in his own

creation. "It really is rather like me, is it not?"

"I should be prepared to swear that it was you."

"The credit of the execution is due to Monsieur Oscar Meunier, of Grenoble, who spent some days in doing the moulding. It is a bust in wax. The rest I arranged myself during my visit to Baker Street this afternoon."

"But why?"

"Because, my dear Watson, I had the strongest possible reason for wishing certain people to think that I was there when I was really elsewhere."

"And you thought the rooms were watched?"

"I *knew* that they were watched."

"By whom?"

"By my old enemies, Watson. By the charming society whose leader lies in the Reichenbach Fall. You must remember that they knew, and only they knew, that I was still alive. Sooner or later they believed that I should come back to my rooms. They watched them continuously, and this morning they saw me arrive."

"How do you know?"

"Because I recognised their sentinel when I glanced out of my window. He is a harmless enough fellow, Parker by name, a garroter by trade, and a remarkable performer upon the Jew's harp. I cared nothing for him. But I cared a great deal for the much more formidable person who was behind him, the bosom friend of Moriarty, the man who dropped the rocks over the cliff, the most cunning and dangerous criminal in London. That is the man who is after me to-night, Watson, and that is the man who is quite unaware that we are after him."

My friend's plans were gradually revealing themselves. From this convenient retreat the watchers were being watched and the trackers tracked. That angular shadow up yonder was the bait and we were the hunters. In silence we stood together in the darkness and watched the hurrying figures who passed and repassed in front of us. Holmes was silent and motionless; but I could tell that he was keenly alert, and that his eyes were fixed intently upon the stream of passers-by. It was a bleak and boisterous night, and the wind whistled shrilly down the long street. Many people were moving to and fro, most of them muffled in their coats and cravats. Once or twice it seemed to me that I had seen the same figure before, and I especially noticed

two men who appeared to be sheltering themselves from the wind in the doorway of a house some distance up the street. I tried to draw my companion's attention to them, but he gave a little ejaculation of impatience and continued to stare into the street. More than once he fidgeted with his feet and tapped rapidly with his fingers upon the wall. It was evident to me that he was becoming uneasy and that his plans were not working out altogether as he had hoped. At last, as midnight approached and the street gradually cleared, he paced up and down the room in uncontrollable agitation. I was about to make some remark to him when I raised my eyes to the lighted window and again experienced almost as great a surprise as before. I clutched Holmes's arm and pointed upwards.

"The shadow has moved!" I cried.

It was, indeed, no longer the profile, but the back, which was turned towards us.

Three years had certainly not smoothed the asperities of his temper or his impatience with a less active intelligence than his own.

"Of course it has moved,"

said he. "Am I such a farcical bungler, Watson, that I should erect an obvious dummy and expect that some of the sharpest men in Europe would be deceived by it? We have been in this room two hours, and Mrs. Hudson has made some change in that figure eight times, or once in every quarter of an hour. She works it from the front so that her shadow may never be seen. Ah!"

He drew in his breath with a shrill, excited intake. In the dim light I saw his head thrown forward, his whole attitude rigid with attention. Outside, the street was absolutely deserted. Those two men might still be crouching in the doorway, but I could no longer see them. All was still and dark, save only that brilliant yellow screen in front of us with the black figure outlined upon its centre. Again in the utter silence I heard that thin, sibilant note which spoke of intense suppressed excitement. An instant later he pulled me back into

the blackest corner of the room, and I felt his warning hand upon my lips. The fingers which clutched me were quivering. Never had I known my friend more moved, and yet the dark street still stretched lonely and motionless before us.

But suddenly I was aware of that which his keener senses had already distinguished. A low, stealthy sound came to my ears, not from the direction of Baker Street, but from the back of the very house in which we lay concealed. A door opened and shut. An instant later steps crept down the passage—steps which were meant to be silent, but which reverberated harshly through the empty house. Holmes crouched back against the wall and I did the same, my hand closing upon the handle of my



Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
"THE LIGHT OF THE STREET FELL FULL UPON HIS FACE."

revolver. Peering through the gloom, I saw the vague outline of a man, a shade blacker than the blackness of the open door. He stood for an instant, and then he crept forward, crouching, menacing, into the room. He was within three yards of us, this sinister figure, and I had braced myself to meet his spring, before I realized that he had no idea of our presence. He passed close beside us, stole over to the window, and very softly and noiselessly raised it for half a foot. As he sank to the level of this opening the light of the street, no longer dimmed by the dusty glass, fell full upon his face. The man seemed to be beside himself with excitement. His two eyes shone like stars and his features were working convulsively. He was an elderly man, with a thin, projecting nose, a high, bald forehead, and a huge grizzled moustache. An opera-hat was pushed to the back of his head, and an evening dress shirt-front gleamed out through his open overcoat. His face was gaunt and swarthy, scored with deep, savage lines. In his hand he carried what appeared to be a stick, but as he laid it down upon the floor it gave a metallic clang. Then from the pocket of his overcoat he drew a bulky object, and he busied himself in some task which ended with a loud, sharp click, as if a spring or bolt had fallen into its place. Still kneeling upon the floor he bent forward and threw all his weight and strength upon some lever, with the result that there came a long, whirling, grinding noise, ending once more in a powerful click. He straightened himself then, and I saw that what he held in his hand was a sort of a gun, with a curiously misshapen butt. He opened it at the breech, put something in, and snapped the breech-block. Then, crouching down, he rested the end of the barrel upon the ledge of the open window, and I saw his long moustache droop over the stock and his eye gleam as it peered along the sights. I heard a little sigh of satisfaction as he cuddled the butt into his shoulder, and saw that amazing target, the black man on the yellow ground, standing clear at the end of his fore sight. For an instant he was rigid and motionless. Then his finger tightened on the trigger. There was a strange, loud whizz and a long, silvery tinkle of broken glass. At that instant Holmes sprang like a tiger on to the marksman's back and hurled him flat upon his face. He was up again in a moment, and with convulsive strength he seized Holmes by the throat; but I struck him on the head with the butt of my revolver

and he dropped again upon the floor. I fell upon him, and as I held him my comrade blew a shrill call upon a whistle. There was the clatter of running feet upon the pavement, and two policemen in uniform, with one plain, clothes detective, rushed through the front entrance and into the room.

"That you, Lestrade?" said Holmes.

"Yes, Mr. Holmes. I took the job myself. It's good to see you back in London, sir."

"I think you want a little unofficial help. Three undetected murders in one year won't do, Lestrade. But you handled the Molesey Mystery with less than your usual—that's to say, you handled it fairly well."

We had all risen to our feet, our prisoner breathing hard, with a stalwart constable on each side of him. Already a few loiterers had begun to collect in the street. Holmes stepped up to the window, closed it, and dropped the blinds. Lestrade had produced two candles and the policemen had uncovered their lanterns. I was able at last to have a good look at our prisoner.

It was a tremendously virile and yet sinister face which was turned towards us. With the brow of a philosopher above and the jaw of a sensualist below, the man must have started with great capacities for good or for evil. But one could not look upon his cruel blue eyes, with their drooping, cynical lids, or upon the fierce, aggressive nose and the threatening, deep-lined brow, without reading Nature's plainest danger-signals. He took no heed of any of us, but his eyes were fixed upon Holmes's face with an expression in which hatred and amazement were equally blended. "You fiend!" he kept on muttering; "you clever, clever fiend!"

"Ah, Colonel!" said Holmes, arranging his rumpled collar; "'journeys end in lovers' meetings,' as the old play says. I don't think I have had the pleasure of seeing you since you favoured me with those attentions as I lay on the ledge above the Reichenbach Fall."

The Colonel still stared at my friend like a man in a trance. "You cunning, cunning fiend!" was all that he could say.

"I have not introduced you yet," said Holmes. "This, gentlemen, is Colonel Sebastian Moran, once of Her Majesty's Indian Army, and the best heavy game shot that our Eastern Empire has ever produced. I believe I am correct, Colonel, in saying that your bag of tigers still remains unrivalled?"

The fierce old man said nothing, but still glared at my companion; with his savage

eyes and bristling moustache he was wonderfully like a tiger himself.

"I wonder that my very simple stratagem could deceive so old a shikari," said Holmes. "It must be very familiar to you. Have you not tethered a young kid under a tree, lain above it with your rifle, and waited for the bait to bring up your tiger? This empty house is my tree and you are my tiger. You have possibly had other guns in reserve in case there should be several tigers, or in the unlikely supposition of your own aim failing you. These," he pointed around, "are my other guns. The parallel is exact."

Colonel Moran sprang forward, with a

pate that you would yourself make use of this empty house and this convenient front window. I had imagined you as operating from the street, where my friend Lestrade and his merry men were awaiting you. With that exception all has gone as I expected."

Colonel Moran turned to the official detective.

"You may or may not have just cause for arresting me," said he, "but at least there can be no reason why I should submit to the gibes of this person. If I am in the hands of the law let things be done in a legal way."

"Well, that's reasonable enough," said Lestrade. "Nothing further you have to say, Mr. Holmes, before we go?"



"COLONEL MORAN SPRANG FORWARD, WITH A SNARL OF RAGE."

snarl of rage, but the constables dragged him back. The fury upon his face was terrible to look at.

"I confess that you had one small surprise for me," said Holmes. "I did not antici-

Holmes had picked up the powerful air-gun from the floor and was examining its mechanism.

"An admirable and unique weapon," said he, "noiseless and of tremendous power. I

knew Von Herder, the blind German mechanic, who constructed it to the order of the late Professor Moriarty. For years I have been aware of its existence, though I have never before had an opportunity of handling it. I commend it very specially to your attention, Lestrade, and also the bullets which fit it."

"You can trust us to look after that, Mr. Holmes," said Lestrade, as the whole party moved towards the door. "Anything further to say?"

"Only to ask what charge you intend to prefer?"

"What charge, sir? Why, of course, the attempted murder of Mr. Sherlock Holmes."

"Not so, Lestrade. I do not propose to appear in the matter at all. To you, and to you only, belongs the credit of the remarkable arrest which you have effected. Yes, Lestrade, I congratulate you! With your usual happy mixture of cunning and audacity you have got him."

"Got him! Got whom, Mr. Holmes?"

"The man that the whole force has been seeking in vain—Colonel Sebastian Moran, who shot the Honourable Ronald Adair with an expanding bullet from an air-gun through the open window of the second-floor front of No. 427, Park Lane, upon the 30th of last month. That's the charge, Lestrade. And now, Watson, if you can endure the draught from a broken window, I think that half an hour in my study over a cigar may afford you some profitable amusement."

Our old chambers had been left unchanged through the supervision of Mycroft Holmes and the immediate care of Mrs. Hudson. As I entered I saw, it is true, an unwonted tidiness, but the old landmarks were all in their place. There were the chemical corner and the acid-stained, deal-topped table. There upon a shelf was the row of formidable scrap-books and books of reference which many of our fellow-citizens would have been so glad to burn. The diagrams, the violin-case, and the pipe-rack—even the Persian slipper which contained the tobacco—all met my eyes as I glanced round me. There were two occupants of the room—one Mrs. Hudson, who beamed upon us both as we entered; the other the strange dummy which had played so important a part in the evening's adventures. It was a wax-coloured model of my friend, so admirably done that it was a perfect facsimile. It stood on a small pedestal table with an old dressing-gown of Holmes's so draped round it that

the illusion from the street was absolutely perfect.

"I hope you preserved all precautions, Mrs. Hudson?" said Holmes.

"I went to it on my knees, sir, just as you told me."

"Excellent. You carried the thing out very well. Did you observe where the bullet went?"

"Yes, sir. I'm afraid it has spoilt your beautiful bust, for it passed right through the head and flattened itself on the wall. I picked it up from the carpet. Here it is!"

Holmes held it out to me. "A soft revolver bullet, as you perceive, Watson. There's genius in that, for who would expect to find such a thing fired from an air-gun. All right, Mrs. Hudson, I am much obliged for your assistance. And now, Watson, let me see you in your old seat once more, for there are several points which I should like to discuss with you."

He had thrown off the seedy frock-coat, and now he was the Holmes of old in the mouse-coloured dressing-gown which he took from his effigy.

"The old shikari's nerves have not lost their steadiness nor his eyes their keenness," said he, with a laugh, as he inspected the shattered forehead of his bust.

"Plumb in the middle of the back of the head and smack through the brain. He was the best shot in India, and I expect that there are few better in London. Have you heard the name?"

"No, I have not."

"Well, well, such is fame! But, then, if I remember aright, you had not heard the name of Professor James Moriarty, who had one of the great brains of the century. Just give me down my index of biographies from the shelf."

He turned over the pages lazily, leaning back in his chair and blowing great clouds from his cigar.

"My collection of M's is a fine one," said he. "Moriarty himself is enough to make any letter illustrious, and here is Morgan the poisoner, and Merridew of abominable memory, and Mathews, who knocked out my left canine in the waiting-room at Charing Cross, and, finally, here is our friend of to-night."

He handed over the book, and I read: "*Moran, Sebastian, Colonel*. Unemployed. Formerly 1st Bangalore Pioneers. Born London, 1840. Son of Sir Augustus Moran, C.B., once British Minister to Persia. Educated Eton and Oxford. Served in Jowaki

Campaign, Afghan Campaign, Charasiab (despatches), Sherrpur, and Cabul. Author of 'Heavy Game of the Western Himalayas,' 1881; 'Three Months in the Jungle,' 1884. Address: Conduit Street. Clubs: The Anglo-Indian, the Tankerville, the Bagatelle Card Club."

On the margin was written, in Holmes's precise hand: "The second most dangerous man in London."

"This is astonishing," said I, as I handed back the volume. "The man's career is that of an honourable soldier."

"It is true," Holmes answered. "Up to a certain point he did well. He was always a man of iron nerve, and the story is still told in India how he crawled down a drain after a wounded man-eating tiger."

There are some trees, Watson, which grow to a certain height and then suddenly develop some unsightly eccentricity. You will see it often in humans. I have a theory that the individual represents in his development the whole procession of his ancestors, and that such a sudden turn to good or evil stands for some strong influence which came into the line of his pedigree. The person becomes, as it were, the epitome of the history of his own family."

"It is surely rather fanciful."

"Well, I don't insist upon it. Whatever the cause, Colonel Moran began to go wrong. Without any open scandal he still made India too hot to hold him. He retired, came to London, and again acquired an evil name. It was at this time that he was sought out by Professor Moriarty, to whom for a time he was chief of the staff. Moriarty supplied him liberally with money and used him only in one or two very high-



"MY COLLECTION OF M'S IS A FINE ONE," SAID HE.

class jobs which no ordinary criminal could have undertaken. You may have some recollection of the death of Mrs. Stewart, of Lauder, in 1887. Not? Well, I am sure Moran was at the bottom of it; but nothing could be proved. So cleverly was the Colonel concealed that even when the Moriarty gang was broken up we could not incriminate him. You remember at that date, when I called upon you in your rooms, how I put up the shutters for fear of air-guns? No doubt you thought me fanciful. I knew exactly what I was doing, for I knew of the existence of this remarkable gun, and I knew also that one of the best shots in the world would be behind it. When we were in Switzerland he followed us with Moriarty, and it was undoubtedly he who gave me that evil five minutes on the Reichenbach ledge.

"You may think that I read the papers with some attention during my sojourn in France, on the look-out for any chance of laying him

by the heels. So long as he was free in London my life would really not have been worth living. Night and day the shadow would have been over me, and sooner or later his chance must have come. What could I do? I could not shoot him at sight, or I should myself be in the dock. There was no use appealing to a magistrate. They cannot interfere on the strength of what would appear to them to be a wild suspicion. So I could do nothing. But I watched the criminal news, knowing that sooner or later I should get him. Then came the death of this Ronald Adair. My chance had come at last! Knowing what I did, was it not certain that Colonel Moran had done it? He had played cards with the lad; he had followed him home from the club; he had shot him through the open window. There was not a doubt of it. The bullets alone are enough to put his head in a noose. I came over at once. I was seen by the sentinel, who would, I knew, direct the Colonel's attention to my presence. He could not fail to connect my sudden return with his crime and to be terribly alarmed. I was sure that he would make an attempt to get me out of the way *at once*, and would bring round his murderous weapon for that purpose. I left him an excellent mark in the window, and, having warned the police that they might be needed—by the way, Watson, you spotted their presence in that doorway with unerring accuracy—I took up what seemed to me to be a judicious post for observation, never dreaming that he would choose the same spot for his attack. Now, my dear Watson, does anything remain for me to explain?"

"Yes," said I. "You have not made it clear what was Colonel Moran's motive in murdering the Honourable Ronald Adair."

