

# Adventures by Gaslight



"What one man can invent another can discover."

*Sherlock Holmes*

*Sherlock Holmes*

# CONSULTING DETECTIVE<sup>T.M.</sup>



"I AM DELIGHTED THAT YOU HAVE COME DOWN, MR. HOLMES.

# Adventures by Gaslight

by  
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## CLUE POINT LISTING

### LONDON

AREA SE	AREA SW	AREA NW	AREA WC	AREA EC
1 SE.....12	2 SW.....15	8 NW.....28	4 WC.....22	6 EC.....26
6 SE.....21	5 SW.....18	12 NW.....68	5 WC.....33	7 EC.....35
7 SE.....41	7 SW.....48	14 NW.....83	6 WC.....118	8 EC.....38
13 SE.....56	8 SW.....51	18 NW.....110	9 WC.....67	14 EC.....53
15 SE.....66	11 SW.....60	22 NW.....34	12 WC.....13	15 EC.....5
21 SE.....141	13 SW.....142	26 NW.....98	14 WC.....107	30 EC.....84
22 SE.....76	22 SW.....134	31 NW.....108	16 WC.....79	34 EC.....55
23 SE.....96	47 SW.....24	43 NW.....88	17 WC.....81	35 EC.....11
32 SE.....116	59 SW.....89	47 NW.....128	20 WC.....106	36 EC.....58
33 SE.....120	100 SW.....92	55 NW.....7	22 WC.....10	38 EC.....82
34 SE.....139		64 NW.....137	28 WC.....122	39 EC.....62
36 SE.....1		65 NW.....77	43 WC.....124	52 EC.....86
42 SE.....3		74 NW.....39	56 WC.....103	69 EC.....111
43 SE.....132		93 NW.....2	70 WC.....136	95 EC.....64
50 SE.....130		95 NW.....140	83 WC.....126	96 EC.....20
53 SE.....44			84 WC.....94	97 EC.....8
57 SE.....30			93 WC.....101	
58 SE.....49			94 WC.....37	
85 SE.....25				

### PARIS

1 PA.....19	31 PA.....102	57 PA.....129
3 PA.....23	33 PA.....105	60 PA.....113
6 PA.....59	35 PA.....69	63 PA.....6
7 PA.....63	38 PA.....109	66 PA.....50
8 PA.....100	40 PA.....85	71 PA.....87
12 PA.....72	41 PA.....123	72 PA.....95
13 PA.....40	42 PA.....9	73 PA.....14
15 PA.....70	44 PA.....121	77 PA.....61
18 PA.....74	45 PA.....125	80 PA.....16
19 PA.....135	46 PA.....65	85 PA.....80
21 PA.....42	47 PA.....133	86 PA.....46
23 PA.....93	49 PA.....36	88 PA.....57
25 PA.....97	50 PA.....27	91 PA.....32
28 PA.....78	52 PA.....127	99 PA.....29

Tuesday, May 21 — Saturday, May 25 1889



OLD HOUSES, QUAI DES GRANDS AUGUSTINS

## CLUE 1

We ring the doorbell at the house on the corner of Brad Street and Cornwall Road. After waiting a few moments, the door is opened and we are greeted by a woman of about sixty years. She is dressed in black and has about her a sorrowful air.

"Yes, gentlemen? What can I do for you?"

"We are looking for a certain Mr. Perry Lexington. Would you happen to know where we could find him?"

"I am sorry, sir, but you are undoubtedly mistaken in coming to this address. I am a widow. My husband Francis passed away a few months ago, and we have no other family in London."

"And you have never heard the name Perry Lexington?" insists Wiggins.

"No, gentlemen. I regret that I cannot help you, but there is nothing else that I can think to tell you."

We apologize for disturbing her and take our leave.

## CLUE 2

We have been sitting patiently in the waiting room of Doctor Agar's surgery for some time when he ushers us into his consulting office and invites us to take our places in the armchairs arranged in front of the massive walnut table he uses as a desk.

"Well, gentlemen, how can I help you?" he asks us with an amiable smile.

"We were told you were the Thackers' family doctor?" Wiggins turns the statement into a question.

"Yes, that is correct. I am well acquainted with the Thackers. But may I know why you are asking this question?"

"As you may already know," explains Wiggins, "a theft was committed last night at the home of Henry Thacker. In addition, Mr. Thacker himself left quite hurriedly, at noon, and his wife Amelie does not know where he could have gone."

"I was not up to date on the facts," says Doctor Agar who looks disturbed by the news. "But I do not quite understand the point of your visit here."

"Sherlock Holmes was asked to look into the matter and we are helping him by following all possible avenues of investigation. Needless to tell you, Doctor, our only goal is to help Mrs. Thacker."

"Well, in that case, gentlemen, I will certainly do all within my abilities to help you in any way."

"Henry Thacker is an old acquaintance, and I also know his sister, Mrs. Rylott, quite well. Henry is a very busy man, bursting with energy, fascinated and intrigued by all the innovations of our modern world."

"And his wife?"

"Amelie? What a charming young woman! She is the incarnation of grace and femininity itself. She possesses the charm so typical of the women of her country; she is French as you probably already know. I can easily understand why Henry became so enamoured of her, for she is most attractive."

"Is it the case that you may have prescribed a sleeping powder for Mrs. Thacker?"

"Yes, indeed. Despite her love of life and her enthusiasm, Amelie is by nature somewhat anxious. Perhaps she misses her homeland; in any case, she occasionally suffers from insomnia. On several occasions I have prescribed sleeping powders from the chemists of Leath and Ross."

"Quite recently, she came for a consultation and I found her most nervous and anxious. I was sure something was bothering her. I thought perhaps a short voyage to the Continent would do her some good. I planned to speak to Henry about it, but I had not yet had the opportunity."

"Had Mr. Thacker and his wife ever approached you about some particular difficulty . . . uh . . . conjugal difficulties, for example?" asks Wiggins with some embarrassment.

"Absolutely not. They formed, and still form, I am convinced, the perfect couple. If there had been any such problem, I am sure one or the other would have come to see me."

"Are you familiar with the servants of the house?" asks Wiggins.

"I occasionally saw Miss . . ."

"Miss Forster," says Wiggins.