"Ah! my dear Watson, there we come

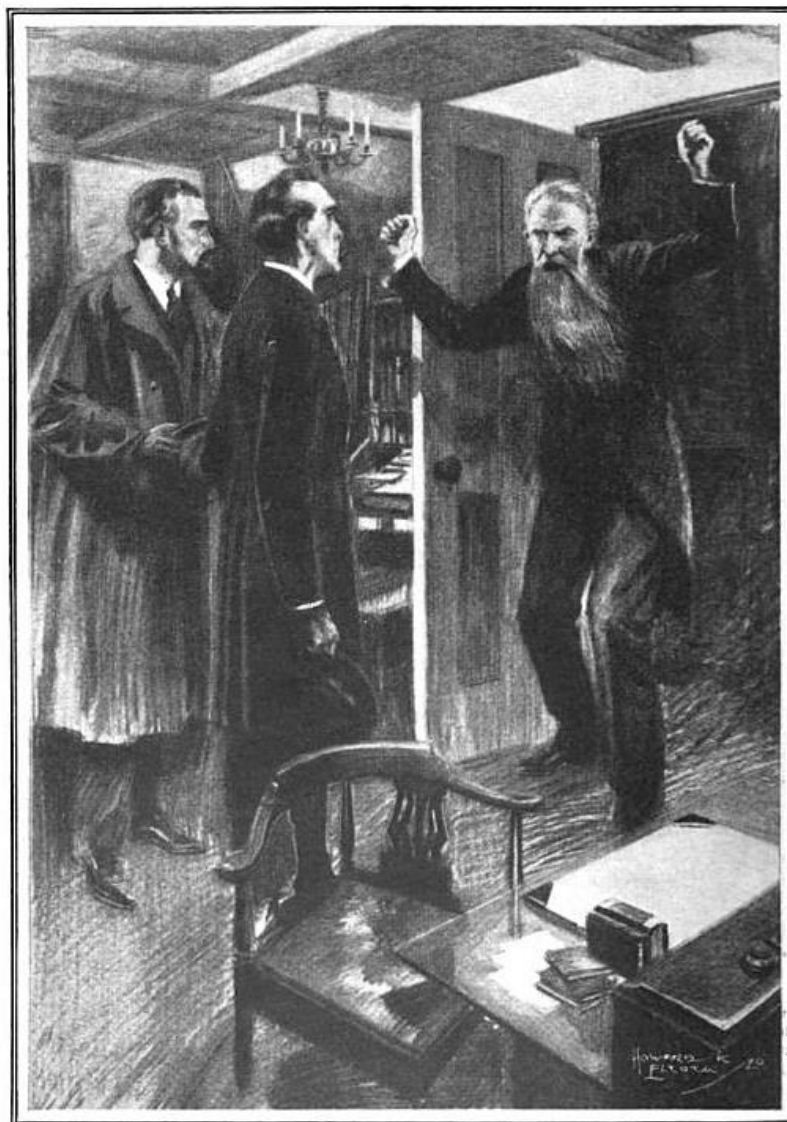
into those realms of conjecture where the most logical mind may be at fault. Each may form his own hypothesis upon the present evidence, and yours is as likely to be correct as mine."

"You have formed one, then?"

"I think that it is not difficult to explain the facts. It came out in evidence that Colonel Moran and young Adair had between them won a considerable amount of money. Now, Moran undoubtedly played foul—of that I have long been aware. I believe that on the day of the murder Adair had discovered that Moran was cheating. Very likely he had spoken to him privately, and had threatened to expose him unless he voluntarily resigned his membership of the club and promised not to play cards again. It is unlikely that a youngster like Adair would at once make a hideous scandal by exposing a well-known man so much older than himself. Probably he acted as I suggest. The exclusion from his clubs would mean ruin to Moran, who lived by his ill-gotten card gains. He therefore murdered Adair, who at the time was endeavouring to work out how much money he should himself return, since he could not profit by his partner's foul play. He locked the door lest the ladies should surprise him and insist upon knowing what he was doing with these names and coins. Will it pass?"

"I have no doubt that you have hit upon the truth."

"It will be verified or disproved at the trial. Meanwhile, come what may, Colonel Moran will trouble us no more, the famous air-gun of Von Herder will embellish the Scotland Yard Museum, and once again Mr. Sherlock Holmes is free to devote his life to examining those interesting little problems which the complex life of London so plentifully presents."



THE DOOR WAS FLUNG OPEN AND HE RUSHED IN WITH BRISTLING BEARD AND TWISTED FEATURES, AS TERRIBLE AN OLD MAN AS EVER I HAVE SEEN.

(See page 431.)

THE ADVENTURE OF THE BLANCHED SOLDIER

A NEW SHERLOCK HOLMES STORY

BY

A. Conan Doyle

Illustrated by
HOWARD K. ELCOCK

THE ideas of my friend Watson, though limited, are exceedingly pertinacious. For a long time he has worried me to write an experience of my own. Perhaps I have rather invited this persecution, since I have often had occasion to point out to him how superficial are his own accounts and to accuse him of pandering to popular taste instead of confining himself rigidly to facts and figures. "Try it yourself, Holmes!" he has retorted, and I am compelled to admit that, having taken my pen in my hand, I do begin to realize that the matter must be presented in such a way as may interest the reader. The following case can hardly fail to do so, as it is among the strangest happenings in my collection, though it chanced that Watson had no note of it in his collection. Speaking of my old friend and biographer, I would take this opportunity to remark that if I burden myself with a companion in my various little inquiries it is not done out of sentiment or caprice, but it is that Watson has some remarkable characteristics of his own, to which in his modesty he has given

small attention amid his exaggerated estimates of my own performances. A confederate who foresees your conclusions and course of action is always dangerous, but one to whom each development comes as a perpetual surprise, and to whom the future is always a closed book, is, indeed, an ideal helpmate.

I find from my notebook that it was in January, 1903, just after the conclusion of the Boer War, that I had my visit from Mr. James M. Dodd, a big, fresh, sun-burned, upstanding Briton. The good Watson had at that time deserted me for a wife, the only selfish action which I can recall in our association. I was alone.

It is my habit to sit with my back to the window and to place my visitors in the opposite chair, where the light falls full upon them. Mr. James M. Dodd seemed somewhat at a loss how to begin the interview. I did not attempt to help him, for his silence gave me more time for observation. I have found it wise to impress clients with a sense of power, and so I gave him some of my conclusions.

"From South Africa, sir, I perceive."

*This is the
first Adventure
ever related by
Sherlock Holmes
himself.*

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The Adventure of the Blanched Soldier

"Yes, sir," he answered, with some surprise.

"Imperial Yeomanry, I fancy."

"Exactly."

"Middlesex Corps, no doubt."

"That is so. Mr. Holmes, you are a wizard."

I smiled at his bewildered expression.

"When a gentleman of virile appearance enters my room with such tan upon his face as an English sun could never give, and with his handkerchief in his sleeve instead of in his pocket, it is not difficult to place him. You wear a short beard, which shows that you were not a regular. You have the cut of a riding-man. As to Middlesex, your card has already shown me that you are a stock-broker from Throgmorton Street. What other regiment would you join?"

"You see everything."

"I see no more than you, but I have trained myself to notice what I see. However, Mr. Dodd, it was not to discuss the science of observation that you called upon me this morning. What has been happening at Tuxbury Old Park?"

"Mr. Holmes—!"

"My dear sir, there is no mystery. Your letter came with that heading, and as you fixed this appointment in very pressing terms, it was clear that something sudden and important had occurred."

"Yes, indeed. But the letter was written in the afternoon, and a good deal has happened since then. If Colonel Emsworth had not kicked me out—"

"Kicked you out!"

"Well, that was what it amounted to. He is a hard nail, is Colonel Emsworth. The greatest martinet in the Army in his day, and it was a day of rough language, too. I couldn't have stuck the Colonel if it had not been for Godfrey's sake."

I lit my pipe and leaned back in my chair.

"Perhaps you will explain what you are talking about."

My client grinned mischievously.

"I had got into the way of supposing that you knew everything without being told," said he. "But I will give you the facts, and I hope to God that you will be able to tell me what they mean. I've been awake all night puzzling my brain, and the more I think the more incredible does it become."

"When I joined up in January, 1901, —just two years ago—young Godfrey Emsworth had joined the same squadron. He was Colonel Emsworth's only son—Emsworth, the Crimean V.C.—and he had the fighting blood in him, so it is no wonder he volunteered. There was not a finer lad in the regiment. We formed a friendship—the sort of friendship which can only be made when one lives the same life and shares the

same joys and sorrows. He was my mate—and that means a good deal in the Army. We took the rough and the smooth together for a year of hard fighting. Then he was hit with a bullet from an elephant gun in the action near Diamond Hill outside Pretoria. I got one letter from the hospital at Cape Town and one from Southampton. Since then not a word—not one word, Mr. Holmes, for six months and more, and he my closest pal.

"Well, when the war was over, and we all got back, I wrote to his father and asked where Godfrey was. No answer. I waited a bit and then I wrote again. This time I had a reply, short and gruff. Godfrey had gone on a voyage round the world, and it was not likely that he would be back for a year. That was all.

"I wasn't satisfied, Mr. Holmes. The whole thing seemed to me so damned unnatural. He was a good lad and he would not drop a pal like that. It was not like him. Then, again, I happened to know that he was heir to a lot of money, and also that his father and he did not always hit it off too well. The old man was sometimes a bully, and young Godfrey had too much spirit to stand it. No, I wasn't satisfied, and I determined that I would get to the root of the matter. It happened, however, that my own affairs needed a lot of straightening out, after two years' absence, and so it is only this week that I have been able to take up Godfrey's case again. But since I have taken it up I mean to drop everything in order to see it through."

MR. JAMES M. DODD appeared to be the sort of person whom it would be better to have as a friend than as an enemy. His blue eyes were stern and his square jaw had set hard as he spoke.

"Well, what have you done?" I asked.

"My first move was to get down to his home, Tuxbury Old Park, near Bedford, and to see for myself how the ground lay. I wrote to the mother, therefore—I had had quite enough of the curmudgeon of a father—and I made a clean frontal attack: Godfrey was my chum. I had a great deal of interest which I might tell her of our common experiences, I should be in the neighbourhood, would there be any objection, etcetera? In reply I had quite an amiable answer from her and an offer to put me up for the night. That was what took me down on Monday."

"Tuxbury Old Hall is inaccessible—five miles from anywhere. There was no trap at the station, so I had to walk, carrying my suit-case, and it was nearly dark before I arrived. It is a great wandering house, standing in a considerable park. I should

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judge it was of all sorts of ages and styles, starting on a half-timbered Elizabethan foundation and ending in a Victorian portico. Inside it was all panelling and tapestry and half-effaced old pictures, a house of shadows and mystery. There was a butler, old Ralph, who seemed about

"I answered that I had explained them in my letter to his wife."

"Yes, yes; you said that you had known Godfrey in Africa. We have, of course, only your word for that."

"I have his letters to me in my pocket."

"Kindly let me see them."

"He glanced at the two which I handed him, and then he tossed them back."



I lit my pipe and leaned back in my chair. "Perhaps you will explain what you are talking about."

the same age as the house, and there was his wife, who might have been older. She had been Godfrey's nurse, and I had heard him speak of her as second only to his mother in his affections, so I was drawn to her in spite of her queer appearance. The mother I liked also—a gentle little white mouse of a woman. It was only the Colonel himself whom I barred.

"We had a bit of a barney right away, and I should have walked back to the station if I had not felt that it might be playing his game for me to do so. I was shown straight into his study, and there I found him, a huge, bow-backed man with a smoky skin and a straggling grey beard, seated behind his littered desk. A red-veined nose jutted out like a vulture's beak, and two fierce grey eyes glared at me from under tufted brows. I could understand now why Godfrey seldom spoke of his father."

"Well, sir," said he in a rasping voice. "I should be interested to know the real reasons for this visit."

"Well, what then?" he asked.

"I was fond of your son Godfrey, sir. Many ties and memories united us. Is it not natural that I should wonder at his sudden silence and should wish to know what has become of him?"

"I have some recollection, sir, that I had already corresponded with you and had told you what had become of him. He has gone upon a voyage round the world. His health was in a poor way after his African experiences, and both his mother and I were of opinion that complete rest and change were needed. Kindly pass that explanation on to any other friends who may be interested in the matter."

"Certainly," I answered. "But perhaps you would have the goodness to let me have the name of the steamer and of the line by which he sailed, together with the date. I have no doubt that I should be able to get a letter through to him."

"My request seemed both to puzzle and to irritate my host. His great eyebrows

The Adventure of the Blanched Soldier

came down over his eyes and he tapped his fingers impatiently on the table. He looked up at last with the expression of one who has seen his adversary make a dangerous move at chess, and has decided how to meet it.

"Many people, Mr. Dodd," said he, "would take offence at your infernal pertinacity and would think that this insistence had reached the point of damned impertinence."

"You must put it down, sir, to my real love for your son."

"Exactly. I have already made every allowance upon that score. I must ask you, however, to drop these inquiries. Every family has its own inner knowledge and its own motives, which cannot always be made clear to outsiders, however well-intentioned. My wife is anxious to hear something of Godfrey's past which you are in a position to tell her, but I would ask you to let the present and the future alone. Such inquiries serve no useful purpose, sir, and place us in a delicate and difficult position."

SO I came to a dead end, Mr. Holmes. There was no getting past it. I could only pretend to accept the situation and register a vow inwardly that I would never rest until my friend's fate had been cleared up. It was a dull evening. We dined quietly, the three of us, in a gloomy, faded old room. The lady questioned me eagerly about her son, but the old man seemed morose and depressed. I was so bored by the whole proceeding that I made an excuse as soon as I decently could and retired to my bedroom. It was a large, bare room on the ground floor, as gloomy as the rest of the house, but after a year of sleeping upon the velvet, Mr. Holmes, one is not too particular about one's quarters. I opened the curtains and looked out into the garden, remarking that it was a fine night with a bright half-moon. Then I sat down by the roaring fire with the lamp on a table beside me, and endeavoured to distract my mind with a novel. I was interrupted, however, by Ralph, the old butler, who came in with a fresh supply of coals.

"I thought you might run short in the night-time, sir. It is bitter weather and these rooms are cold."

"He hesitated before leaving the room, and when I looked round he was standing facing me with a wistful look upon his wrinkled face."

"Beg your pardon, sir, but I could not help hearing what you said of young Master Godfrey at dinner. You know, sir, that my wife nursed him, and so I may say I am his foster-father. It's natural we should take an interest. And you say he carried himself well, sir?"

"There was no braver man in the regiment. He pulled me out once from under the rifles of the Boers, or maybe I should not be here."

"The old butler rubbed his skinny hands. 'Yes, sir, yes, that is Master Godfrey all over. He was always courageous. There's not a tree in the park, sir, that he has not climbed. Nothing would stop him. He was a fine boy—and oh, sir, he was a fine man.'

"I sprang to my feet."

"Look here!" I cried. "You say he was. You speak as if he were dead. What is all this mystery? What has become of Godfrey Emsworth?"

"I gripped the old man by the shoulder, but he shrank away."

"I don't know what you mean, sir. Ask the master about Master Godfrey. He knows. It is not for me to interfere."

"He was leaving the room, but I held his arm."

"Listen," I said. "You are going to answer one question before you leave if I have to hold you all night. Is Godfrey dead?"

"He could not face my eyes. He was like a man hypnotized. The answer was dragged from his lips. It was a terrible and unexpected one."

"I wish to God he was!" he cried, and, tearing himself free, he dashed from the room."

"You will think, Mr. Holmes, that I returned to my chair in no very happy state of mind. The old man's words seemed to me to bear only one interpretation. Clearly my poor friend had become involved in some criminal, or, at the least, disreputable, transaction which touched the family honour. That stern old man had sent his son away and hidden him from the world lest some scandal should come to light. Godfrey was a reckless fellow. He was easily influenced by those around him. No doubt he had fallen into bad hands and been misled to his ruin. It was a piteous business, if it was indeed so, but even now it was my duty to hunt him out and see if I could aid him. I was anxiously pondering the matter when I looked up, and there was Godfrey Emsworth standing before me."

MY client had paused as one in deep emotion.

"Pray continue," I said. "Your problem presents some very unusual features."

"He was outside the window, Mr. Holmes, with his face pressed against the glass. I have told you that I looked out at the night. When I did so, I left the curtains partly open. His figure was framed in this gap. The window came down to the ground

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and I could see the whole length of it, but it was his face which held my gaze. He was deadly pale—never have I seen a man so white. I reckon ghosts may look like that; but his eyes met mine, and they were the eyes of a living man. He sprang back when he saw that I was looking at him, and he vanished into the darkness."

"There was something shocking about the man, Mr. Holmes. It wasn't merely that ghastly face glimmering as white as cheese in the darkness. It was more subtle than that—something slinking, something furtive, something guilty—something very unlike the frank, manly lad that I had known. It left a feeling of horror in my mind."