"Miss Forster, that's the name. Why do you ask?"

"Both Miss Forster and the butler Nigel O'Brady were arrested, and we would like to know your opinion of them."

"You ask me a delicate question. Let us say that Miss Forster seems to be a good person, very devoted to her mistress. Amelie showed a similar attachment to her, I should add."

"And Nigel O'Brady?"

"I only know him by sight. My impression of him is a lot less favourable, but I would not want to say anything about him that would prejudice you against him."

"One last question, Doctor, if you permit. You mentioned Mr. Thacker's sister, Mrs. Rylott. Could you possibly tell us where we could find her?"

"She lives at thirty-one Hanover Square, London. I am afraid I can think of nothing else to tell you in this matter, and I do have patients waiting to see me."

We thank Doctor Agar warmly and take our leave.

## CLUE 3

A group of about twenty people stands before us. They hold themselves perfectly still, their faces tilted upward and their eyes fixed at some distant point in the sky above, as they sing. "Bringing in the sheaves, bringing in the sheaves," while a shrill piano accompanies them. We wait until the hymn is finished and the indigents are walking in mournful procession towards the kettles of steaming soup at the other end of the room before approaching the woman standing in front of them.

Major Barbara is a somewhat stout woman of about forty-five years, whose brusque mannerisms harmonize perfectly with the severity of her uniform. The copper buttons adorning her coat shine brightly in the dim light of the shelter and seem to bring in a few sun rays.

Major Barbara recognizes us immediately.

"My friends, my friends," she says to us, "I am glad to see you. Satan has once again set upon one of God's most valiant soldiers. I assume you have come to speak to me about Anny Forster?"

"Exactly, Major," replies Wiggins. "We were visited by Mike Collier this morning. He told us you had advised him to come and see us."

"Yes, I have observed that the fight you wage against evil often converges with our own, and with your gracious help maybe Donald will be able to more than ever uplift the souls of those you see around us."

"What can you tell us about Anny Forster and Mike Collier?" asks Wiggins.

"Mike has been working with us for close to ten years. When he arrived in London he was very young. He was alone in this great city, and he was shocked by the vice and the misery which he saw all around him. I showed him the path of light that brought him to our side in the war against evil."

"What exactly does he do here at the shelter?" interrupts Wiggins.

"He goes to the heart of the battle, to the streets of the East End. The hours he spends helping those who have no refuge in the night but the penny sit-ups are a great aid in our struggle to defeat the forces of Satan."

"And Miss Forster?" asks Wiggins.

"She came here three years ago, with her mistress, Mrs. Thacker, who desired to join us in our fight against evil. And it was here that Anny and Mike first met each other."

"Can you tell us Mrs. Thacker's and Anny Forster's duties

within your organization?"

"They are both devoted young women. Mrs. Thacker has shown herself to be very generous, for she helps us financially in addition to the time she donates. She also participates regularly in the organization of the plays we perform for charity, to support our cause. She was an actress at one time, as you probably know, like Miss Forster, to whom she seems to feel a sincere affection, despite the difference in their social positions. Miss Forster helps us as best she can, and has proved, by her hard work and her courage, that the forces of God will triumph in this world. I cannot believe she is guilty. She must not give up hope. Cecilia was shocked when she learned of her arrest this morning."

"Cecilia?" asks Wiggins.

"Yes, Cecilia Sipton."

"She knows Miss Forster?"

"Of course, and she often works with Mrs. Thacker."

"How is Mrs. Sipton?" asks Watson who has not forgotten the tears of the charming widow of the tea magnate.

"She is to marry Donald Stillwater at the end of the month. The wedding has yet to be announced, but the date of the ceremony is set for the twenty-ninth. They are to be married at St. Paul's. Cecilia is beaming with happiness."

"Do you know Nigel O'Brady, the Thackers' butler?"

"Yes, a sheep gone astray in his youth, a victim of the forces of evil. But he has repented and now helps us, proving once more that Satan is not the master. Amelie was fully aware of his past and insisted that her husband take him on. She believed, and she was right, that honest work is the path to salvation."

"Thank you, Major. Your help has been most valuable."

#### CLUE 4

This area of the Exhibition is certainly interesting, but we can find no one who has heard of Jules Carcelle. Despite the fascinating sights, we decide to leave quickly.

#### CLUE 5

We are kept waiting only a few moments during which time we enjoy the brightly coloured posters hanging on the walls of the office of Jardine, Matheson & Co.

A charming red-haired woman with green eyes finishes helping the customer ahead of us before turning to us.

"Excuse us for inconveniencing you," says Wiggins whose moroseness seems to have suddenly disappeared at the sight of the woman, "but I would like to know if it is possible to see your passenger lists."

"Unfortunately, that is not possible, sir," answers the young woman. "Is there some other way I might be able to help you?"

"If I may permit myself to insist," says Wiggins, "I have personally been assigned, by Scotland Yard, to make a discreet investigation into a matter of the utmost importance."

We pretend to be absorbed in the contemplation of a poster of the Taj Mahal to avoid being implicated in Wiggins' fabrications.

"Perhaps for you I could make an exception," says the young woman with a little smile and twinkling eyes. "Which dates and ships are you interested in?"

"Actually, I don't know what the date would have been," says Wiggins. "I am searching for a young woman arriving in England from Adelaide."

"I will be back in a moment," she says before leaving the room by the door in the back. True to her word, she soon returns with a large, heavy-looking log book.

"What is the name of the passenger?" she asks.

"Miss Forster, Miss Anny Forster."

The young woman leafs through her book tracing each column with her index finger. Arriving at the last page she says, "I am sorry. I have no passenger by that name on these lists which cover the last two years."

"Is it possible to see the books from previous years?" asks Wiggins.

"Alas, no," says the woman giving a deliciously feminine sigh. "We don't keep any older records. Believe me, I'm sorry to not be able to assist you in your investigation."

Wiggins thanks her warmly, assuring her of our appreciation for her understanding and devotion and adding that he would not hesitate to call upon her services if the occasion should present itself again one day.

#### CLUE 6

A small frail woman about sixty-five years old dressed all in black opens the door.

"Madame Sicard?" asks Francois le Villard.

"Yes. What can I do for you?"

"We believe you might know Madame Desmoulin."

"Yes, I do. I hope nothing has happened to her."

"No, rest assured, but we were hoping you could give us her current address."

Marceline Sicard gives us a long look and apparently decides she can tell us. She says softly, "She lives at ninety-nine rue de Paradis. It's on the corner of la rue du Faubourg Saint-Denis. A pretty little apartment, on the ground floor, given to her by her daughter."

"Do you know her daughter?"

"No, she just told me about her when I visited. We were drinking some herb tea to warm us up. It was after poor Raymonde's funeral. Raymonde Zaccharie. She worked with us at the book-store. At our age, you don't expect much, except to watch the people you know leave. . . ."

We thank Madame Sicard and quickly take our leave.

#### CLUE 7

We knock on the heavy wooden door. After a few moments, a small peephole in the middle of the door is opened and the wrinkled face of a very old man appears.

"If you have come to ask for something, it's useless to try. You'd be better off going elsewhere. I won't give you a thing."

"Excuse me, sir," says Wiggins, refusing to let himself be discouraged by this rather brutal conversation. "We would like to meet with Mr. Henry Thacker."

"That's me," says the man behind the peephole.

"Can we come in," asks Wiggins in a soft voice.

"No! Populus me sibilat, at mihi plundo. Ipse domi simul ac nummos contemplor in arca."

With that, he slams the peephole shut.

"Must be another Henry Thacker," says Wiggins.

#### CLUE 8

The landlady tells us that no Peter Rucastle lives at this address. The description of him we give her does not ring any bells either.

#### CLUE 9

Deputy Eugene de Lestang receives us in the offices designated for members of the Chamber. He is a large, tall man with a strong voice, who speaks perfect English, which greatly facilitates our conversation.

"I unfortunately cannot give you any details on what you call the Giraud affair, partly because it's confidential and partly because I know so little about it myself. I will, however, tell you this; perhaps you are aware that in my role as a parliamentary official I am particularly interested in military affairs and questions of national defense. A great number of deputies, if I do say so myself, are specialists in certain areas, for it would be difficult to be an expert in

all the political spheres. A few days ago I received a communication from Monsieur Giraud, who said he was prepared to furnish me, for a considerable sum of money, a document which, he said, would very much interest the top echelon of our military. The matter was to remain confidential, of course. I was not surprised that he approached me in this manner; I am aware that many countries operate in this fashion. But I am a staunch opponent of moral turpitude in the matter of politics, domestic as well as international, so I refused his offer. I immediately informed the Minister of the Interior. He, in turn, I believe, warned the Prefecture of Police who conducted a discreet enquiry. That is all I can tell you."

"What was the nature of this document?" asks Wiggins.

"I only know what Monsieur Giraud told me about it. He claimed the implications of this material were extremely important, and that it would totally change the conceptions we have about fighting a war."

"Mr. Thacker, the engineer whose disappearance precipitated our investigation, was researching the possibility of designing a flying machine heavier than air. Do you think that Mr. Giraud's information involved this research?"

"I don't want to exclude that possibility, but I am not able to confirm it either."

"Who is Mr. Giraud?"

"A man who is well known in all circles, neither estimable nor held in any regard. As a matter of fact his activities are rather suspicious, even though he has a network of powerful friends and financial backers. He has been linked with the Parisian *pegre*, the light-fingered gentry, but nothing can be proven and it is all hearsay."

"Have you seen him since he made this proposition?"

"No. When he left he said that if France was not interested, other countries would be, and that he had come to me first out of patriotism. The kind of false patriotism I scarcely believe in, as I am sure you understand."

"Are the French currently conducting research in the realm of such flying machines?"

"Of course, we are conducting research in this area as are all the great powers."

"Can you give us the names of any of the scientists or engineers engaged on this project?"

"Again, I am obligated to remain discreet; I am sure you will understand. I can, however, tell you that Monsieur Ader, the same man who installed the first telephone system in Paris ten years ago, is on the verge of obtaining some very interesting results."

"Would it be possible to meet him?"

"Unfortunately he is not in Paris at the moment."

We thank Eugene de Lestang for taking the time to meet with us, and we quickly take our leave, for the deputy is putting the last touches on an important speech he is to give tomorrow dealing with the laws concerning army recruitment and the regulation of the conditions of exemption.

## CLUE 10

Cox Bank .....	CLUE 112
Clifford Doolittle .....	CLUE 47

## CLUE 11

"Are you sure you're not working for Giraud?" says Quintin Hogg laughingly to Wiggins, as we enter the office.

"Giraud? Who is he?"

"Judging from what people say he is both important and dangerous. He influences all strata of Paris life."

"And why do you ask me that?" says Wiggins.

"Just joking, Wiggins. I just received a photograph from Paris and there's a strong resemblance. But enough of this idle talk. What

brings you here today?"

Wiggins quickly explains the details of the matter we are investigating.

"Concerning the stolen birds, I would advise you to see Barry O'Neill. I believe you have already met him."

We nod our heads in acquiescence.

"I have little doubt that he will have some information to give you. As for your horse racing amateur, I have never heard of him. I suggest you see Frank Kearny, the reporter for the *Sporting Gazette*."

"Thanks for the advice, Quin. By the way, do you happen to know anything about the corpse discovered at the Bloody Tower?"

"Only what was in *The Times* this morning."

"Thank you, again. Good-bye."

"Good luck!"

We make our way to the door with extreme care and agility to avoid being buried beneath the piles of reports and newspapers encumbering Quintin Hogg's crowded office.

## CLUE 12

The building we are looking for is two steps from Southwark Bridge. The landlady immediately answers the door.

"Does Mr. Overstreet live here?" asks Wiggins.

"Yes, of course, sir," she answers in a friendly voice. "His is the door on the left, at the top of the stairs."

"Is he in?"

"I believe so. When he's not at work, he usually stays in his room."

We thank her and quickly climb the dim narrow staircase leading to the third floor. We knock at the door on the left where a small rectangle of white paper proclaims in neat handwriting the name of the occupant, Marmaduke Overstreet.

"I'm coming," cries a voice from inside.

A few moments later, the door is opened and we find ourselves in front of a man of about fifty, his blond hair tousled. He is wearing a grey smock covered with stains of many colours.