"But when a man has been soldiering for a

year or two with brother Boer as a playmate, he keeps his nerve and acts quickly. Godfrey had hardly vanished before I was at the window. There was an awkward catch, and it was some little time before I could open it. Then I nipped through and ran down the garden path in the direction that I thought he might have taken."

"It was a long path and the light was not very good, but it seemed to me something was moving ahead of me. I ran on and called his name, but it was no use. When I got to the end of the path, there were several others branching in different directions to various outhouses. I stood



"I gripped the old man by the shoulder, but he shrank away."

hesitating, and as I did so I heard distinctly the sound of a closing door. It was not behind me in the house, but ahead of me, somewhere in the darkness. That was enough, Mr. Holmes, to assure me that what I had seen was not a vision. Godfrey had run away from me and he had shut a door behind him. Of that I was certain."

"There was nothing more I could do, and I spent an uneasy night turning the matter over in my mind and trying to find some theory which would cover the facts. Next day I found the Colonel rather more conciliatory, and as his wife remarked that there were some places of interest in the

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neighbourhood, it gave me an opening to ask whether my presence for one more night would incommode them. A somewhat grudging acquiescence from the old man gave me a clear day in which to make my observations. I was already perfectly convinced that Godfrey was in hiding somewhere near, but where and why remained to be solved.

"The house was so large and so rambling that a regiment might be hid away in it and no one the wiser. If the secret lay there, it was difficult for me to penetrate it. But the door which I had heard close was certainly not in the house. I must explore the garden and see what I could find. There was no difficulty in the way, for the old people were busy in their own fashion and left me to my own devices.

"There were several small outhouses, but at the end of the garden there was a detached building of some size—large enough for a gardener's or a gamekeeper's residence. Could this be the place whence the sound of that shutting door had come? I approached it in a careless fashion, as though I were strolling aimlessly round the grounds. As I did so, a small, brisk, bearded man in a black coat and bowler hat—not at all the gardener type—came out of the door. To my surprise, he locked it after him and put the key in his pocket. Then he looked at me with some surprise on his face.

"Are you a visitor here?" he asked.

"I explained that I was and that I was a friend of Godfrey's.

"What a pity that he should be away on his travels, for he would have so liked to see me," I continued.

"Quite so. Exactly," said he, with a rather guilty air. "No doubt you will renew your visit at some more propitious time." He passed on, but when I turned I observed that he was standing watching me, half-concealed by the laurels at the far end of the garden.

"I HAD a good look at the little house as I passed it, but the windows were heavily curtained, and, so far as one could see, it was empty. I might spoil my own game, and even be ordered off the premises, if I were too audacious, for I was still conscious that I was being watched. Therefore, I strolled back to the house and waited for night before I went on with my inquiry. When all was dark and quiet, I slipped out of my window and made my way as silently as possible to the mysterious lodge.

"I have said that it was heavily curtained, but now I found that the windows were shuttered as well. Some light, however, was breaking through one of them, so I concentrated my attention upon this. I was in

luck, for the curtain had not been quite closed, and there was a crack in the shutter so that I could see the inside of the room. It was a cheery place enough, a bright lamp and a blazing fire. Opposite to me was seated the little man whom I had seen in the morning. He was smoking a pipe and reading a paper."

"What paper?" I asked.

My client seemed annoyed at the interruption of his narrative.

"Can it matter?" he asked.

"It is most essential."

"I really took no notice."

"Possibly you observed whether it was a broad-leaved paper or of that smaller type which one associates with weeklies."

"Now that you mention it, it was not large.

It might have been *The Spectator*. However, I had little thought to spare upon such details, for a second man was seated with his back to the window, and I could swear that this second man was Godfrey. I could not see his face, but I knew the familiar slope of his shoulders. He was leaning upon his elbow in an attitude of great melancholy, his body turned towards the fire. I was hesitating as to what I should do when there was a sharp tap on my shoulder, and there was Colonel Emsworth beside me.

"This way, sir!" said he in a low voice. He walked in silence to the house and I followed him into my own bedroom. He had picked up a time-table in the hall.

"There is a train to London at eight-thirty," said he. "The trap will be at the door at eight."

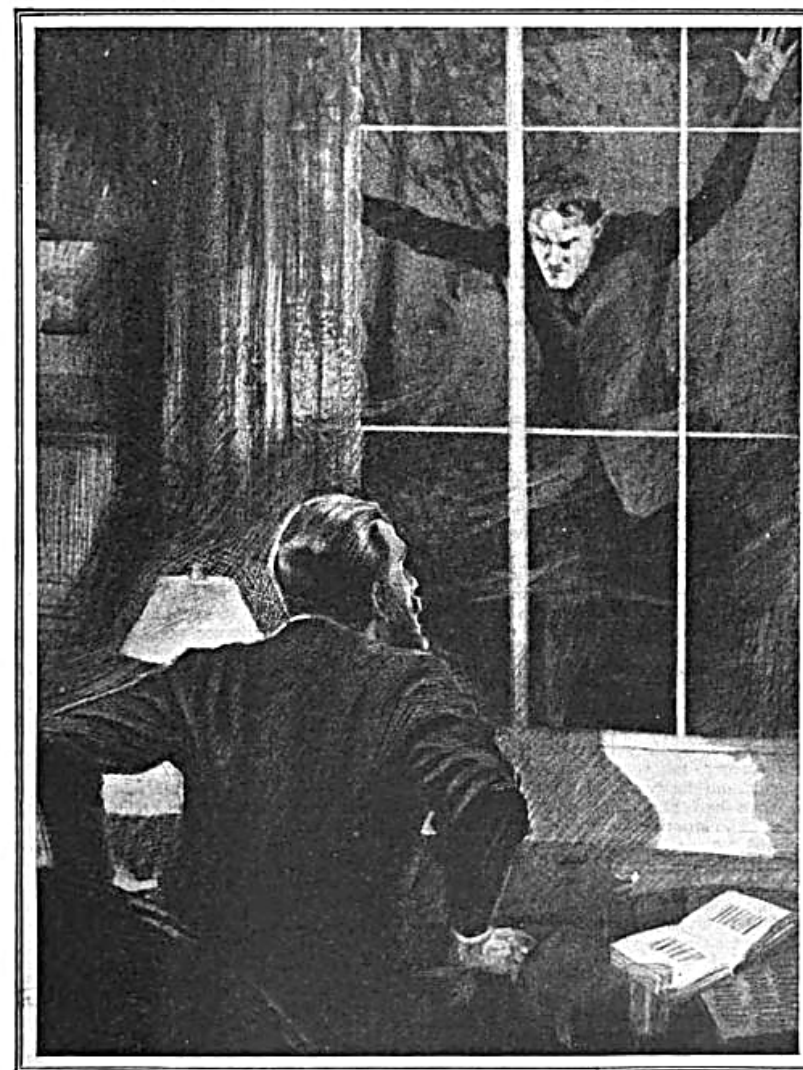
"He was white with rage, and, indeed, I felt myself in so difficult a position that I could only stammer out a few incoherent apologies, in which I tried to excuse myself by urging my anxiety for my friend.

"The matter will not bear discussion," said he, abruptly. "You have made a most damnable intrusion into the privacy of our family. You were here as a guest and you have become a spy. I have nothing more to say, sir, save that I have no wish ever to see you again."

"At this I lost my temper, Mr. Holmes, and I spoke with some warmth.

"I have seen your son, and I am convinced that for some reason of your own you are concealing him from the world. I have no idea what your motives are in cutting him off in this fashion, but I am sure that he is no longer a free agent. I warn you, Colonel Emsworth, that until I am assured as to the safety and well-being of my friend I shall never desist in my efforts to get to the bottom of the mystery, and I shall certainly not allow myself to be intimidated by anything which you may say or do."

"The old fellow looked diabolical, and I really thought he was about to attack me,



"He sprang back when he saw that I was looking at him and vanished into the darkness."

I have said that he was a gaunt, fierce old giant, and though I am no weakling I might have been hard put to it to hold my own against him. However, after a long glare of

rage he turned upon his heel and walked out of the room. For my part, I took the appointed train in the morning, with the full intention of coming straight to you and

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asking for your advice and assistance at the appointment for which I had already written."

SUCH was the problem which my visitor laid before me. It presented, as the astute reader will have already perceived, few difficulties in its solution, for a very limited choice of alternatives must get to the root of the matter. Still, elementary as it was, there were points of interest and novelty about it which may excuse my placing it upon record. I now proceeded, using my familiar method of logical analysis, to narrow down the possible solutions.

"The servants," I asked; "how many were in the house?"

"To the best of my belief there were only the old butler and his wife. They seemed to live in the simplest fashion."

"There was no servant, then, in the detached house?"

"None, unless the little man with the beard acted as such. He seemed, however, to be quite a superior person."

"That seems very suggestive. Had you any indication that food was conveyed from the one house to the other?"

"Now that you mention it, I did see old Ralph carrying a basket down the garden walk and going in the direction of this house. The idea of food did not occur to me at the moment."

"Did you make any local inquiries?"

"Yes, I did. I spoke to the station-master and also to the innkeeper in the village. I simply asked if they knew anything of my old comrade, Godfrey Emsworth. Both of them assured me that he had gone for a voyage round the world. He had come home and then had almost at once started off again. The story was evidently universally accepted."

"You said nothing of your suspicions?"

"Nothing."

"That was very wise. The matter should certainly be inquired into. I will go back with you to Tuxbury Old Park."

"To-day?"

It happened that at the moment I was clearing up the case which my friend Watson has described as that of the Abbey School, in which the Duke of Greyminster was so deeply involved. I had also a commission from the Sultan of Turkey which called for immediate action, as political consequences of the gravest kind might arise from its neglect. Therefore it was not until the beginning of the next week, as my diary records, that I was able to start forth on my mission to Bedfordshire in company with Mr. James M. Dodd. As we drove to Euston we picked up a grave and taciturn gentleman

of iron-grey aspect, with whom I had made the necessary arrangements.

"This is an old friend," said I to Dodd.

"It is possible that his presence may be entirely unnecessary, and, on the other hand, it may be essential. It is not necessary at the present stage to go further into the matter."

The narratives of Watson have accustomed the reader, no doubt, to the fact that I do not waste words or disclose my thoughts while a case is actually under consideration. Dodd seemed surprised, but nothing more was said and the three of us continued our journey together. In the train I asked Dodd one more question which I wished our companion to hear.

"You say that you saw your friend's face quite clearly at the window, so clearly that you are sure of his identity?"

"I have no doubt about it whatever. His nose was pressed against the glass. The lamplight shone full upon him."

"It could not have been someone resembling him?"

"No, no; it was he."

"But you say he was changed?"

"Only in colour. His face was—how shall I describe it?—it was of a fish-belly whiteness. It was bleached."

"Was it equally pale all over?"

"I think not. It was his brow which I saw so clearly as it was pressed against the window."

"Did you call to him?"

"I was too startled and horrified for the moment. Then I pursued him, as I have told you, but without result."

My case was practically complete, and there was only one small incident needed to round it off. When, after a considerable drive, we arrived at the strange old rambling house which my client had described, it was Ralph, the elderly butler, who opened the door. I had requisitioned the carriage for the day and had asked my elderly friend to remain within it unless we should summon him. Ralph, a little, wrinkled old fellow, was in the conventional costume of black coat and pepper-and-salt trousers, with only one curious variant. He wore brown leather gloves, which at sight of us he instantly shuffled off, laying them down on the hall-table as we passed in. I have, as my friend Watson may have remarked, an abnormally acute set of senses, and a faint but incisive scent was apparent. It seemed to centre on the hall-table. I turned, placed my hat there, knocked it off, stooped to pick it up, and contrived to bring my nose within a foot of the gloves. Yes, it was undoubtedly from them that the curious tarry odour was oozing. I passed on into the study with my case complete. Alas, that I should have

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to show my hand so when I tell my own story! It was by concealing such links in the chain that Watson was enabled to produce his meretricious finales.

Colonel Emsworth was not in his room, but he came quickly enough on receipt of Ralph's message. We heard his quick, heavy step in the passage. The door was flung open and he rushed in with bristling beard and twisted features, as terrible an old man as ever I have seen. He held our cards in his hand, and he tore them up and stamped on the fragments.

"Have I not told you, you infernal busy-body, that you are warned off the premises? Never dare to show your damned face here again. If you enter again without my leave I shall be within my rights if I use violence. I'll shoot you, sir! By God, I will! As to you, sir," turning upon me, "I extend the same warning to you. I am familiar with your ignoble profession, but you must take your reputed talents to some other field. There is no opening for them here."

"I cannot leave here," said my client, firmly, "until I hear from Godfrey's own lips that he is under no restraint."

Our involuntary host rang the bell.

"Ralph," he said, "telephone down to the county police and ask the inspector to send up two constables. Tell him there are burglars in the house."

"One moment," said I. "You must be aware, Mr. Dodd, that Colonel Emsworth is within his rights and that we have no legal status within his house. On the other hand, he should recognize that your action is prompted entirely by solicitude for his son. I venture to hope that, if I were allowed to have five minutes' conversation with Colonel Emsworth, I could certainly alter his view of the matter."

"I am not so easily altered," said the old soldier. "Ralph, do what I have told you. What the devil are you waiting for? Ring up the police!"

"Nothing of the sort," I said, putting my back to the door. "Any police interference would bring about the very catastrophe which you dread." I took out my notebook and scribbled one word upon a loose sheet. "That," said I, as I handed it to Colonel Emsworth, "is what has brought us here."

He stared at the writing with a face from which every expression save amazement had vanished.

"How do you know?" he gasped, sitting down heavily in his chair.

"It is my business to know things. That is my trade."

He sat in deep thought, his gaunt hand tugging at his straggling beard. Then he made a gesture of resignation.

"Well, if you wish to see Godfrey, you shall. It is no doing of mine, but you have forced my hand. Ralph, tell Mr. Godfrey and Mr. Kent that in five minutes we shall be with them."

AT the end of that time we passed down the garden path and found ourselves in front of the mystery house at the end. A small bearded man stood at the door with a look of considerable astonishment upon his face.

"This is very sudden, Colonel Emsworth," said he. "This will disarrange all our plans."

"I can't help it, Mr. Kent. Our hands have been forced. Can Mr. Godfrey see us?"

"Yes; he is waiting inside." He turned and led us into a large, plainly-furnished front room. A man was standing with his back to the fire, and at the sight of him my client sprang forward with outstretched hand.

"Why, Godfrey, old man, this is fine!" But the other waved him back.

"Don't touch me, Jimmie. Keep your distance. Yes, you may well stare! I don't quite look the smart Lance-Corporal Emsworth, do I?"

His appearance was certainly extraordinary. One could see that he had indeed been a handsome man with clear-cut features sunburned by an African sun, but mottled in patches over this darker surface were curious whitish patches which had bleached his skin.

"That's why I don't court visitors," said he. "I don't mind you, Jimmie, but I could have done without your friend. I suppose there is some good reason for it, but you have me at a disadvantage."

"I wanted to be sure that all was well with you, Godfrey. I saw you that night when you looked into my window, and I could not let the matter rest till I had cleared things up."

"Old Ralph told me you were there, and I couldn't help taking a peep at you. I hoped you would not have seen me, and I had to run to my burrow when I heard the window go up."

"But what in Heaven's name is the matter?"

"Well, it's not a long story to tell," said he, lighting a cigarette. "You remember that morning fight at Buffelspruit, outside Pretoria, on the Eastern railway line? You heard I was hit?"

"Yes, I heard that, but I never got particulars."

"Three of us got separated from the others. It was very broken country, you may remember. There was Simpson—the

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fellow we called Baldy Simpson—and Anderson, and I. We were clearing brother Boer, but he lay low and got the three of us. The other two were killed. I got an elephant bullet through my shoulder. I stuck on to my horse, however, and he galloped several miles before I fainted and rolled off the saddle.

"When I came to myself it was nightfall, and I raised myself up, feeling very weak and ill. To my surprise there was a house close beside me, a fairly large house with a broad stoep and many windows. It was deadly cold. You remember the kind of numb cold which used to come at evening, a deadly, sickening sort of cold, very different from a crisp, healthy frost. Well, I was chilled to the bone, and my only hope seemed to lie in reaching that house. I staggered to my feet and dragged myself along, hardly conscious of what I did. I have a dim memory of slowly ascending the steps, entering a wide-opened door, passing into a large room which contained several beds, and throwing myself down with a gasp of satisfaction upon one of them. It was unmade, but that troubled me not at all. I drew the clothes over my shivering body and in a moment I was in a deep sleep.