"Is this the home of Marmaduke Overstreet, hansom driver?" asks Wiggins.

"That's me. Come in."

We enter the little apartment, which is lighted only by the large windows. The walls are covered with small representations of familiar London scenes. An unfinished watercolour is sitting on an easel. We immediately recognize the Quadrangle in the rain.

"My occupation causes me to travel the most famous streets of London throughout all seasons," says Overstreet, "and I like to paint them from memory when I have time. Are you art enthusiasts?"

"Unfortunately that is not the object of our visit," says Wiggins, careful not to offend the sensibilities of the driver, "but your talent is evident, judging by the works we see here."

Marmaduke Overstreet seems to be disappointed that we have not come to buy paintings.

"What can I do for you, then?"

"Would you happen to remember a trip you made last night at approximately half past seven?"

Overstreet thinks for a moment before answering. "I do remember picking up a ravishing young blonde woman near the depot. Would that be the fare you mean?"

"Yes. Do you remember where you dropped her off?"

"Of course! It was my last trip of the day. It was at the Allegro Theatre, in the Strand."

"Did you notice anything strange or unusual?"

"No. She seemed to be in quite a hurry, but that is hardly surprising. At that hour, all the passengers are in a rush when they are going to the theatre . . ." Marmaduke interrupts himself. "Wait a moment. I did actually notice something which seemed a little strange to me. She wasn't dressed up like most of the ladies are

when they go to the theatre."

We thank him enthusiastically for his help and we take our leave, once again complimenting him on his artistic talent.

### CLUE 13

"Mr. Attard left on a voyage last night."

### CLUE 14

Simone Delorme is a young woman about thirty years old, with a long sad face.

"I remember Ernestine quite well," she says to us. "We used to work together. We did the cleaning at the National Library. But I don't know her address. The last time I saw her was at Raymonde's funeral."

"Raymonde?"

"Yes, Raymonde Zaccharie. She died six months ago. But Ernestine and I didn't really talk. We didn't have the same age or the same interests, you see."

We understand.

### CLUE 15

"Ah, Wiggins. Yes, I've heard the fairy tale of the brilliant engineer who marries the beautiful French actress," says Langdale Pike languishing on the mauve divan. "Son of an excellent family, his mother died while bringing him into the world. His father, occupied performing important functions for his country, never recovered from the premature departure of his beloved wife. He raised young Henry and his sister, but he spent very little time with them, leaving their care to others. He died in eighteen-eighty-three, of fatigue and sadness, I hear."

"By the way, Wiggins, why are you asking about Henry Thacker? A new investigation on the part of Sherlock Holmes, I suppose?"

"Yes, a theft took place last night at his home and he has disappeared. That's why we would like to hear everything you know about him."

"Henry Thacker is a man of great intelligence, and as I mentioned, he is also a brilliant engineer. He is passionately interested by all the new technology, which, alas, does not make for fascinating conversation," sighs Langdale.

"Do you know of any weakness, however small?" asks Wiggins.

"Every man has his weakness, but the answer to your question is no. He is a gambler of course . . . but it's not what you imagine. He does not gamble away his fortune in the latest game, but he is a familiar presence at the racetrack."

Pike pauses to light the cigarette at the end of his seemingly interminable amber cigarette holder, as if he means to excite our curiosity and arouse our interest. He continues. "But he plays with small amounts, which is unusual for such an habitual player," says Langdale, delicately blowing a cloud of smoke in our direction.

"Does he win often?"

"Yes, often, perhaps too often. . . ."

"And his wife?"

"Ah, the divine and seductive Amelie! What grace and charm! How many heads has she turned and how many wives will breathe a sigh of relief when she begins to tarnish."

"Is she a coquette?" asks Wiggins.

"No, alas for yours truly, she is a faithful wife who loves her husband dearly. Not the least adventure, not a hint of scandal, even though a troubled past is sometimes mentioned, but only out of jealousy on the part of women who have received less of a blessing from the Creator, like Mrs. Rylott, her sister-in-law."

Langdale pauses to draw voluptuously from his cigarette. "You

see," he continues, "Henry Thacker met her while residing in Paris. He fell madly in love, and apparently he continues to feel the same way about her."

"What kind of life has she led since she moved to London?"

"A life I personally find lacking in interest," sighs Langdale. "She dedicates her time to the Salvation Army, as does her friend Cecelia Sipton, and she goes out only to go to the theatre—to see serious plays, that is."

"We thank you very much, Langdale," says Wiggins.

"You have yet to tell me what was stolen, dear Wiggins."

"Porcelain birds."

"Even thieves have no taste these days," sighs Langdale Pike with an air of resignation.

### CLUE 16

Mademoiselle Louise Renaud advises us to go see Marceline Sicard.

### CLUE 17

"This is all I find," says Wiggins as he joins us with a piece of paper in his hand.

"Henry James Thacker, born the twelfth of September, eighteen-fifty, in London, the son of Richard Brinsley Thacker and Joan Smith, his wife. One sister, named Rose. Mother died while giving birth. Father died in eighteen-eighty-three."

"Nigel O'Brady, born the seventh of May, eighteen-fifty, in Liverpool, son of Howard O'Brady and Molly Flanders, his wife. A brother, Patrick. Father died in eighteen-seventy-one. Mother remarried to Leo Mathew Maguire, who died in eighteen-eighty-one."

"Mary Ann Flannagan, born the third of January, eighteen-eighty-seven, in Chester. Orphan by birth."

"Mike Richard Collier, born the ninth of November, eighteen-fifty-seven, in York, son of Charles David Collier and of Janet Price, his wife. Both died in eighteen-seventy-four. Does not seem to have any family."

"There, that's it."

"And Anny Forster?" asks Simpson.

"Nothing on her, not any more than Mrs. Thacker, of course."

### CLUE 18

As we enter the London Library, we find Lomax deeply absorbed in a letter which seems to fascinate him and we dare not interrupt his reading. As he finishes, he looks up and notices us.

"Pardon me," he says to us. "I didn't see you come in. I have just received a letter from one of my French correspondents, Mr. Verne, member of the town council of Amiens."

"I didn't know you were so interested in French politics, Lomax," says Wiggins.