"It was morning when I awakened, and it seemed to me that instead of coming out into a world of sanity I had emerged into some extraordinary nightmare. The African sun flooded through the big, curtainless windows, and every detail of the great, bare, whitewashed dormitory stood out hard and clear. In front of me was standing a small, dwarf-like man with a huge, bulbous head, who was jabbering excitedly in Dutch, waving two horrible hands which looked to me like brown sponges. Behind him stood a group of people who seemed to be intensely amused by the situation, but a chill came over me as I looked at them. Not one of them was a normal human being. Every one was twisted or swollen or disfigured in some strange way. The laughter of these strange monstrosities was a dreadful thing to hear.

"It seemed that none of them could speak English, but the situation wanted clearing up, for the creature with the big head was growing furiously angry and, uttering wild beast cries, he had laid his

deformed hands upon me and was dragging me out of bed, regardless of the fresh flow of blood from my wound. The little monster was as strong as a bull, and I don't know what he might have done to me had not an elderly man who was clearly in authority been attracted to the room by the hubbub. He



Colonel Emsworth pointed to Sherlock Holmes.

said a few stern words in Dutch and my persecutor shrank away. Then he turned upon me, gazing at me in the utmost amazement.

"How in the world did you come here?" he asked, in amazement. "Wait a bit! I see that you are tired out and that wounded shoulder of yours wants looking after. I am a doctor, and I'll soon have you tied up. But, man alive! you are in far greater danger here than ever you were on the battlefield. You are in the Leper Hospital, and you have slept in a leper's bed."

"Need I tell you more, Jimmie? It seems

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that in view of the approaching battle all these poor creatures had been evacuated the day before. Then, as the British advanced, they had been brought back by this, their medical superintendent, who assured me that, though he believed he was immune to the disease, he would none the less never have dared

on those lines. The alternative was a dreadful one—segregation for life among strangers with never a hope of release. But absolute secrecy was necessary, or even in this quiet countryside there would have been an outcry, and I should have been dragged to my horrible doom. Even you, Jimmie—even you

had to be kept in the dark. Why my father has relented I cannot imagine." Colonel Emsworth pointed to me.

"This is the gentleman who forced my hand," He unfolded the scrap of paper on which I had written the word "Leprosy." "It seemed to me that if he knew so much as that it was safer that he should know all."

"And so it was," said I. "Who knows but good may come of it? I understand that only Mr. Kent has seen the patient. May I ask, sir, if you are an authority on such complaints, which are, I understand, tropical or semi-tropical in their nature?"

"I have the ordinary knowledge of the educated medical man," he observed, with some stiffness.

"I have no doubt, sir, that you are fully competent, but I am sure that you will agree that in such a case a second opinion is valuable. You have avoided this, I understand, for fear that pressure should be put upon you to segregate the patient."

"That is so," said Colonel Emsworth.

"I foresaw this situation," I explained, "and I have brought with me a friend whose discretion may absolutely be trusted. I was able once to do him a professional service, and he is ready to advise as a friend rather than as a specialist. His name is Sir James Saunders."

The prospect of an interview with Lord



"This is the gentleman who forced my hand," he said.

to do what I had done. He put me in a private room, treated me kindly, and within a week or so I was removed to the general hospital at Pretoria.

"So there you have my tragedy. I hoped against hope, but it was not until I had reached home that the terrible signs which you see upon my face told me that I had not escaped. What was I to do? I was in this lonely house. We had two servants whom we could utterly trust. There was a house where I could live. Under pledge of secrecy, Mr. Kent, who is a surgeon, was prepared to stay with me. It seemed simple enough

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Roberts would not have excited greater wonder and pleasure in a raw subaltern than was now reflected upon the face of Mr. Kent.

"I shall indeed be proud," he murmured.

"Then I will ask Sir James to step this way. He is at present in the carriage outside the door. Meanwhile, Colonel Emsworth, we may perhaps assemble in your study, where I could give the necessary explanations."

AND here it is that I miss my Watson. By cunning questions and ejaculations of wonder he could elevate my simple art, which is but systematized common sense, into a prodigy. When I tell my own story I have no such aid. And yet I will give my process of thought even as I gave it to my small audience, which included Godfrey's mother, in the study of Colonel Emsworth.

"That process," said I, "starts upon the supposition that when you have eliminated all which is impossible, then whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth. It may well be that several explanations remain, in which case one tries test after test until one or other of them has a convincing amount of support. We will now apply this principle to the case in point. As it was first presented to me, there were three possible explanations of the seclusion or incarceration of this gentleman in an outhouse of his father's mansion. There was the explanation that he was in hiding for a crime, or that he was mad and that they wished to avoid an asylum, or that he had some disease which caused his segregation. I could think of no other adequate solutions. These, then, had to be sifted and balanced against each other.

"The criminal solution would not bear inspection. No undiscovered crime had been reported from that district. I was sure of that. If it were some crime not yet discovered, then clearly it would be to the interest of the family to get rid of the delinquent and send him abroad rather than keep him concealed at home. I could see no explanation for such a line of conduct.

"Insanity was more plausible. The presence of the second person in the outhouse suggested a keeper. The fact that he locked the door when he came out strengthened the supposition and gave the idea of constraint. On the other hand, this constraint could not be severe or the young man could not have got loose and come down to have a look at his friend. You will remember, Mr. Dodd, that I felt round for points, asking you, for example, about the paper which Mr. Kent was reading. Had it been *The Lancet* or *The British Medical Journal* it would

have helped me. It is not illegal, however, to keep a lunatic upon private premises so long as there is a qualified person in attendance and that the authorities have been duly notified. Why, then, all this desperate desire for secrecy? Once again I could not get the theory to fit the facts.

"There remained the third possibility, into which, rare and unlikely as it was, everything seemed to fit. Leprosy is not uncommon in South Africa. By some extraordinary chance this youth might have contracted it. His people would be placed in a very dreadful position, since they would desire to save him from segregation. Great secrecy would be needed to prevent rumours from getting about and subsequent interference by the authorities. A devoted medical man, if sufficiently paid, would easily be found to take charge of the sufferer. There would be no reason why the latter should not be allowed freedom after dark. Bleaching of the skin is a common result of the disease. The case was a strong one—so strong that I determined to act as if it were actually proved. When on arriving here I noticed that Ralph, who carries out the meals, had gloves which are impregnated with disinfectants, my last doubts were removed. A single word showed you, sir, that your secret was discovered, and if I wrote rather than said it, it was to prove to you that my discretion was to be trusted."

I WAS finishing this little analysis of the case when the door was opened and the austere figure of the great dermatologist was ushered in. But for once his sphinx-like features had relaxed and there was a warm humanity in his eyes. He strode up to Colonel Emsworth and shook him by the hand.

"It is often my lot to bring ill-tidings, and seldom good," said he. "This occasion is the more welcome. It is not leprosy."

"What?"

"A well-marked case of pseudo-leprosy or ichthyosis, a scale-like affection of the skin, unsightly, obstinate, but possibly curable, and certainly non-infective. Yes, Mr. Holmes, the coincidence is a remarkable one. But is it coincidence? Are there not subtle forces at work of which we know little? Are we assured that the apprehension, from which this young man has no doubt suffered terribly since his exposure to its contagion, may not produce a physical effect which simulates that which it fears? At any rate, I pledge my professional reputation— But the lady has fainted! I think that Mr. Kent had better be with her until she recovers from this joyous shock."

(Next month: "The Adventure of the Lion's Mane.")

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The Adventures of a Man of Science.

BY L. T. MEADE AND CLIFFORD HALIFAX, M.D.

We have taken down these stories from time to time as our friend, Paul Gilchrist, has related them to us. He is a man whose life study has been science in its most interesting forms—he is also a keen observer of human nature and a noted traveller. He has an unbounded sympathy for his kind, and it has been his lot to be consulted on many occasions by all sorts and conditions of men.

IV.—THE SLEEPING SICKNESS.

LI was in the summer of 1894 that the following strange events occurred.

"Harry Lidderdale has unexpectedly returned to England and will, I hope, dine with us to-night," wrote my friend, Charles Holdsworth. "Do not fail to be present if you can possibly manage it."

I crumpled up the brief note of invitation and rose to my feet.

"So Lidderdale has come back," I said, speaking aloud in my astonishment. I had good reason for my wonder. Harry was an old friend of mine. All during our early years we had been chums; then suddenly and mysteriously he had disappeared from the country. From the date of his departure he had not written a line to any of his old friends; not a soul who knew him in England could even guess at his whereabouts—to all intents and purposes the man was dead. There was a story which in a measure accounted for this.

Lidderdale in the days of his early manhood had fallen desperately in love with a girl of the name of Alma Ramsay. She was a beautiful girl, and report whispered that she loved him in return; there were no tidings, however, of an absolute engagement, and suddenly the news reached me that Alma was about to marry a certain General Colthurst, and that Lidderdale had left the country. Colthurst turned out a cruel husband—untender, suspicious, jealous. Fortunately for his young wife, he did not survive the union more than a few years. Now he was dead; Mrs. Colthurst was a widow and well off, and Lidderdale had come home.

Charles Holdsworth was a member of Parliament; a quiet, sober, middle-aged gentleman. I often

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dined at his house, and we had often discussed Lidderdale's mysterious disappearance. I hastily replied to his note, saying that I should certainly dine with him that evening, and when the hour arrived put in an appearance in Curzon Street in good time. Several guests were present, but I looked round in vain for my friend. Holdsworth came to my side.

"You will be disappointed," he said; "but I have no time at present to explain matters. Lidderdale will not dine with us. Ask me more after dinner—and now you will like to see Mrs. Colthurst—she is present."

"Does she also know of his return?" I asked, in a low voice.

"I have not told her, but there is no reason why you should not mention it. I have arranged that you are to take her down to dinner."

A few moments later I found myself seated at table beside Mrs. Colthurst, whom I had not met since her widowhood. I noticed as I glanced at her that her beautiful face was thin to emaciation. I was just turning to say something about Lidderdale, when she uttered a little cry of distress.

"Mr. Gilchrist," she said, "we are thirteen at table—you know of old how horribly



"MR. GILCHRIST," SHE SAID, "WE ARE THIRTEEN AT TABLE."

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superstitious I am. I wish I had not come to dinner."

I soothed her, and even laughed a little at her fears.

"The age of superstition is quite over," I said; "you ought not to think of such mediæval follies. Besides, I have something to tell you which will quite turn your attention—our sitting down thirteen to dinner is a mere accident; it is caused by the non-arrival of one of the principal guests."

"And who may that be?" she asked, turning and looking at me.

"No less a person than your old friend and mine, Harry Lidderdale."

Her dark brows were contracted with pain and astonishment.

"Harry Lidderdale? Has he returned to England?" she asked, in an awe-struck voice.

"I believe so—I have not heard many particulars as yet. Holdsworth asked me to meet him here this evening. I am as much astonished as you are," I continued.

I noticed that she played with her food. Suddenly, as if unable to hold them any longer, she put down her knife and fork.

"It is long since I have met or heard from Mr. Lidderdale," she said. "It stirs my heart to hear his name mentioned; sometimes I have feared, that he was dead. Will you try to find out from Mr. Holdsworth all you can about his return, and why he is not dining with us?"

"I will do so," I replied. "I shall doubtless have an opportunity when you leave the room after dinner."

"I shall be greatly obliged," she answered, with earnestness—her eyes grew large and bright, her face seemed suddenly to fill out and look youthful, the colour flamed in her cheeks, and her whole manner indicated suppressed excitement.

I was about to say something more, when a pretty girl who was seated a little way further down the table bent forward and said, in a tone of delight:—

"Mrs. Colthurst, I have great news for you. Do you know what Mrs. Holdsworth has succeeded in doing? She has induced Haridas, the celebrated chiromancist, to come here after dinner—we can all have our fortunes told."

"Haridas!" cried Mrs. Colthurst, "is it possible? I have longed to go to him, but have been afraid."

"Do you really believe in chiromancy?" I asked of her, when she turned once more towards me.

"Emphatically," she answered. "I would

give a great deal to show my hand to Haridas—more particularly now." She coloured. "You have heard his name, of course, Mr. Gilchrist?"

"I confess I have not," I replied.

"You surprise me—I thought everyone knew of him. He is a Brahmin of very high caste, and seems to possess almost superhuman powers. I know several people whose fortunes he has told, and in each case his predictions came to pass. Please don't laugh—I know you scientific men care nothing for that sort of thing—but to us—" She broke off abruptly—I noticed that she clasped her hands tightly together under the table. She was too nervous to proceed with her dinner.

"Then you intend to submit your hand to the inspection of this man?" I said.

"Most certainly. I would not miss the opportunity for the world—and what is more, whatever he tells me I shall firmly believe."

After the ladies had withdrawn, I found myself sitting next to Holdsworth.

"Now, what about Lidderdale?" I asked.

Holdsworth looked at me and slowly filled his glass before he replied.

"I have very little to tell," he said. "I saw Lidderdale's card lying on the hall table this morning with the address of the Hotel Métropole scribbled in one corner. There was also some writing on the back saying that he would call later in the day. I was unable to stay in, but left a note inviting him to dine here this evening, and telling him that Alma Colthurst was to be one of the guests. When I returned home, just in time to dress for dinner, my servant informed me that he had not come back, and a few moments later I received a telegram saying that he would call to-morrow, as he had been prevented from doing so to-day. I shall be glad to welcome him back again—he was a very good sort of fellow. I cannot imagine why he gave all his friends the go-by in the extraordinary manner he did."

"I am convinced that he can explain that," I said. "I shall be heartily glad to see him again. Of course, all who knew him well will remember how attached he was to Mrs. Colthurst."

"Ah, yes, poor girl," said Holdsworth, "and she to him. She had a very unhappy marriage, as you know only too well, Gilchrist. Well, she is free now—she is rich, too. Doubtless Lidderdale and she will soon be happily married, and we shall be only too glad to dance at their wedding."

"I have not seen Mrs. Colthurst for some time," I said. "She is much changed—she seems to be in a very nervous condition. Should you consider her in good health?"

"Well, Gilchrist, you are more of a doctor than I am—she has always been rather delicate. I am not aware that there is anything special the matter with her."

"Her nerves are in a shaky condition," I repeated—"she was considerably distressed at our sitting down thirteen to dinner; and when she heard that you are going to have an exhibition of chiromancy in the drawing-room, it caused her to forget her uneasiness with regard to the old superstition. Strange, how easily women are influenced."

"Call it black art or what you will," said Holdsworth, gravely, "I also, to a certain extent, believe in chiromancy."



"CALL IT BLACK ART OR WHAT YOU WILL," SAID HOLDSWORTH, GRAVELY.

I looked at him in some astonishment. If ever there was a man endowed with common sense it was Charles Holdsworth.

"I do not profess to understand the principle on which these persons work out their curious prophecies," he continued, "but so many of them have to my certain knowledge come true, that—but what am I thinking of? We ought to be in the drawing-room now." Here he rose from his seat.

"Gentlemen," he called out, "I have the pleasure of telling you all that Haridas, the well-known chiromancist, is coming here this evening to give an exhibition of his powers.

I believe he is due now. I am sure you will none of you like to miss him. Shall we all go upstairs?"

Looks of curiosity, astonishment, and pleasure were seen more or less on every face. We all rose from the table, and a moment or two later entered the drawing-room. Here we found ourselves in the midst of a crowd of visitors, several fresh guests having arrived since dinner. I could not help noticing a hushed and expectant expression on the faces of nearly everyone present. Mrs. Colthurst was standing not far from the door; she made way for me to come to her side.

"Well?" she asked, in an eager whisper, "has Mr. Holdsworth told you anything?"

"Yes, all he knows," I replied. "Lidderdale's card was found on his hall table this morning, with the address of the Hotel Métropole scribbled on it. There was some message

on the back to say that he would call again in the evening; and as Holdsworth could not remain in, he left a letter inviting him to dine. But as it happened Lidderdale did not call again, but sent a telegram to say that he was detained, and would come to-morrow."

While I was speaking, Mrs. Colthurst sank down on to the nearest chair; her face was white, her eyes full of trouble.

"What can this mean?" she said, in a whisper.

"I don't understand you," I answered.

"His not coming back," she replied, "and his going to see Mr. Holdsworth first of all. Why did he not come to me or—or

to you, who have always been his greatest friend? Perhaps," she added, suddenly, "Haridas can explain."

At this moment there was a slight bustle in the neighbourhood of the door, and we both rose to our feet.

A Brahmin, wearing a white flowing robe, sandals on his feet, a short jacket richly embroidered on his shoulders, and a turban of many colours wound round his picturesque head, entered the room. He was accompanied by a young woman, who was dressed from head to foot in white. She had handsome features and sparkling eyes. Like the

Brahmin, she also wore a turban of many colours, and several strings of shining beads encircled her brown throat. Her arms were bare to the elbow, but were round and beautifully formed. When the pair entered the room they turned, faced the company and salaamed very low. I then heard the young woman say a word or two in English to Mrs. Holdsworth. The Brahmin did not open his lips. He was a strikingly handsome man; his face was thin, his features aquiline. There was a sort of solemn dignity about him which put us Europeans completely into the shade.

As I looked at the pair I could not but confess that I had seldom seen a more picturesque couple.

Mrs. Holdsworth immediately conducted Haridas and the young woman to the top of the room, where they mounted a little platform arranged beforehand to receive them. Having done so, our hostess turned and introduced the chiromancist and the Hindu girl to her guests.

"The name of Haridas," she said, "is, of course, well known to all people interested in the marvellous science of chiromancy. The Brahmin has come here to-night to tell the fortunes of all present who care to submit their hands to his manipulations, but as he cannot speak English, Mungela"—here she laid her hand on the girl's arm—"has accompanied him as interpreter."

There was a moment's hesitation. Mrs. Holdsworth left the platform—Haridas came slowly to the front and stood with folded arms, not looking at any of the company. His splendid eyes seemed, if I may use the expression, to be full of vision.

After a little more delay, one of the men of the party came forward. He mounted the platform, said a word or two to Mungela, and then held out his hand for Haridas to examine. The chiromancist turned it slowly over, looking first at the palm and then at the upper part of the hand. He then began to speak in rapid Hindustani, which Mungela interpreted in a low voice. What the pair said was unheard by the rest of the party. The gentleman returned to his seat with a smile on his face.

"The whole thing is absolutely wonderful," I heard him say to a neighbour. "The man knows nothing whatever about me, not even my name, and yet he told me a great deal of my past history and prophesied—" Here there was a bustle, someone else was going on the platform, and I could not hear the next word. This time it was a lady. She also underwent

a brief examination of her hand. Haridas spoke in Hindustani and Mungela interpreted. The lady returned to her friends with a flushed face and pleased eyes. Soon many others followed her example, each one coming back into the body of the room, looking mystified, pleased or the reverse, but all more or less impressed.

"Now I am going," said Mrs. Colthurst to me.

I noticed how queer she looked—there was a grey shadow under the eyes, and the lips were slightly blue in tint; the rest of the face was ghastly.

"Whatever you do, pray don't believe that man's nonsense," I said. "Try to regard it as a joke."

"I cannot do that," she answered. "I am glad he has come. After he has spoken to me I shall know the truth."

She left my side and approached the upper part of the room. She seemed almost to stagger as she walked. The next moment she had mounted the little platform and stood with her back to the company.

Impelled by strong interest, I left my seat and approached the end of the room where the platform was. I saw Haridas take her hand exactly as he had done those of the other people. Then I observed a quick and peculiar light flash through his eyes—he glanced at Mungela, and it seemed to me that there was consternation in his gaze. I don't think he once looked at the white face of the woman whose fate he seemed to hold in his grasp, but there was evidently something about the lines of her palm which distressed him. He began to talk in his musical rapid Hindustani, and Mungela listened. At each pause she translated the meaning of his words to Mrs. Colthurst. The whole thing did not occupy two minutes.

When the young widow left the platform the grey look had crept all over her face. She saw me, and came to my side.

"He has told me my past, and accurately," she said. "But what can be the matter—he won't say a word about my future? What do I care about the past? The past is done, but I will know—yes, I will know—what is about to befall me. I believe he is afraid to tell me. I believe he knows something terrible. Go, Mr. Gilchrist, go and ask him for the truth—he will give it to you, I am certain."

Mungela and Haridas were standing close together. When they saw me, they came slowly to the edge of the platform. I spoke to Mungela.



"HE BEGAN TO TALK IN HIS MUSICAL RAPID HINDUSTANI."

"I do not wish to ask Haridas about my fortune," I said.

"Then what is your pleasure, sir?" she asked, fixing her bright eyes on my face.

"I have a word to say with regard to the young lady whose hand Haridas has just examined."

"The lady with the grey face?" interrupted Mungela.

"Yes, the one who has just left the platform—she is greatly distressed. Haridas has not told her the whole—he has spoken of her past, but has said nothing of her future; she is very much alarmed. Perhaps he will tell me in confidence what he has thought well to hide from her."

It was impossible for the swarthy features of the Hindu woman to turn pale, but there was consternation in her eyes. She turned to Haridas and spoke. He said something in Hindustani—she looked at me.

"Haridas is sorry," said Mungela, "he cannot tell the future of the pretty lady."

"Why not?" I asked.

"Because there is none—everything is finished. There is nothing to say."

Her words were so startling and unexpected, and I was so much afraid that Mrs. Colthurst might hear them, that I hastily showed my own hand to the chiromancist, who began to mutter over it, but I interrupted him.

"Mungela," I said, "ask Haridas why there is no future for Mrs. Colthurst."

She repeated the question.

"He only says the same thing," she replied. "There is none—there is nothing to say—it is all done."

The next moment I returned to Mrs. Colthurst's side.

"Well," she said, trying to smile, "have they told you? What terrible fate hangs over me?"

"I have found out nothing," I answered, laughing as I spoke. "Haridas evidently has a limit to his powers: he cannot foretell your future."

"He will not—oh, that I could make him!" she replied.

Her face looked haggard and dreadfully worn. Soon afterwards she bade her hostess good-night,

held out her hand to me, and left the room.

I had just risen on the following morning, and was about to sit down to breakfast, when to my astonishment my servant ushered in Charles Holdsworth. His hair was rumpled up, his eyes looked full of excitement.

"Gilchrist," he cried, "what awful thing do you think has happened?"

"What?" I asked.

"Alma Colthurst is dead."

"Impossible!" I cried.

"She is dead, murdered. She was found in her drawing-room early this morning, having evidently been stabbed, as there was a deep wound in the left side, which must have penetrated to the heart. Her servant rushed over to inform me. The police are on the scent. Gilchrist, they suspect Lidderdale."

"Nonsense, Holdsworth, you must be mistaken," I answered.

"They do; it is a fact."

"Well, tell me everything," I said, after a pause.

"I have very little to tell. The servant's story is as follows: Alma returned home between eleven and twelve last night. She found a card from Lidderdale lying on the hall table, with a line in pencil that he would call to see her about midnight. She told the servant that he was to be admitted, and went up to her drawing-room to wait for him. He arrived almost to the minute, and was shown upstairs. The footman waited up, lingering about the hall and staircase for something over half an hour. About half-past twelve Lidderdale came calmly downstairs, bade the footman good-night, and left the house. At Alma's special request her maid had already

gone to bed. When Lidderdale went away, the footman extinguished the lights in the rest of the house, but did not return to the drawing-room, as Alma never cared to be disturbed, and as a rule put out the lights there herself. On entering the room at an early hour this morning, he found his mistress stretched on the floor, quite dead. A doctor was summoned, and the unfortunate girl was discovered to have been dead for many hours. A brief examination showed that she had been stabbed through the heart.

"How awful!" I cried.
"Holdsworth, I shall



"HE FOUND HIS MISTRESS STRETCHED ON THE FLOOR, QUITE DEAD."

begin to believe in chiromancy. That man last night would not tell her future, and when I questioned him, said that she had none. His prediction turned out strangely correct."

Holdsworth swept back the hair from his forehead.

"I am so stunned, I scarcely know what I am doing," he said—"and sorry as I am for her, poor soul, it is Lidderdale that I think most of at the present moment. Gilchrist, it is quite impossible that he could have done it."

"I agree with you," I answered. "Lidderdale is a man of strong passions, but he would never, under any circumstances, stoop to murder."

"But think of the circumstantial evidence—the man was the very last in her presence. He will, of course, be arrested on suspicion. Let us go straight to the Métropole and find out what has happened."

We left my flat, hailed the first hansom we came across, and drove to the large hotel. On our arrival, we sent in our cards and inquired for Lidderdale. There was a slight delay, and then, rather to our surprise, the manager came forward and said that no gentleman of that name was staying at the hotel.

"There have been inquiries for him already this morning," he said, in a somewhat pointed way, "but we have no Mr. Lidderdale here."

"Are you certain?" asked Holdsworth. "I have his visiting-card in my pocket—he left it at my house yesterday, with the name of your hotel scribbled in the corner."

The manager looked at it and shook his head.

"There has been no gentleman of that name staying here," he said. "The name of the hotel was doubtless used as a blind—such things have happened before."

"But not in the case of men like Lidderdale," I interrupted. "I think," I added, turning to Holdsworth, "that we ought to take the hotel manager into our confidence."

"Certainly," he answered.

"Very well, gentlemen," replied the manager, "will you both come this way?"

He led us at once into his private room. There Holdsworth gave him a brief account of the terrible event which had transpired in Melville Street.

"I fully believe in Mr. Lidderdale's innocence," he continued, "but I know that circumstantial evidence is strong against him."

"The police have been here already inquiring for him," said the manager. "It is all very unpleasant," he added.

"There is just a chance," I interrupted, "that he may be staying here under another name. If so, I should recognise him immediately. Can you put me in a position to see your visitors as they leave the hotel this morning?"

"I certainly can and will," answered the

manager. "You have only to stay in the hall, sir, and you will notice everyone who passes."

I said a few words to Holdsworth, who soon afterwards left the hotel—the manager then took me into the big entrance-hall where I spent the remainder of the morning.

Lidderdale, when I had last seen him, was a tall, slender, dark-complexioned man—young-looking for his age, with straight features and a good carriage—his hair grew somewhat low on his forehead, and was black and straight. He kept it cut very short, and had somewhat the appearance of a military man. In repose his face was rather wanting in animation, but when he spoke it lit up with extreme brilliancy—I felt certain that I should recognise him through any disguise.

The hotel happened to be very full, and many dark-eyed, slender men passed and re-passed in the course of the long morning. But no one in the least resembling Lidderdale put in an appearance, and soon after noon I went away.

The police were now actively on the scent, and both Holdsworth and I were visited and eagerly catechized. We could neither of us give the least information. One of Lidderdale's cards had been found lying on Holdsworth's table; the writing in the corner was easily identified with some of his letters which I possessed—a similar card had been found at Mrs. Colthurst's, with writing also in Lidderdale's hand in the corner. A man, in all respects answering to my description of Lidderdale, had called on Mrs. Colthurst at midnight on the evening of the 21st. In the morning she was found dead, stabbed to the heart.

The newspapers became full of sensational paragraphs, but there were no tidings whatever of the man himself. I could scarcely conceal my great anxiety. Where was the murderer? Where was the man who had undoubtedly left Lidderdale's card at two houses?

A week from the death of the unfortunate widow passed away, and still the police had not got the faintest trace of the missing man.

I had spent a long day in the country, and was returning home somewhat fagged when my servant, who knew all about the mysterious murder, greeted me with a peculiar expression on his face.

"Well, Silva," I said, "have you any news for me?"

"I have, sir," he replied. "Mr. Lidderdale has been found."

"Found? Where?" I asked, in excitement. "Have the police got him?"

"No, sir, he is waiting for you in your laboratory—he has been there for over half an hour."

"Lidderdale in my laboratory!" I cried. "Impossible!"

"It is true, sir. He called about six o'clock, and said that he would wait for you for a short time."

"The mystery truly deepens," I muttered to myself. I hurried across the hall, opened the door of my laboratory, and went in.

Lidderdale, looking very like what he was when I last saw him, sprang from the depths of an easy chair and came quickly to meet me.

"How do you do, Gilchrist?" he said. "This is a pleasure. I have not been two hours in London, and you naturally are the first person I wanted to see. Why, what is the matter?" he continued, observing the expression on my face.

"For Heaven's sake, sit down!" I said. "You tell me you have been only two hours in London? Impossible. Don't you know what has happened? But you must know."

"I assure you that I only arrived in London by the Dover Express this morning, having travelled overland from Marseilles. I went to an hotel, changed my clothes, and then strolled over to see you. When I heard you were out, I said I would wait for you. Well, it is good to see an old friend again."

I looked Lidderdale over from head to foot. The old description still answered with regard to his face and appearance. He looked scarcely any older than when he left England four years ago. He was still tall, still slender, his features were straight and his carriage good; his grave and very beautiful dark-grey eyes still retained their old trick of lighting up with the least word. His teeth gleamed white and wholesome in his mouth. It was impossible to connect murder with a man like him.

"For some reason or other you look dazed, Gilchrist," he said. "You seem more astonished than pleased at seeing me."

"I am amazed at seeing you," I replied. "I thought -- the fact is, you will forgive me, Lidderdale, but I must speak plainly—I thought you were hiding from the police."

"I?—hiding from the police! I can scarcely take that, even from you, old friend. What do you mean?"

"Well, you left England four years ago in a precious hurry, and since you came back—"

"I tell you I have not been back many hours." Original from

"Then," I continued, "what did the visiting-cards mean?"

"The visiting-cards?—you are talking in your sleep, Gilchrist. Wake up! What can you be driving at?"

I stared fixedly at him, then I sprang to my feet.

"God knows I am not dreaming," I said; "and yet to see you here, looking for all the world as if nothing had happened!"

"Nothing has happened, as far as I am concerned."

"Then why did you leave England as you did, and—and cut us all, and then come back—?"

"One question at a time, old man. I am prepared to account for my somewhat mysterious absence. The fact is, I was really mad at that time. You know what my feeling was for Alma Ramsay. When she definitely made up her mind to throw me over and marry that old *roué*, General Colthurst, I became seized with a frenzy which I could neither control nor subdue. In fact, a very demon got possession of me. You know I come of a good old family. Most of the men of my house have both wealth and position. I am the younger son of a younger son, and a few years ago was as poor as they make 'em. Alma refused me, I was convinced at the time, on the score of my poverty. I resolved to leave the country, to cut my connection with all my old belongings, and to make for South Africa. There I was joined by a man of the name of Colville. He and I had been chums together at college—he also knew Alma, and the first thing which drew us together was his mention of her name. He had a little money, and we agreed to purchase a share in a good diamond mine. We did well, better than well—in fact, I soon became very rich. Colville took fever and very nearly died. I nursed him, and on his supposed death-bed he made a confession. He also loved Alma Ramsay, and in order to win her for himself had gone to see her and told her lies about me—cursed lies, without a breath of truth in them—that I was secretly engaged to another, that I was false, and the rest—the poor girl believed him. He had no knowledge at the time that pressure was being brought to bear upon her to marry General Colthurst. When he discovered that his nefarious scheme had come to naught, and that he could not win her for himself, he resolved to join me in Africa. His object, he said, was to watch me in order to prevent my having the least communication with Alma, feeling sure that if he

only hid his time he would win her yet, as she was certain to survive old General Colthurst. He expressed penitence for what he had done on his supposed death-bed, and to my surprise, and his own, recovered. When he was well again I told him that it was absolutely necessary that he and I should dissolve partnership. He was furious at first, for he knew that by slow degrees I had come to possess far and away the larger share of the business. I was firm, however. I paid him a sum of money; he left me, telling me that his intention was to travel through Matabeleland, and cross the Zambesi into Congo Free State. I have not heard from him now for several months. I am a rich man; I heard suddenly that Alma was a widow—I have hurried back to England, and—why, what is the matter, Gilchrist? You look graver and graver. Do you believe that I am inventing this story?"

"I do not," I answered, "I believe you from my soul—but what has possessed you to come back to England *now*? Do you know that you have been wanted for the last week?"

"Wanted? By whom? By you, old friend?"

"No, not by me—I would rather you were buried in the depths of the sea. You don't know what awful thing has occurred—I can scarcely bear to tell you."

"Look here, Gilchrist," said Lidderdale, springing abruptly to his feet, "I have had a pretty rough life of it, all things considered. I am over thirty years of age, and can stand most things, but suspense I never could brook. You have evidently bad news for me—what is it?—out with it."

I stood silent for a minute. His grey eyes were fixed upon me with an intensity which drove out of my head all other thought beyond the terrible knowledge that he still loved that poor murdered woman with his whole soul and strength.

"I don't think anything you can say will greatly upset me," he said, "provided Alma is well. I am certain now that I had her affections from the first, and if she will promise to be mine I can give her every comfort. What of her, Gilchrist?"

"You can do nothing for her," I said—"she is dead."

"Dead—I might have guessed it—like my luck," he muttered.

He turned away in great agitation, and walked to the nearest window. He stood with his back to me for a minute or two. I saw him take out his handkerchief

and wipe the drops from his forehead. After a very short time he came back and seated himself near me.

"No wonder you were shy of telling me," he said. "That wretch, General Colthurst, no doubt shortened her days."

"Nay, do not blame him," I said. "General Colthurst may have been bad, but she survived him. She—Lidderdale, you must bear up, old man. I believe there is a solution of this terrible mystery—but mystery it is."

"Well, tell me, tell me. Surely there can be nothing worse. With her life mine practically ends—I have nothing more to live for. What did she die of?"

"Something too horrible almost to contemplate has happened," I said. "Yes, I will tell you everything. Mrs. Colthurst has died—you have not asked how."

"How?" he asked. "Tell me. The fact of her death alone is sufficient for me. I shall never see her more. That is the crown of all misery to me."