"He's not only a municipal councilman," answers Lomax. "He is also a well-known author in his country, and I think he will soon become famous world-wide."

"And what genre of literature does he write?" asks Wiggins, always looking to further his education.

"Novels, mostly," answers Lomax. "He is writing to tell me about his latest work, *A Family without a Name*, which was published yesterday. He is going to spend a few days in Paris with his editor, even though he is not as enthusiastic about the capital as he used to be."

"I have never heard of him," says Simpson. "Has he written many books?"

"Yes, numerous novels which he has grouped together in a series he calls "Extraordinary Voyages." But he is also a well-known playwright. His last play, written two years ago in collaboration with William Busnach and George Maurens, was quite a success."

We can't help but admire our friend Lomax's cultural background.

"But I doubt that you have come here simply to discuss the literature on the Continent," says Lomax with a big smile. "I'm willing to bet that you are on a new case."

"You are right," says Wiggins giving Lomax a brief summary of our investigation.

"If I understand correctly," says Lomax, "you are seeking information on porcelain birds, as well as information on the scientific research Henry Thacker is conducting."

"Yes, that is quite right," agrees Wiggins.

"Concerning Thacker's research, I do not have much to offer you. You would be better off, I think, going to the University of London to find the information you need."

"And concerning the porcelain?" asks Wiggins.

"I think I have what you want."

Lomax retrieves a large volume bound in green leather from the uppermost shelf of one of the numerous bookcases lining the room and then comes back quickly towards us. "We have numerous books on the subject, but this material should answer a lot of your questions."

### Porcelain

Porcelain is a ceramic ware having a translucent body, and when glazed a translucent glaze also. It is of two basic types, hard paste and soft paste. Hard paste (or natural) porcelain is essentially a high-fired mixture of the fusible and non-fusible silicates of alumina, called by the Chinese *petuntse* and *kaolin*, and in English china-stone and china-clay. Soft paste porcelain was originally an attempted imitation of the hard porcelain brought from China and Japan. Sand, niter, soda, gypsum, salt and other ingredients enter into it, and, in order to make it plastic, glue or some other similar material is added.

The artificial porcelains made from the 1670s by Edme Poterat and his son Louis near Rouen and those manufactured at St. Cloud were fired at low temperature and made translucent with the aid of a previously fired glassy mixture or frit. They remained the characteristic porcelains of France through most of the 18th century. Somewhat similar compositions were widely used in England, Italy and Spain during this same period. The beauty of material characteristic of the French soft pastes was achieved in the highest degree in the productions of the royal factory at Vincennes, which was removed to Sevres, between Paris and Versailles, in 1756. Many artists contributed to the development of this period, including Jean-Jacques Bachelier, the enameller Cotteau, the sculptors Falconet and la Rue in the earlier period and Pajou and Boizot in the later, and the painter Boucher.

The English soft-paste porcelains date back to the middle of the 18th century. No certain English porcelain is known of earlier date than the so-called "goat and bee" jugs from Chelsea dated 1745, although the Bow factory may have been in existence a year or two earlier. The Chelsea china made under the management of Nicholas Sprimont from 1750-58 is the finest ever made in England. Like those of Chelsea, the productions of the Bow factory were largely inspired by Meissen, but they do not match the Chelsea delicacy of modelling, although they do boast a beautiful ivory-toned material.

The period of the Napoleonic Wars marks a definite break with the older traditions of craftsmanship: European civilization emerged impoverished and found the Industrial Revolution complete. In the more pretentious wares, the Empire style was a pompous and frigid continuation of the neo-classical. Many of the older factories including Meissen and Vienna have been content to reproduce their former inventions. In England the porcelain made by the Spodes and their successors Copeland's, of Stoke-on-Trent, by Minton's of the same place, and at Coalport and Swinton was often very creditable technically but artistically of little account.

"Thank you," says Wiggins, returning the book to Lomax. "I don't quite know if our investigation has progressed any, but at least we are now well versed on the composition and history of porcelain."

### CLUE 19

As we enter the music hall, we see that it is empty with the exception of waiters in black suits and aprons, who are circulating among the tables, setting them up with white cloths and small bouquets of flowers, and arranging wicker chairs around them.

The small round tables and chairs are carefully arranged so that each person can see the stage, slightly elevated, occupying one wall of the hall.

We ask to see Mademoiselle Beaupre, and we are escorted to a small office in the back behind the scenery, next to a door which announces in large letters: DRESSING ROOM.

Hortense Beaupre is a tall and beautiful woman, with lustrous red hair. Her voice is soft and melodious.

"I remember Amelie Desmoulins quite well," she says to us as Francois le Villard explains the reason for our visit. "We met in 'eighty-two, I believe. She was just beginning her career then. I was struck by her determination and by her willingness to work, which did not preclude a charming manner and a warm personality. We saw each other regularly until she moved to London."

"Have you seen her since?"

"No, but we write to each other occasionally. She tells me about her life in London and her work for the Salvation Army, which seems to be very important to her."

"Does she mention anything else in particular?"

"No."

"Do you know her husband?"

"I met him when he lived in Paris, of course. Amelie presented him to me, but I didn't know him personally."

"You were quite close to Mrs. Thacker before her marriage. What can you tell us about her life during this period?"

"I would say that Amelie is very discreet, reserved. I knew she had come back from abroad, where she had been for quite a while. I think she came back from her trip the year before I met her. But she didn't like to talk about it."

"Did she talk to you about her family?"

"Her father died when she was about twelve, I think, but she was somewhat reticent on that subject. Apparently she had never come to terms with his death. Her mother remained in Paris. Amelie lived with her, and she often told me that she wanted to be successful to insure her mother would be comfortable in her old age. That is all I can tell you."

"Do you know where she lived, did you visit her at her home?"

"No, as I was saying, we were friends, but she seemed to want to put up a barrier between her private life and the rest of the world. I didn't want to try and force her to reveal what she did not want to talk about."

"What theatre company was she with?"

"She belonged to the Company of Phillip Arneau from the beginning of her career until she left for London."

"Thank you very much for taking the time to answer our questions."

"Would you like to come and see the show tonight?" she proposes.