"She has died by the hand of another," I continued; "and Lidderdale, God help you, you are suspected of her murder."

Lidderdale's reply to this was a loud, half-crazy laugh.

"You must be mad, old fellow," he said—but then he checked himself and looked at me.

"There is method in your madness," he continued; "you have more to say."

"If you can listen to me calmly I will tell you the entire story," I replied.

I then proceeded to give him a brief account of what had taken place. I told him of the visiting-cards with the handwriting on each which had already been identified with his. I told him of his supposed visit to Mrs. Colthurst on the night of the murder. He listened to me with outward calmness. When I had finished, he looked me steadily in the face.

"And now," he said, "in spite of this terrible circumstantial evidence against me, do you or do you not believe me guilty?"

I gave him a keen glance—then my heart

gave a leap in my breast. I replied with fervour:—

"As there is a God above I believe that you are as innocent of this crime as I am," I said.

He held out his hand, which I silently pressed.

"All the same," he said, "I can see at a glance that I am in a deuce of a mess. The fact is—I cannot help it—I suspect Colville."

"Colville?" I interrupted.

"Yes—the man who slandered me to her years ago—the man who loved her with a ferocity equal to the purity of my passion. You never happened to see him, did you, Gilchrist?"

"No."

"He is like me in appearance, remarkably so—about my height and complexion. Even to the colour of his eyes, we are as like as two peas. At Cambridge we used to be spoken of as the twins."

"But granted even that he did try to see her, what motive could he have in committing

such an awful crime?" I interrupted.

"Jealousy," replied Lidderdale, without hesitation. "The fact is, Alma would never look at him—he confessed as much as that on his supposed death-bed. When he spoke against me, she scorned him and showed him the door. She professed not to believe a word he said—but all the same, I suppose, a little of that mud stuck. He was like me, and he doubtless used my name in order to get an interview with her. I have watched him, and knew him well. He was capable in moments of frenzy of any deed of violence. Alma was the kind of woman to drive a man to distraction."

"The question now is," I continued, "how are we to prove your story? But that, of course, must be easy. You can be identified as one of the passengers on board the vessel which brought you from Africa to Marseilles?"

"There is a difficulty about that," replied Lidderdale, with a grim smile. "The fact is, I seem to have made a mess of things all round. Since I left the country I have



"I BELIEVE YOU ARE AS INNOCENT OF THE CRIME AS I AM."

always lived under another name. I did not want my old friends to write to me, nor my people to know anything about my whereabouts, and when I left England for Africa I took the name of John Ross. I wished to bury my old identity, and to hide myself from the face of the world. My shares in the diamond mines are in the name of John Ross. All legal documents are also made out in that name. I have a large sum of money waiting for me in the Bank of England, but I can only draw it in the name of John Ross. In short, fool that I am, I have surrounded myself with complications at every step."

I sat in a state of bewilderment for a moment, then I spoke.

"At least this much could be proved," I said. "You sailed on a certain date in a certain vessel from the coast of Africa to Marseilles—you were entered in the ship's books under the name of John Ross, the captain and passengers would know you again?"

"They might if they could be found, but the vessel was a small one and most of the passengers foreigners—it may take several weeks to get hold of the captain of the small trader in which I sailed."

"Then matters certainly look bad," I said. "What possessed you not to return to England in one of the ordinary liners?"

"The Evil One has been in this business from first to last," replied Lidderdale; "but the fact is, I am so stunned to-night that nothing whatever seems to matter. I must sleep over this, and let you know in the morning what steps I propose to take."

"You shall have a bed here; you had better not go back to your hotel."

He consented to this, and after a little more conversation we parted for the night.

In the morning Lidderdale met me with a brave face.

"I have put the thing straight, as far as my own action is concerned," he said. "Now that she has gone, I am more or less indifferent to life. Under any circumstances I cannot live under a cloud. I have made up my mind to go through the thing, and, whether I come out on the right side or wrong, at least to get it through. Gilchrist, will you come with me now to see the Superintendent of Police, in order that I may give him a faithful version of my story?"

This, after a little further conversation, we decided to do. We took a cab to Scotland Yard, saw the Superintendent, who, after a long conversation with Lidderdale, told him that it was his painful duty to arrest him on

the charge of the murder. My friend went off to await his examination before the magistrate with an air of outward quiet.

"I do not want to hang for it," he said to me, "for I am as innocent as you are; but short of that, now that she has gone, life is of no value to me."

I wrung his hand and hurried off, stricken to the heart.

For some reasons which I cannot now recall, Lidderdale's examination before the magistrate would not take place until the following morning, and in the meantime I felt that there was much to be done. More and more as the moments flew by did I feel convinced that he was right in his conjecture, and that Colville must be the guilty person. How he had managed his whole ingenious scheme was more than I could explain. After thinking matters over, I resolved to pay a visit to the house in Melville Street where the murder had been committed. I had been often there during the past week, and the servants knew me well. I had an interview with the footman, Carson, who happened to be the first to have seen his dead mistress. I said nothing to him about Lidderdale's appearance on the scene, but asked to be taken up to the drawing-room. The man immediately complied. He ran up before me, and the next moment we had entered the beautiful room.

The blinds were down, and there was a close smell caused by unopened windows. I saw at a glance that the room had been left almost undisturbed since the inquest. Carson went to draw up one of the blinds. When he did so, I saw a dark stain of blood on the carpet where the unhappy girl had fallen after she had received her death wound. Carson began talking eagerly. I scarcely listened to his story, which was stale by this time. In one corner of the room, put away on a table, I saw a couple of decanters—they were both half full, and contained either wine or cognac.

"What are those bottles doing there?" I asked.

Carson crossed the room to look at them. "I never knew until this minute that they were left there," he replied. "I suppose one of the housemaids put them out of sight. They contain the brandy and sherry which were taken into the room the night the murder was committed. When Mrs. Colthurst saw Mr. Lidderdale's card on her return home she desired me to bring refreshments to the drawing-room, and I put the brandy and sherry and biscuits on a tray."

I lifted one of the decanters. It contained cognac—as I was putting it back again in its place I noticed, lying by its side, a broken wine-glass. Nearly half of the upper portion of the glass had been smashed away, but enough remained to allow a dark stain to show plainly in the bottom.

"What is this?" I said, lifting it up as I spoke.

Carson came and watched me with anxious eyes.

"I don't know, sir," he answered.

"It is a stain of blood," I said.

"There has been a deal of blood on many things in the room, sir," answered the man.



"WHAT IS THIS?" I SAID.

I did not reply to him. In my own mind I was going rapidly through a chain of reasoning. From the appearance of the broken glass I did not think for a moment that the dark stain on this occasion was caused by the victim. In all probability the man who had committed the murder had rushed, after the horrible deed was done, to fortify himself with a glass of brandy. In his agitation he had doubtless broken the top of the glass, and perhaps cut himself in so doing—the blood had poured down inside, and now lay in a little pool in the bottom of the glass.

"I should like to take this broken glass away with me," I said to Carson.

"I never saw it before, sir," he said, "but I don't know—I am very sorry, I don't believe I ought to give you leave. All the contents of this room are under the care of the Superintendent of Police."

"Never mind," I replied, quickly—I suddenly remembered that I had some microscopical slides and a cover glass in my pocket. I took out the case, slipped a slide away from its fellows, and taking a smear from the stain in the bottom of the broken glass, put it on the slide. As soon as it had dried, which it did almost immediately, I put the slide back into the cover glass, and left the house. I went straight back to my flat, and immediately submitted the slide to the microscopical and chemical tests necessary for the thorough examination of the smear of blood. I had no sooner done so than an exclamation of astonishment and relief rose from my lips. This blood, dry as it was, contained a quantity of the remarkable parasite, *filaria perstans*. As this parasite has never been contracted anywhere except on the West Coast of Africa, this fact proved at a glance that it was not the blood of Mrs. Colthurst. It must therefore follow, as a natural consequence, that it could only come from a person who had been in West Africa.

As I eagerly studied the dark smear, I remembered a remark Lidderdale had made yesterday. He told me quite incidentally that, when Colville and he parted company, Colville had started to travel through Matabeleland, across the Zambesi, into the Congo Free State. It was, therefore, quite within the range of possibility that, on his way down the Congo while living among the natives, he might have contracted, unknown to himself, of course, the parasite, *filaria perstans*.

I had studied Eastern diseases with care, and was well acquainted with the peculiar nature of this strange parasite. Was it possible that I now held in my hand the means of clearing my friend?

After a few moments of careful reflection, I went straight to the house of a Harley Street doctor who was celebrated for his treatment of Eastern diseases. Dr. Materick and I had before now done good work together, and we were fast friends. He happened to be in, and could see me at once. I gave him a brief outline of my strange story, and showed him the stain on the microscopical slide. He looked at it carefully himself, and immediately corroborated the discovery I had made.

"There is not the least doubt," he said, "that only a person coming from the West Coast of Africa could contract this special parasite, as it is found nowhere else in the world."

"Then, of course," I cried in excitement, "this is of great importance to Lidderdale, who has never, to my knowledge, been in West Africa."

"Unquestionably," answered Materick, "the fact of the parasite being found in this stain of blood supports his story. Your friend has come, you tell me, straight from South Africa?"

"Yes, from South Africa."

"We can soon discover if he has the *filaria perstans* in his own blood; if not, the natural conclusion is that he could not be the man who committed the murder; but now, before we come to that, I have a somewhat remarkable thing to tell you. There is a patient at the present moment in my hospital suffering from a disease called the Sleeping Sickness, which is caused by *filaria perstans*, and which, therefore, can only be contracted in West Africa, although this particular symptom may not show itself until years after the person has been there. Still, the disease is a sufficiently peculiar one for a European to have. Would you like to come with me to see the patient?"

"I certainly should," I replied. "You know I am much interested in Eastern diseases."

"Well, I will call for you this afternoon, and drive you straight to my hospital."

This arrangement was carried out, and at four o'clock that day I found myself standing by the bedside of the patient who was suffering from the Sleeping Sickness.

"He will not recover," said Materick, in a low voice to me, as he looked at him. "The symptoms are all of an aggravated description. As a rule the disease lasts from three months to as many years, and is characterized by slowly increasing somnambulism and lethargy. These symptoms gradually deepen until the patient is almost continually asleep. I have known cases where the sick person becomes so lethargic that he cannot remain awake long enough to feed himself, but sometimes falls asleep in the act of carrying his food to his mouth. Now, the blood of this man simply swarms with the parasite, *filaria perstans*. I will remove a few drops of blood from one of the fingers, and you can test it when you go home."

While the doctor was speaking rapidly to

me in a low voice I was watching the patient. He was a slender, dark man, his face was bathed in perspiration, his black hair was pushed back from his forehead. Where had I seen those features before, that somewhat peculiar length of jaw, the shape of the low forehead? Suddenly I felt my heart beat hard.

"Look here, Materick," I cried, with excitement, "I believe Providence has brought me to this bedside. The man lying there has a look of Lidderdale. Good heavens! suppose he happens to be the person we are seeking for! Did you notice the colour of his eyes?"

"I cannot say that I did."

"In an ordinary case," I continued, "the eyes of such a man would be brown or black. If they should happen to be grey, I am convinced that your patient must be Colville, the man we are seeking for."

"Scarcely likely," said Materick, with a smile—he knew me of old, and had often spoken of my impetuosity in taking up clues which I supposed might help my friends out of difficulties.

"The more I look at him, the more my suspicion strengthens," I continued. "The life of one of my greatest friends hangs in the balance. I should like to become acquainted with the circumstances under which this man came to the hospital, and also with the permission of the hospital authorities, to watch the case."

"I believe both your wishes can be gratified," replied Materick. "Let us go to the Lady Superintendent: she may know something of the man's previous history."

We left the ward and went immediately into a small room off the main wing, where Sister Sophia came to interview us. When we mentioned the patient who was suffering from Sleeping Sickness, she told us immediately the little she knew. He had been found about a week ago in the street, to all appearance in a state of intoxication; had been taken by the police and removed to the nearest lock-up. There, a very brief examination showed that the man was not suffering from intoxication, but was seriously ill—he was conveyed to the hospital, and had scarcely opened his lips since. When taken up he was in evening dress. No one knew his name: he spent his entire time sleeping, although for the last day or so he had been suffering from tremor and spasms sometimes almost amounting to convulsions.

I asked the date of the man's reception

into the hospital: he had been brought there on the morning of the 22nd of June.

I looked at Materick.

"The murder took place on the night of the 21st," I said.

The doctor said a few more words to the Lady Superintendent, who immediately agreed to my request to be allowed to sit by the patient's bedside. I took up my place there.

"I will return to see you this evening, or if you leave the hospital you might call on me," said Materick. "Of course, if we can get this man to confess that his name is Colville, your friend ought to see him."

The doctor left the hospital, and I found myself practically alone with the patient.

The case was a bad one, likely to terminate fatally within a few hours at farthest. At my desire one of the nurses brought a screen to put round the sick man's bed. He lay muttering to himself, tossing from side to side. He could scarcely be aroused to take either food or medicine. Once he opened his eyes. He stared at me when he did so, and I saw their colour distinctly. They were grey, and very like my friend's in expression.

"Colville," I said, involuntarily, "do you know that Lidderdale has returned to England? He has just been arrested for the murder of Mrs. Colthurst. Now, you alone can explain that crime. Do not go to your Maker with that unconfessed sin upon your soul."

The sick man shivered when I spoke, and stared fixedly at me. With each word I uttered, his eyes grew more and more full of an incomprehensible expression—a mixture of terror and defiance.

"Why do you call me Colville?" he asked, at last.

"Because that is your name," I answered, firmly. "I am a friend of Lidderdale's. You have been guilty of a dastardly trick on your friend, and you have also committed—"

"Don't," he cried, giving way to an excess of terror. "As there is a God above, don't say the word."

"You cannot deny that your name is Colville?"

"Don't speak so loud—I am too ill to talk to you." He turned over, trembled violently, and the next moment was convulsed by spasm.

The nurse came to his assistance. When the fit had passed he sank into a deeper sleep than ever.

"I fear he will never speak again," she said, "but I have not had a case exactly like his before."

"How long is he likely to live?" I asked.

"He may lie in that condition for hours."

"Have I time to be absent for an hour or two?"

"I cannot tell you, sir."

"I will risk it," I replied. "The life of another hangs on that wretch's last moments of existence."

I left the hospital and drove to the police-court in Marlborough Street. There I had an interview with the Superintendent, and gave him a brief sketch of what had occurred.

"It is all-important," I said, "that Lidderdale should see this man. Will you bring him at once to Materick's Hospital?"

The Superintendent considered for a moment, and then resolved to comply.

"It is out of the routine," he said; "but I think I am justified."

He left me, returning in a moment with Lidderdale and another policeman. We all drove to the hospital, and were conducted to the ward—the screen was still round the dying man's bed. Lidderdale passed behind the screen, and we three stood without. I heard Lidderdale utter an exclamation—it



"DRINK THIS, AND THEN TELL ME THE TRUTH."

was enough—I knew that he had found his man.

"Rouse yourself, I am here," he said, in a voice hoarse with emotion. The man started and muttered in his sleep. "Open your eyes," continued Lidderdale. "Do you remember when you were ill last—do you remember what you confessed? Wake, Colville, wake up."

The well-known tones burst through the terrible lethargy which was carrying the man to his grave—he opened his eyes. The police officers and I stepped a little nearer. The Superintendent took a notebook from his pocket and prepared to take down any confession which might be made.

"Am I dying?" asked the sick man.

"Yes."

"Strange—so the inevitable has come at last," he muttered. "I only feel dead with sleep, sleep which seems never inclined to terminate, sleep and a sort of tremor which comes over me." He began to shake from head to foot.

The nurse came forward with a restorative; Lidderdale held it to the man's lips.

"Drink this," he said, "and then tell me the truth. Colville, why did you take her life?"

Colville looked at Lidderdale, and a strange smile flickered round his lips. His grey eyes, so like those of my friend, began to glitter.

"In a fit of frenzy," he replied, after a pause. "She refused to have anything to do with me. Yes, I borrowed your name. Months ago I meant to do something of the kind, and I also managed, while with you in Africa, to secrete some of your visiting-cards. I had made careful copies of your handwriting, and knew I could imitate it sufficiently well to deceive anyone who was not a great expert. I knew she would see me if she thought I was you. She did so—but when she discovered the trick I had played on her, her scorn and rage were greater than I can describe. Then the Evil One entered into me, and I made up my mind that at

least you should not enjoy the prize which I could not obtain. I had a clasp-knife in my pocket; I opened it and, in a fit of fury, stabbed her to the heart. The moment I did the deed I repented. I ran to a decanter which contained brandy and poured out a glass—I was ill at the time—I had been queer for days and weeks. One of those awful tremors assailed me—the glass fell from my trembling hands and I cut myself. I filled up another and drained off the contents. The stimulant gave me strength to leave the house as quietly as if nothing had happened. Well, she has gone to her Maker."