"Alas, we have a long way to go in our investigation, and we must return to London by the first train tomorrow morning. But if we return to Paris one day, we will be sure to come."

### CLUE 20

The landlady of the building tells us that Peter Rucastle does not live here.

### CLUE 21

"Pardon me," says Wiggins to the clerk, "but it seems that you have misplaced the package you were supposed to deliver to me this morning."

The man straightens himself up immediately and declares in an irritable tone of voice, "If I permit myself to doubt you, sir, such a thing has never happened."

"I insist," says Wiggins, "that you verify the transaction on your register, if you please."

The man takes a large book covered in green fabric and opens it to today's date.

"What address?" asks the man curtly.

"Minister of War!" replies Wiggins just as curtly.

The man rapidly glances over the page. "Here we are. One package picked up at Selfridge's and delivered to the Minister. How many packages have you received?"

"Uh, one package," falters Wiggins.

"That's it, I have demonstrated I am correct, sir. We were to deliver a package and we delivered it!" declares the man, an air of triumph on his face.

"In that case, it must be an error on the part of one of my associates," says Wiggins, "I will immediately verify this."

"If you had started with your own office in the first place it would have been better for all concerned."

We leave the premises showing all the signs of the most extreme confusion.

## CLUE 22

Amelie Thacker is a young woman of about thirty, with long golden hair framing her perfectly oval face. Despite her red eyes and her obvious nervousness, her charm and grace, combined with the softness of her voice, make her one of the most seductive women we have ever met. She expresses herself in the most elegant English, with only the slightest hint of a foreign accent.

We are sitting in a drawing room on the ground floor. It is tastefully decorated with almond and green walls; a broken window overlooks a small garden. We explain our presence.

"As I was saying a few moments ago, gentlemen, two events happened yesterday which have upset me. The theft of my porcelain collection was the reason I called the police. However, the hurried departure of my husband at noon, especially in light of the fact that he has yet to come home, upsets me and worries me more than anything else."

"Can you tell us what exactly happened yesterday, Mrs. Thacker?" asks Wiggins. "Please do not omit any detail, even if it seems to be of little importance."

The young woman thinks for a moment, no doubt recapitulating the events of the day, trying to sort them in her mind.

"It must have been at about eight o'clock that a tall man, with grey eyes, dressed in a dark suit, rang at the door of our home on Grey's Inn Road. He asked to speak with Henry. The two of them met together until about half past the hour when my husband came to speak to me. He asked me to give Nigel, our butler, several days off, and to take advantage of the absence of our cook to go spend a few days in Bath. He added that Anny, who acts as my maid and companion, should accompany me, and that he would be very preoccupied, to use his own words, for the next few days. I asked him why he wanted me to leave, but he refused to answer me."

We notice a tear beginning to well up in the corner of Mrs. Thacker's eye.

"Pardon me," she says, "but you must understand that this was my first disagreement with Henry, the first in three years. My husband then locked himself up in his office until noon. When he came out, he repeated his request that I leave London for a few days. He then left carrying only a black briefcase.

"I was very upset, as I am sure you understand. I let the butler go for the afternoon, if only to allow myself time to think, not knowing what to do. I had no reason to refuse Henry's request, he has always been the perfect husband, but I was worried, and I also wondered what he really intended to do. I spent the afternoon reading, in vain trying to understand.

"At about seven o'clock, Mike Collier, whom you have met, came to visit Anny. I offered them theatre tickets which they gladly accepted, and then I went upstairs to my room. I was nervous, anxious, and I took a sleeping powder. Then I went to bed and fell asleep. Some time later, I was awakened by a noise. Not knowing what had happened I went downstairs to the ground floor to see where the noise had come from. I quickly discovered the window had been broken, as you can see. I noticed my porcelain bird collection had disappeared. It was housed in this display case."

Mrs. Thacker indicates an elegant piece of furniture. The door is slightly open. "I have not touched anything as the police requested."

We approach the cabinet to examine it closely, but we do not discover anything. "I never lock it," Mrs. Thacker says. "This may seem childish, but I liked to frequently rearrange the birds, to emphasize different pieces."

We sit back down as Mrs. Thacker continues her account of the theft.

"I rapidly looked in all the rooms on the ground floor, and noticed that my husband's office, whose windows give out onto Sidmouth Street, had been searched. The drawers had been pulled out and overturned, and the papers scattered. I then called the police who arrived at about ten o'clock. The police officers questioned me. Anny arrived home from the theatre and answered their questions. Nigel returned soon after that and he too made a statement.

"This morning, men from Scotland Yard came to arrest them both."

"I have several questions to ask you, if you will permit me, Mrs. Thacker. What can you tell us about your husband?"

"I met my husband almost four years ago, in Paris. I am French, and we were married almost three years ago, as I mentioned. He is an educated and cultured man, and a brilliant scientist and engineer."

"What was his specialty?" asks Wiggins.

"You know, I don't really understand the engineering he is involved with. When I met him in Paris, he taught at the Sorbonne. He was interested in sounds, noises, voices. Since then, he has told me he is interested in flying machines, and I was afraid that hot air balloons would put an end to his project."

"Where does he usually work?"

"In his office, here at home. He occasionally goes and works in a workshop he rents in the south end of London, and also at the University, where he does some of his research, I think."

"And outside of his occupation, what are his other interests?"

"He enjoys the theatre and accompanies me regularly, but his favourite pastime is the racetrack. He often told me that he found it a great pleasure and an inexhaustible challenge. He is also an excellent chess player and plays regularly."

"Mrs. Thacker, does he have any family in London?"

"His parents are both dead. He has a sister, but we never see her."

We perceive a slight tensing of Mrs. Thacker's face.

"Can you tell us about your servants?"

"The cook, Mary Flannagan, is a spinster. She has been an orphan since birth. She had asked to go spend several days near Chester where she was raised by a family who adopted her. I believe that one of the children she was raised with is gravely ill. I must add that he is probably quite old himself and must be approaching seventy years old. When Mary asked for my permission to let her go for a few days, I gave it to her immediately, of course."