"Where you are following her—may God forgive you," said the other man.

Making a tremendous effort, Colville suddenly sat up in bed.

"Is it true that I am dying?" he cried; his eyes grew full of terror. The two police officers pushed aside the screen and entered.

"Get him to sign this paper," said the Superintendent, handing the one on which he had been hastily writing to Lidderdale.

"Put your name here, Colville," said Lidderdale.

The man looked wildly around him—then took the pen in his hand.

"Sign your confession at once," said the Superintendent.

Colville gave an awful laugh.

"Your law cannot have me now," he said, looking at the Superintendent; "you are too late for that—so I don't mind signing." He scribbled his name feebly at the bottom of the sheet of paper. "She is lost to us both, Lidderdale," he continued, "that is my only comfort."

This was his final remark. He sank back on his pillows in another fit, in which he died.

Of course, the case against Lidderdale fell through. He left England almost immediately afterwards.

"I have nothing to live for," he said to me on the day that I saw him off.

But he is young, and Time, the healer, may cause him to think differently yet.



THE ANTHROPOLOGIST AT LARGE

BY

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ILLUSTRATIONS BY HENRY RALEIGH

THORNDYKE was not a newspaper reader. He viewed with extreme disfavor all scrappy and miscellaneous forms of literature, which, by presenting a disorderly series of unrelated items of information, tended, he considered, to destroy the habit of consecutive mental effort.

"It is most important," he once remarked to me, "habitually to pursue a definite train of thought, and to pursue it to a finish, instead of flitting indolently from one uncompleted topic to another, as the newspaper reader is so apt to do. Still, there is no harm in a daily paper—so long as you don't read it."

Accordingly, he patronized a morning paper, and his method of dealing with it was characteristic. After breakfast, the paper was laid on

the table, together with a blue pencil and a pair of office shears. A preliminary glance through the sheets enabled him to mark with the pencil those paragraphs that were to be read, and these were presently cut out and looked through, after which they were either thrown away or set aside to be pasted in an indexed book. The whole proceeding occupied, on an average, a quarter of an hour.

On the morning of which I am now speaking, he was thus engaged. The pencil had done its work, and the snick of the shears announced the final stage. Presently he paused with a newly excised cutting between his fingers, and, after glancing at it for a moment, he handed it to me.

"Another art robbery," he remarked. "Mysterious affairs, these—as to motive, I mean.

You can't melt down a picture or an ivory carving, and you can't put them on the market as they stand. The very qualities that give them their value make them totally unnegotiable."

"Yet, I suppose," said I, "the really inveterate collector — the pottery or stamp maniac, for instance — will buy these contraband goods, even though he dare not show them."

"Probably. No doubt the *cupiditas habendi*, the mere desire to possess, is the motive force, rather than any intelligent purpose —"

The discussion was at this point interrupted by a knock at the door, and a moment later my colleague admitted two gentlemen. One of these I recognized as Mr. Marchmont, a solicitor for whom we had occasionally acted; the other was a stranger — a typical Hebrew of the blond type — good-looking, faultlessly dressed, carrying a handbox, and obviously in a state of the most extreme agitation.

"Good morning to you, gentlemen," said Mr. Marchmont, shaking hands cordially. "I have brought a client of mine to see you, and when I tell you that his name is Solomon Lowe, it will be unnecessary for me to say what our business is."

"Oddly enough," replied Thorndyke, "we were, at the very moment that you knocked, discussing the bearings of his case."

"It is a horrible affair!" burst in Mr. Lowe. "I am distracted! I am ruined! I am in despair!"

He banged the handbox down on the table, and, flinging himself into a chair, buried his face in his hands.

"Come, come," remonstrated Marchmont, "we must be brave; we must be composed. Tell Dr. Thorndyke your story, and let us hear what he thinks of it."

He leaned back in his chair, and looked at his client with that air of patient fortitude that comes to us all so easily when we contemplate the misfortunes of other people.

"You must help us, sir," exclaimed Lowe, starting up again,—"you must indeed, or I shall go mad! But I will tell you what has happened, and then you must act at once. Spare no effort and no expense. Money is no object — at least, not in reason," he added, with native caution. He sat down once more, and in perfect English, though with a slight German accent, proceeded volubly: "My brother Isaac is probably known to you by name."

Thorndyke nodded.

"He is a great collector, and to some extent a dealer — that is to say, he makes his hobby a profitable hobby."

"What does he collect?" asked Thorndyke.

"Everything," replied our visitor, flinging his hands apart with a comprehensive gesture,—"everything that is precious and beautiful: pictures, ivories, jewels, watches, objects of art and virtu — everything. He is a Jew, and he has that passion for things that are rich and costly that has distinguished our race from the time of my namesake Solomon. His house in Howard Street, Piccadilly, is at once a museum and an art gallery. The rooms are filled with cases of gems, of antique jewelry, of coins and historic relics — some of priceless value; and the walls are covered with paintings, every one of which is a masterpiece. There is a fine collection of ancient weapons and armor, both European and Oriental; rare books, manuscripts, papyri, and valuable antiquities from Egypt, Assyria, Cyprus, and elsewhere. You see, his taste is quite catholic, and his knowledge of rare and curious things is probably greater than that of any other living man. He is never mistaken; no forgery deceives him, and hence the great prices that he obtains: for a work of art purchased from Isaac Lowe is a work certified as genuine beyond all cavil."

He paused to mop his face with a silk handkerchief, and then, with the same plaintive volubility, continued:

"My brother is unmarried. He lives for his collection, and he lives with it. The house is not a very large one, and the collection takes up most of it; but he keeps a suite of rooms for his own occupation, and has two servants — a man and wife — to look after him. The man, who is a retired police sergeant, acts as caretaker and watchman; the woman as housekeeper and cook, if required, but my brother lives largely at his club. And now I come to this present catastrophe."

He ran his fingers through his hair, took a deep breath, and continued:

"Yesterday morning Isaac started for Florence, by way of Paris; but his route was not certain, and he intended to break his journey at various points as circumstance determined. Before leaving, he put his collection in my charge, and it was arranged that I should occupy his rooms in his absence. Accordingly, I sent my things around and took possession."

"Now, Dr. Thorndyke, I am closely connected with the drama, and it is my custom to spend my evenings at my club, of which most of the members are actors. Consequently, I am rather late in my habits; but last night I was earlier than usual in leaving my club, for I started for my brother's house before half-past twelve. I felt, as you may suppose, the responsibility of the great charge I had undertaken; and you may, therefore, imagine my horror, my

consternation, my despair, when, on letting myself in with my latch-key, I found a police inspector, a sergeant, and a constable in the hall. There had been a robbery, sir, in my brief absence, and the account that the inspector gave of the affair was briefly this:

"While making the round of his district, he had noticed an empty hansom proceeding in leisurely fashion along Howard Street. There was nothing remarkable in this; but when, about ten minutes later, he was returning, and met a hansom, which he believed to be the same,

sprang in himself. The cabman lashed his horse, which started off at a gallop, and the policeman broke into a run, blowing his whistle and flashing his lantern on the cab. He followed it around the two turnings into Albemarle Street, and was just in time to see it turn into Piccadilly, where, of course, it was lost. However, he managed to note the number of the cab, which was 72,863, and he describes the man as short and thick-set, and thinks he was not wearing any hat."

"As he was returning, he met the inspector



DR. THORNDYKE, MEDICAL JURIST

proceeding along the same street in the same direction and at the same easy pace, the circumstance struck him as odd, and he made a note of the number of the cab in his pocket-book. It was 72,863, and the time was 11.35.

"At 11.45 a constable coming up Howard Street noticed a hansom standing opposite the door of my brother's house, and while he was looking at it, a man came out of the house carrying something, which he put in the cab. On this, the constable quickened his pace; and when the man returned to the house, and reappeared carrying what looked like a portmanteau, and closed the door softly behind him, the policeman's suspicions were aroused, and he hurried forward, hailing the cabman to stop."

"The man put his burden into the cab, and

and the sergeant, who had heard the whistle, and on hearing his report the three officers hurried to the house, where they knocked and rang for some minutes without any result. Being now more than suspicious, they went to the back of the house, through the mews, where, with great difficulty, they managed to force a window and effect an entrance into the house."

"Here their suspicions were soon changed to certainty, for, on reaching the first floor, they heard strange muffled groans proceeding from one of the rooms, the door of which was locked, though the key had not been removed. They opened the door, and found the caretaker and his wife sitting on the floor, with their backs against the wall. Both were bound hand and foot, and the head of each was enveloped in a

green baize bag; and when the bags were taken off, both were found to be lightly but effectively gagged.

"Each told the same story. The caretaker, fancying he heard a noise, armed himself with a truncheon, and came downstairs to the first floor, where he found the door of one of the rooms open and a light burning inside. He stepped on tiptoe to the open door, and was peering in, when he was seized from behind, and half suffocated by a pad held over his mouth, pinioned, gagged, and blindfolded with a bag.

"His assailant — whom he never saw — was amazingly strong and skilful, and handled him with perfect ease, although he, the caretaker, is a powerful man, and a good boxer and wrestler. The same thing happened to the wife, who had come down to look for her husband. She walked into the same trap, and was gagged, pinioned, and blindfolded without ever having seen the robber. So the only description that we have of this villain is that furnished by the constable."

"And the caretaker had no chance to see his truncheon?" said Thorndyke.

"Well, he got in one back-handed blow over

his right shoulder, which he thinks caught the burglar in the face; but the fellow caught him by the elbow, and gave his arm such a twist that he dropped the truncheon on the floor."

"Is the robbery a very extensive one?"

"Ah!" exclaimed Mr. Lowe. "That is just what we cannot say. But I fear it is. It seems that my brother had quite recently drawn out of his bank four thousand pounds in notes and gold. These little transactions are often carried out in



"BOUND HAND AND FOOT, AND THE HEAD OF EACH ENVELOPED IN A GREEN BAIZE BAG"

cash rather than by check,"—here I caught a twinkle in Thorndyke's eye,—“and the caretaker says that a few days ago Isaac brought home several parcels, which were put away temporarily in a strong cupboard. He seemed to be very pleased with his new acquisitions, and gave the caretaker to understand that they were of extraordinary rarity and value.

"Now, this cupboard has been cleared out. Not a vestige is left in it but the wrappings of the parcels. So, although nothing else has been touched, it is pretty clear that goods to the value of four thousand pounds have been taken. But, when we consider what an excellent buyer my brother is, it becomes highly probable that the actual value of those things is two or three times that amount, or even more. It is a dreadful, dreadful business, and Isaac will hold me responsible for it all."

"Is there no further clue?" asked Thorndyke. "What about the cab, for instance?"

"Oh, the cab!" groaned Lowe. "That clue failed. The police must have mistaken the number. They telephoned immediately to all the police stations, and a watch was set, with the result that number 72,863 was stopped as it

was going home for the night. But it then turned out that the cab had not been off the rank since eleven o'clock, and the driver had been in the shelter all the time, with several other men. But there is a clue; I have it here."

Mr. Lowe's face brightened, for once, as he reached out for the bandbox.

"The houses in Howard Street," he explained, as he untied the fastening, "have small balconies to the first-floor windows at the back. Now, the thief entered by one of these



"HE OPENED THE BOX WITH A FLOURISH AND BROUGHT FORTH A RATHER SHABBY BILLYCOCK HAT"

windows, having climbed up a rain-water pipe to the balcony. It was a gusty night, as you will remember; and this morning, as I was leaving the house, the butler next door called to me and gave me this; he had found it lying in the balcony of his house."

He opening the bandbox with a flourish and brought forth a rather shabby billycock hat.

"I understand," said he, "that by examining a hat it is possible to deduce from it, not only the bodily characteristics of the wearer, but also his mental and moral qualities, his state of health, his pecuniary position, his past history, and even his domestic relations and the peculiarities of his place of abode. Am I right in this supposition?"

The ghost of a smile flitted across Thorndyke's face as he laid the hat upon the remains of the newspaper. "We must not expect too much," he observed. "Hats, as you know, have a way of changing owners. Your own hat, for instance" (a very spruce hard felt), "is a new one, I think."

"Got it last week," said Mr. Lowe.

"Exactly. It is an expensive hat, by Lin-

coln and Bennett, and I see you have judiciously written your name in indelible marking-ink on the lining. Now, a new hat suggests a discarded predecessor. What do you do with your old hats?"

"My man has them, but they don't fit him. I suppose he sells them or gives them away."

"Very well. Now, a good hat like yours has a long life, and remains serviceable long after it has become shabby; and the probability is that many of your hats pass from owner to owner — from you to the shabby genteel, and from them to the shabby ungentle. And it is a fair assumption that there are, at this moment, an appreciable number of tramps wearing hats by Lincoln and Bennett, marked in indelible ink with the name S. Lowe; and any one who should examine those hats, as you suggest, might draw some very misleading deductions as to the personal habits of S. Lowe."

Mr. Marchmont chuckled audibly, and then, remembering the gravity of the occasion, suddenly became portentously solemn.

"So you think that the hat is of no use, after all?" said Mr. Lowe, in a tone of deep disappointment.

"I won't say that," replied Thorndyke. "We may learn something from it. Leave it with me, at any rate. But you must let the police know that I have it; they will want to see it, of course."

"And you will try to get those things, won't you?" pleaded Lowe.

"I will think over the case. But you understand, or Mr. Marchmont does, that this is hardly in my province. I am a medical jurist, and this is not a medico-legal case."

"Just what I told him," said Marchmont. "But you will do me a great kindness if you will look into the matter. Make it a medico-legal case," he added persuasively.

Thorndyke repeated his promise, and the two men took their departure.

For some time after they had left, my colleague remained silent, regarding the hat with a quizzical smile. "It is like a game of forfeits," he remarked at length, "and we have to find the owner of 'this very pretty thing.'" He lifted it with a pair of forceps into a better light, and began to look at it more closely.

"Perhaps," said he, "we have done Mr. Lowe an injustice, after all. This is certainly a very remarkable hat."

"It is as round as a basin," I exclaimed. "Why, the fellow's head must have been turned in a lathe!"

Thorndyke laughed. "The point," said he, "is this. This is a hard hat, and so must have fitted fairly, or it could not have been worn; and it was a cheap hat, and so was not made to measure. But a man with a head that shape has got to come to a clear understanding with his hat. No ordinary hat would go on at all."

"Now, you see what he has done — no doubt on the advice of some friendly hatter. He has bought a hat of a suitable size, and he has made it hot — probably steamed it. Then he has jammed it, while still hot and soft, on to his head, and allowed it to cool and set before removing it. That is evident from the distortion of the brim. The important corollary is that this hat fits his head exactly — is, in fact, a perfect mold of it; and this fact, together with the cheap quality of the hat, furnishes the further corollary that it has probably had only a single owner."

"And now let us turn it over and look at the outside. You notice at once the absence of old dust. Allowing for the circumstance that it had been out all night, it is decidedly clean. Its owner has been in the habit of brushing it, and is therefore presumably a decent, orderly man. But if you look at it in a good light, you see a kind of bloom on the felt, and through this lens you can make out particles of a fine white powder that has worked into the surface."

He handed me his lens, through which I could distinctly see the particles to which he referred.

"Then," he continued, "under the curl of the brim and in the folds of the hat-band, where the brush has not been able to reach it, the powder has collected quite thickly, and we can see that it is a very fine powder, and very white, like flour. What do you make of that?"

"I should say that it is connected with some industry. He may be engaged in some factory or works, or, at any rate, may live near a factory and have to pass it frequently."

"Yes; and I think we can distinguish between the two possibilities. For, if he only passes the factory, the dust will be on the outside of the hat only; the inside will be protected by his head. But if he is engaged in the works, the dust will be inside, too, as the hat will hang on a peg in the dust-laden atmosphere, and his head will also be powdered, and so convey the dust to the inside."

He turned the hat over once more, and as I brought the powerful lens to bear upon the dark lining, I could clearly distinguish a number of white particles in the interstices of the fabric. "The powder is on the inside too," I said.

He took the lens from me, and, having verified my statement, proceeded with the examination. "You notice," he said, "that the leather head-lining is stained with grease, and this staining is more pronounced at the sides and back. His hair, therefore, is naturally greasy, or he greases it artificially; for, if the staining were caused by perspiration, it would be most marked opposite the forehead."

He peered anxiously into the interior of the hat, and eventually turned down the head-lining; and immediately there broke out upon his face a gleam of satisfaction.

"Ha!" he exclaimed. "This is a stroke of luck. I was afraid our neat and orderly friend had defeated us with his brush. Pass me the small dissecting forceps, Jervis."