"Anny is a young woman who is very devoted to me. I hired her soon after I arrived in London. She is a generous soul, and her devotion to me, as well as to the poor at the Salvation Army shelter, is great. As for Nigel, our butler, he is a man who had a difficult childhood and who, in the past, made some errors. But one must give every man the opportunity, with God's help, to prove himself worthy, and that's the reason I persuaded Henry to take him into our service. I don't believe he's involved in this theft, nor do I believe Anny is guilty in the least."

Mrs. Thacker appears to have more and more difficulty in holding back her tears, and she now twists her white handkerchief in her hands showing her agitation.

"Have you noticed anything unusual, in the last few days, happening around you, besides what you have just mentioned to us?" asks Wiggins.

Mrs. Thacker closes her eyes for a moment before answering.

"No, not really. There certainly are a lot of beggars in front of the house lately, on the other side of the street, on the corner of Grey's Inn Road and Ampton Street. They frighten me a little, I don't quite know why. Misery provokes evil, not the man who suffers from it. And yet I should be accustomed to seeing these poor people since I work at the shelter."

"At the shelter?"

"At the Salvation Army's Shelter."

"Can you tell us what you do there?"

"Oh, my role is modest, compared to Major Barbara's or Cecilia's."

"Cecilia?"

"Yes, Cecilia Sipton. Her devotion is magnificent."

"Would you describe exactly what your porcelain collection consisted of," asks Wiggins, brusquely changing the subject.

"Birds. Small subjects in porcelain, handpainted and resting on small stands. French and English porcelain mostly."

"How did you acquire the collection?"

"Piece by piece. By chance, at auctions and sales. Recently, I purchased a gorgeous red robin at Bonham's gallery."

"Can you explain to us, if it's not too indiscreet, why you chose to collect birds?"

"I can't quite tell you why. Maybe because they represent for me the idea of innocence and purity. The Bible talks about birds, for example."

"May we tour your house, Mrs. Thacker?" asks Wiggins.

"Of course, if you think it could be helpful. I will accompany you."

We leave the drawing room. On the opposite side of the foyer is Mr. Thacker's office. We find it in terrible disorder. The two drawers from his work table are upside down on the floor which is covered with reports and loose papers. A large wooden wardrobe, more than six feet high, stands open. The contents are piled on the floor in front of the door. Most of the pile consists of books. Wiggins leafs through several of them.

"Mathematical works, written in English for the most part. Some are in French and German, but I don't understand them in the least."

We turn our attention to a grey metal safe on the floor, on which is sitting a small silver tray with a glass and a bottle.

Wiggins tries to move the safe with all his strength and fails. "It's solid!" he says to us. "The bottle didn't even tremble." Then he asks Mrs. Thacker if we might be permitted to see the contents of the safe.

"Of course!" she answers.

The safe contains a few plans and technical drawings, accompanied by notes. The writing is neat and energetic.

We return the materials to Mrs. Thacker before turning our attention to the fireplace in the entrance, but we find no ashes or burnt bits of paper that could ultimately prove useful.

Wiggins examines the armchair and the overturned chairs lying in front of the table. Then he delicately lifts the edges of the splendid Oriental carpet covering the floor. Unfortunately, nothing appears to present any possible clues.

"Is the door to the office kept locked?" asks Wiggins as we leave the room.

"No, we never close the interior rooms. And now, if you don't mind, I'll show you the dining room and the library, then we will go upstairs."

While we are following Mrs. Thacker, Simpson murmurs to us "Say, do you know what I found under the bottle of Vera Cruz Port while we were looking at the fireplace? A letter from the Cox Bank.

I didn't have a chance to read it, unfortunately. I just saw the letterhead."

We rapidly examine the dining room, whose windows overlook a small garden. We enter the parlour from the dining room through a double door. Then we proceed to the library which occupies an entire wing of the house.

"This is the room I most prefer," says Mrs. Thacker, "even though the light is not as good for reading as in the drawing room."

We then follow Mrs. Thacker to the first floor. "This is where you'll find my room and my husband's room. Do you want to see them?"

Amelie Thacker's room is decorated in pale rose satin. Next to her bed, on the nightstand, we notice several small packets marked Leath and Ross.

"Do you keep your jewellery here?" asks Wiggins.

"No, I keep them in my boudoir." Mrs. Thacker reaches towards the door and then hesitates, troubled.

"It's very intimate. I don't know if I want to show it to you."

Despite her hesitancy, she opens the door and we enter a small room. "I was an actress in France, before marrying Henry, and I have always had nostalgia for the theatre."

Indeed, Amelie Thacker's boudoir reminds us of a theatre dressing room. A triple mirror sits upon the commode surrounded by two large bronze and crystal chandeliers. A number of brightly coloured dresses are hanging on a rack. Several wooden heads with wigs on them sit on the vanity next to numerous small containers of makeup. "I occasionally use my modest talents to organize humble plays for charity, with the money going to the Salvation Army," she adds, blushing lightly. "But you wanted to see my jewellery, I believe."

She takes a small casket made of black wood from the drawer of her dresser. "Here they are," she says to us. "As you can see, you have to go through my bedroom to get to my boudoir."

We leave the boudoir and Amelie Thacker's room to enter her husband's room. It is a large white room, the windows giving onto Grey's Inn Road. A chess set sits on a small table. The pieces are arranged as if a game has been interrupted. On the nightstand is a cut out newspaper article announcing the next Epsom Derby.

"We only have Anny and Nigel's rooms left to see," says Mrs. Thacker as we exit. "They are on the next floor."

Miss Forster's room is simply furnished with a wooden bed, a wardrobe and a small table. Sitting in the corner is a large iron trunk with the label "Jardine & Matheson - Adelaide." A book sits on top of the trunk. Wiggins goes over to the book and opens it. "*Vanity Fair* by William Thackeray," he reads.

Nigel O'Brady's room is even more impersonal than Miss Forster's, and we see nothing which attracts our attention.

"Do you think you will be able to explain everything that has happened?" asks Mrs. Thacker as we go back down the stairs. "I repeat that I am convinced of the innocence of both Anny and Nigel."

"We will try our best," answers Wiggins. "With your permission, we would like to glance in the garden under the drawing room windows."

The roses are in bloom. That's all we find.

## CLUE 23

First Floor (Restaurant) . . . . .	CLUE 54
Second Floor (Panorama) . . . . .	CLUE 131

## CLUE 24

The director of the military hospice agrees to see us and we enter his office. He asks us to forgive him for having made us wait so long, explaining that he had to take care of a few administrative details.