I handed him the instrument, and he proceeded to pick out daintily, from the space behind the head-lining, some half dozen short hairs, which he laid, with infinite tenderness, on a sheet of white paper.

"There are several more on the other side," I said, pointing them out to him.

"Yes; but we must leave some for the police," he answered, with a smile. "They must have the same chance as ourselves, you know."

"But surely," I said, as I bent down over the paper, "these are pieces of horsehair!"

"I think not," he replied; "but the microscope will show. At any rate, this is the kind of hair I should expect to find with a head of that shape."

"Well, it is extraordinarily coarse," said I, "and two of the hairs are nearly white."

"Yes — black hairs beginning to turn gray. And now, as our preliminary survey has given such encouraging results, we will proceed to more exact methods; and we must waste no time, for we shall have the police here presently to rob us of our treasure."

"We will sample the dust from the outside first," said Thorndyke, laying the hat upon the work-bench. "Are you ready, Polton?"

The assistant slipped his foot into the stirrup of the pump and worked the handle vigorously, while Thorndyke drew the glass nozzle slowly along the hat-brim under the curled edge. And, as the nozzle passed along, the white coating van-



"IT IS A MOST ASTONISHING HEAD"

He carefully folded up the paper containing the hairs, and, taking the hat in both hands, as if it were some sacred vessel, ascended with me to the laboratory on the next floor.

"Now, Polton," he said to his laboratory assistant, "we have here a specimen for examination, and time is precious. First of all, we want your patent dust-extractor."

The little man bustled to a cupboard and brought a singular appliance somewhat like a miniature vacuum cleaner. He had made it from a bicycle foot-pump, by reversing the piston-valve, and it was fitted with a glass nozzle and a small detachable glass receiver for collecting the dust, at the end of a flexible metal tube.

ished as if by magic, leaving the felt absolutely clean and black, and simultaneously the glass receiver became clouded with a white deposit.

"We will leave the other side for the police," said Thorndyke. And, as Polton ceased pumping, he detached the receiver and laid it on a sheet of paper, on which he wrote in pencil, "Outside," and covered it with a small bell-glass. A fresh receiver having been fitted on, the nozzle was now drawn over the silk lining of the hat, and then through the space behind the leather head-lining on one side; and now the dust that collected in the receiver was of the usual gray color and fluffy texture, and included two more hairs.

"And now," said Thorndyke, when the second receiver had been detached and set aside, "we want a mold of the inside of the hat, and we must make it by the quickest method; there is no time to make a paper mold. It is a most astonishing head," he added, taking down from a nail a pair of large calipers, which he applied to the inside of the hat; "six inches and nine tenths long by six and six tenths broad, which gives us"—he made a rapid calculation on a scrap of paper—"the extraordinarily high cephalic index of 95.6."

Polton now took possession of the hat, and, having stuck a band of wet tissue-paper round the inside, mixed a small bowl of plaster-of-Paris and very dexterously ran a stream of the thick liquid on the tissue paper, where it quickly solidified. A second and a third application resulted in a broad ring of solid plaster an inch thick, forming a perfect mold of the inside of the hat; and in a few minutes the slight contraction of the plaster, in setting, rendered the mold sufficiently loose to allow of its being slipped out on a board to dry.

We were none too soon, for, even as Polton was removing the mold, the electric bell, which I had switched to the laboratory, announced a visitor; and when I went down, I found a police sergeant waiting, with a note from Superintendent Miller requesting the immediate transfer of the hat.

"The next thing to be done," said Thorndyke, when the sergeant had departed with the bandbox, "is to measure the thickness of the hairs, and make a transverse section of one, and examine the dust. The sectioning we will leave to Polton. As time is an object, Polton, you had better embed the hair in thick gum and freeze it hard on the microtome, and be very careful to cut the section at right angles to the length of the hair. Meanwhile, we will get to work with the microscope."

The hairs proved, upon measurement, to have the surprisingly large diameter of $1/135$ of an inch—fully double that of ordinary hairs; but they were unquestionably human. As to the white dust, it presented a problem that even Thorndyke was unable to solve. The application of reagents showed it to be carbonate of lime, but its source remained a mystery for a time.

"The larger particles," said Thorndyke, with his eye applied to the microscope, "appear to be transparent, crystalline, and distinctly laminated in structure. It is not chalk, it is not whiting, it is not any kind of cement. What can it be?"

"Could it be any kind of shell?" I suggested. "For instance——"

"Of course!" he exclaimed, starting up; "you have hit it, Jervis, as you always do. It must be mother-of-pearl. Polton, give me a pearl shirt-button out of your oddments-box."

The button was duly produced by the thrifty Polton, dropped into an agate mortar, and speedily reduced to powder, a tiny pinch of which Thorndyke placed under the microscope.

"This powder," said he, "is, naturally, much coarser than our specimen, but the identity of character is unmistakable. Jervis, you are a treasure! Just look at it."

I glanced down the microscope, and then pulled out my watch. "Yes," I said, "there is no doubt about it, I think; but I must be off. Anstey urged me to be in court by 11.30 at the latest."

With infinite reluctance, I collected my notes and papers and departed, leaving Thorndyke diligently copying addresses out of the Post Office Directory.

My business at the court detained me the whole of the day, and it was nearly dinner-time when I reached our chambers. Thorndyke had not yet come in, but he arrived half an hour later, tired and hungry, and not very communicative.

"What have I done?" he repeated, in answer to my inquiries. "I have walked miles of dirty pavement, and I have visited all the pearl-shell cutters in London, with one exception; and I have not found what I was looking for. The one mother-of-pearl factory that remains, however, is the most likely, and I propose to look in there to-morrow morning. Meanwhile, we have completed our data, with Polton's assistance. Here is a tracing of our friend's skull taken from the mold; you see, it is an extreme type of brachycephalic skull, and markedly unsymmetrical. Here is a transverse section of one of his hairs, which is quite circular—unlike yours or mine, which would be oval. We have the mother-of-pearl dust from the outside of the hat, and from the inside similar dust mixed with various fibers and a few granules of rice starch. Those are our data."

"Supposing the hat should not be that of the burglar, after all?" I suggested.

"That would be annoying. But I think it is his, and I think I can guess at the nature of the art treasures that were stolen."

"And you don't intend to enlighten me?"

"My dear fellow," he replied, "you have all the data. Enlighten yourself by the exercise of your own brilliant faculties. Don't give way to mental indolence."

I endeavored, from the facts in my possession, to construct the personality of the mysterious burglar, and failed utterly; nor was I more



"THE LEG WAS FOLLOWED BY A BACK AND A CURIOUS GLOBULAR HEAD"

successful in my endeavor to guess at the nature of the stolen property; and it was not until the following morning, when we had set out on our quest and were approaching Limehouse, that Thorndyke would revert to the subject.

"We are now," he said, "going to the factory of Badcomb and Martin, shell importers and cutters, in the West India Dock Road. If I don't find my man there, I shall hand the facts over to the police and waste no more time on the case."

"What is your man like?" I asked.

"I am looking for an elderly Japanese, wearing a new hat or, more probably, a cap, and having a bruise on his right cheek or temple. I am also looking for a cab-yard. But here we are at the works, and as it is now close on the dinner-hour, we will wait and see the hands come out before making any inquiries."

We walked slowly past the tall, blank-faced building, and were just turning to re-pass it when a steam whistle sounded, a wicket opened in the main gate, and a stream of workmen—each powdered with white, like a miller—emerged into the street. We halted to watch the men as they came out, one by one, through the wicket, turning to the right or the left toward their

homes or some near-by coffee-shop; but none of them answered the description that my friend had given.

The outgoing stream grew thinner, and at length ceased; the wicket was shut with a bang, and once more Thorndyke's quest appeared to have failed.

"Is that all of them, I wonder?" he said, with a shade of disappointment in his tone.

But, even as he spoke, the wicket opened again, and a leg protruded. The leg was followed by a back and a curious globular head, covered with iron-gray hair, and surmounted by a cloth cap, the whole appertaining to a short, very thick-set man, who was evidently talking to some one inside.

Suddenly he turned his head to look across the street; and immediately I recognized, by the pallid yellow complexion and narrow eye-slits, the physiognomy of a typical Japanese. The man remained talking for almost another minute; then, drawing out his other leg, he turned toward us; and now I perceived that the right side of his face, over the prominent cheekbone, was discolored as if by a severe bruise.

"Ha!" said Thorndyke, turning round sharply as the man approached. "Either this

is our man, or it is an incredible coincidence." He walked away at a moderate pace, allowing the Japanese to overtake us slowly, and when the man had at length passed us, he increased his speed somewhat, so as to keep near him.

Our friend stepped along briskly, and presently turned up a side street, whither we followed at a respectful distance, Thorndyke holding open his pocket-book and appearing to engage me in an earnest discussion, but keeping a sharp eye on his quarry.

"There he goes!" said my colleague, as the man suddenly disappeared,— "the house with the green window-sashes. That will be number thirteen."

It was; and, having verified the fact, we passed on, and took the next turning that would lead us back to the main road.

Some twenty minutes later, as we were strolling past the door of a coffee-shop, a man came out, filling his pipe with an air of leisurely satisfaction. His hat and clothes were powdered with white, like those of the workmen whom we had seen come out of the factory. Thorndyke accosted him.

"Is that a flour-mill up the road there?"

"No, sir; pearl-shell. I work there myself."

"Pearl-shell, eh?" said Thorndyke. "I suppose that will be an industry that will tend to attract the aliens. Do you find it so?"

"No, sir; not at all. The work's too hard. We've only got one foreigner in the place, and he ain't an alien—he's a Jap."

"A Jap!" exclaimed Thorndyke. "Really? Now, I wonder if that would chance to be our old friend Kotei—you remember Kotei?" he added, turning to me.

"No, sir; this man's name is Futashima. There was another Jap in the works, a chap named Itu, a pal of Futashima's, but he's left."

"Ah! I don't know either of them. By the way, usen't there to be a cab-yard just above here?"

"There's a yard up Rankin Street, where they keep vans and one or two cabs. That chap Itu works there now. Taken to horse-flesh. Drives a van sometimes. Queer start for a Jap."

"Very," Thorndyke thanked the man for his information, and we sauntered on toward Rankin Street. The yard was at this time nearly deserted, being occupied only by an ancient and crazy four-wheeler and a very shabby hansom.

"Curious old houses, these that back on to the yard," said Thorndyke, strolling into the inclosure. "That timber gable, now," pointing to a house from a window of which a man was watching us suspiciously, "is quite an interesting survival."

"What's your business, Mister?" demanded the man in a gruff tone.

"We are just having a look at these quaint old houses," replied Thorndyke, edging toward the back of the hansom, and opening his pocket-book, as if to make a sketch.

"Well, you can see 'em from outside," said the man.

"So we can," said Thorndyke suavely, "but not so well, you know."

At this moment the pocket-book slipped from his hand and fell, scattering a number of loose papers about the ground under the hansom, and our friend at the window laughed joyously.

"No hurry," murmured Thorndyke, as I stooped to help him gather up the papers—which he did in the most surprisingly slow and clumsy manner. "It is fortunate that the ground is dry." He stood up with the rescued papers in his hand, and, having scribbled down a brief note, slipped the book into his pocket.

"Now you'd better mizzle," observed the man at the window.

"Thank you," replied Thorndyke; "I think we had." And, with a pleasant nod at the custodian, he proceeded to adopt the hospitable suggestion.

"Mr. Marchmont has been here, sir, with Inspector Badger and another gentleman," said Polton, as we entered our chambers. "They said they would call again about five."

"Then," replied Thorndyke, "as it is now a quarter to five, there is just time for us to have a wash, while you get the tea ready."

Our visitors arrived punctually, the third gentleman being, as we had supposed, Mr. Solomon Lowe. I had not seen Inspector Badger before, and he now impressed me as showing a tendency to invert the significance of his own name by endeavoring to "draw" Thorndyke—in which, however, he was not very successful.

"I hope you are not going to disappoint Mr. Lowe, sir," he began facetiously. "You have had a good look at that hat,—we saw your marks on it,—and he expects that you will be able to point us out the man, name, and address all complete." He grinned patronizingly at our unfortunate client, who was looking even more haggard and worn than he had been on the previous morning.

"Have you—have you made any—discovery?" Mr. Lowe asked with pathetic eagerness.

"We examined the hat very carefully, and I think we have established a few facts of some interest."

"Did your examination of the hat furnish any information as to the nature of the stolen property, sir?" inquired the humorous inspector.

Thorndyke turned to the officer with a face as expressionless as a wooden mask.

"We thought it possible," said he, "that it might consist of works of Japanese art, such as netsukes, paintings, and such like."

Mr. Lowe uttered an exclamation of delighted astonishment, and the facetiousness faded rather suddenly from the inspector's countenance.

"I don't know how you can have found out," said he. "We have known it only half an hour ourselves, and the wire came direct from Florence to Scotland Yard."

"Perhaps you can describe the thief to us," said Mr. Lowe, in the same eager tone.

"I dare say the inspector can do that," replied Thorndyke.

"Yes, I think so," replied the officer. "He is a short, strong man, with a dark complexion and hair turning gray. He has a very round head, and he is probably a workman engaged at some whitening or cement works. That is all we know; if you can tell us any more, sir, we shall be very glad to hear it."

"I can only offer a few suggestions," said Thorndyke, "but perhaps you may find them useful. For instance, at 13 Birket Street, Limehouse, there is living a Japanese gentleman named Futashima, who works at Badcomb and Martin's mother-of-pearl factory. I think that if you were to call on him, and let him try on the hat that you have, it would probably fit him."

The inspector scribbled ravenously in his note-book, and Mr. Marchmont—an old admirer of Thorndyke's—leaned back in his chair, chuckling softly and rubbing his hands.

"Then," continued my colleague, "there is in Rankin Street, Limehouse, a cab-yard, where another Japanese gentleman, named Itu, is employed. You might find out where Itu was the night before last; and if you should chance to see a hansom cab there,—number 22,481,—have a good look at it. In the frame of the number-plate you will find six small holes. Those holes may have held brads, and the brads may have held a false number-card. At any rate, you might ascertain where that cab was at 11.30 the night before last. That is all I have to suggest."

Mr. Lowe leaped from his chair. "Let us go—now—at once! There is no time to be lost. A thousand thanks to you, doctor—a thousand million thanks. Come!"

He seized the inspector by the arm and forcibly dragged him toward the door, and a moment later we heard the footsteps of our visitors clattering down the stairs.

"It was not worth while to enter into explanations with them," said Thorndyke, as the footsteps died away—"nor perhaps with you?"

"On the contrary," I replied, "I am waiting to be fully enlightened."

"Well, then, my inferences in this case were perfectly simple ones, drawn from well-known anthropological facts. The human race, as you know, is roughly divided into three groups—the black, the white, and the yellow races. But, apart from the variable quality of color, these races have certain fixed characteristics, associated especially with the shape of the skull, of the eye-sockets, and the hair. So that we have, in the black races, long skull, long orbits, flat hair; in the white races, oval skull, oval orbits, oval hair; and in the yellow races, round skull, round orbits, round hair."

"Now, in this case we had to deal with a very short, round skull. But you cannot argue from races to individuals; there are many short-skulled Englishmen. But when I found, associated with that skull, hairs that were circular in section, it became practically certain that the individual was a Mongol of some kind. The mother-of-pearl dust and the granules of rice starch from the inside of the hat favored this view, for the pearl-shell industry is specially connected with China and Japan, while starch granules from the hat of an Englishman would probably be wheat starch."

"Then, as to the hair. It was, as I mentioned to you, circular in section, and of very large diameter. Now, I have examined many thousands of hairs, and the thickest that I have ever seen came from the heads of Japanese; the hairs from this hat were as thick as any of them. But the hypothesis that the burglar was a Japanese received confirmation in various ways. Thus, he was short, though strong and active, and the Japanese are the shortest of the Mongol races, and very strong and active."

"Then, his remarkable skill in handling the powerful caretaker—a retired police sergeant—suggested the Japanese art of jiu-jitsu; while the nature of the robbery was consistent with the value set by the Japanese on works of art. Still, it was nothing but a bare hypothesis until we had seen Futashima—and, indeed, is no more now. I may, after all, be entirely mistaken."

He was not, however; and at this moment there reposes in my drawing-room an ancient netsuke, which came as a thank-offering from Mr. Isaac Lowe on the recovery of the booty from a back room in 13 Birket Street, Limehouse. The treasure, of course, was given in the first place to Thorndyke, but transferred by him to my wife, on the pretense that, but for my suggestion of shell-dust, the robber would never have been traced. Which is, on the face of it, preposterous.

Remember you also have the REQUIRED CRITICAL READING - [This introduction](#) to Christopher Pittard, *Purity and contamination in late Victorian detective fiction*. Routledge, 2016. Try and make some connections with reading this week and in term 1 where pertinent.