He is a bald man, of medium height, with a sharp look in his

eye. He invites us to sit down and asks the object of our visit.

"We are working for Sherlock Holmes, and we are trying to find information about Peter Rucastle. Perhaps you read of the body found at the foot of the Bloody Tower. We have reason to believe that the victim is Peter Rucastle and that he was an old soldier. We were hoping that someone here might know of him."

"No one of that name has ever resided here," answers the director. "Of that I am sure. I have never heard the name."

He pauses, taking a cigarette out of an elaborate silver case, decorated at the centre with a military emblem. He lights his cigarette, exhales a cloud of blue smoke over his work table and continues, "If you would like, I can take you to the main sitting room, where our boarders like to gather. They play chess or cards, but their main preoccupation is to spend hours talking about the glories of the battles of their youth. Perhaps one of them can help you."

We follow the director along a corridor and into a large room which seems more like a military museum than a sitting room. To our left stands a large bookshelf apparently filled with books on the military, no doubt glorifying the British army and tracing the stories of valiant soldiers. Flags, sabres and military accessories hang on the wall to our right.

The other walls are decorated with maps of England and paintings of illustrious battles. The room is furnished with arm-chairs and small tables around which sit old men. As the director had told us, some are playing cards while others quietly talk among themselves.

"Gentlemen," says the director in a friendly voice addressing the pensioners, "these young men seek information on a retired soldier, Peter Rucastle. Were any of you acquainted with him?"

Apparently no one has heard of him, for they all shake their heads.

"He was called 'The General,' I believe," adds Wiggins.

An elderly soldier with a face burned by the sun of all the continents on which the soldiers of his Majesty have marched, struggles to his feet and comes towards us slowly. He says, "Yes, I believe I remember someone by that name. I did not know him personally, but a dear friend of mine who is now dead, spoke to me about him several times. I think he lived by Smithfield Market. I can't remember anything else, and I'm not quite sure of that."

We thank the old man, and Wiggins escorts him back to his armchair. Then we leave the drawing room, accompanied by the director whom we thank warmly for his hospitality and his assistance.

## CLUE 25

We enter the Leath and Ross apothecary and watch as the chemist, dressed in a white coat, waits on a young and charming customer. He tries to explain to her, with some difficulty, the dosages corresponding to the numerous flacons filled with different coloured potions sitting on the counter.

We wait patiently while the chemist finishes helping the young woman. When she has left we approach the man, who is about fifty and greets us in a friendly manner.

"How can I help you gentlemen?" he asks us.

"We would like to know if you sell sleeping powders?"

"Yes, of course. Sleeping powders are one of our most popular products."

"And what is the composition?" asks Wiggins.

"Oh, it's quite simple. Each packet contains point-one-five grams of opium, and this opium is mixed with a substance which forms a vehicle for the medicament."

"Can you tell us if Mrs. Thacker, Mrs. Amelie Thacker, is one of your customers?"

"Your question poses a slight dilemma for me. However, I

believe I would not be revealing a big secret in telling you Mrs. Thacker is indeed one of our clients."

"Does she buy sleeping powders from you?"

"Yes, Doctor Agar prescribes them for her regularly."

"Thank you. You have been very helpful. Good-bye."

"Good day, gentlemen."

## CLUE 26

The shop of Elton Sherman, taxidermist, is inhabited by strange animals that seem ready to leap off the shelves so lifelike are their poses. A duck-billed platypus sits next to a parrot, while a lyre with long wings and elegant stature contemplates the scene with fixed eyes.

An old man leaning over his work table slowly looks up at us.

"Hello, gentlemen," he says to us. "What can I do for you?"

"We are friends of Sherlock Holmes, and we read your letter in the *Times*. We are interested in your idea. We are confronted with a small problem, a matter of theft, and we thought you might be willing to help us."

"With pleasure," answers the old man. "Always glad to help friends of Sherlock. In what way can I help you?"

"Would you let us use your dog? You may accompany us, of course, if you wish to."

"Give me a few moments to change out of my workclothes, and Toby and I are all yours."

A few moments later we leave the shop, accompanied by Elton Sherman and his dog, and we hail a hansom. The driver is reluctant to take the dog, but the promise of a generous tip proves persuasion enough.

We enter the garden behind the Thacker house by the small gate on Harrison Street. When we reach the area under the drawing room window, Elton Sherman removes Toby's leash.

Toby sniffs a few moments, his nose glued to the ground, and then he comes back to lie down docilely at the feet of his master.

"This experiment has not been very successful," sighs Wiggins. "I had hoped for more. The police, I'm sure, have trampled the ground and erased any traces of our thief."

"How strange," says the taxidermist. "Toby thinks with his nose, and up to now he has never failed when I have asked him to follow a trail."

We quickly leave the garden, bitterly regretting having lost the precious time.

"Thank you anyway for accompanying us," says Wiggins to old Sherman as he disappears through the gate in the company of his dog.

## CLUE 27

Guidebook to the Universal Exposition of Paris 1889:

Fine Arts Palace ..... CLUE 138

Fluvial and Maritime Exposition ..... CLUE 4

Modern Art Palace ..... CLUE 43

Machine Exposition Hall ..... CLUE 114

Miscellaneous Groups ..... CLUE 90

## CLUE 28

"Yes, I wrote the report, after conducting a preliminary investigation," says Richard Lane as he invites us to sit down in his small drawing room.

"I doubt I can tell you much more, but I will be glad to tell you everything I know."

The police officer sits down in front of us and lights a cigarette before speaking. "Well, last night I was on duty at the police station. At nine-forty-seven—I noted the time as required—I received

a telephone call from Mrs. Thacker, residing at Four, Grey's Inn Road. To tell you the truth, I was surprised as very few individuals have a telephone, but I must admit it's quite practical, especially during weather like we've been having.

"Back to your question, this woman told me a theft had just taken place in her home. She had been sleeping, and she was wakened by a noise. She had gone downstairs, and she had found a broken window on the ground floor.

"I told her not to worry, and that I would arrive shortly with Charley Jones, the man you saw at Bow Street.

"We arrived, it was just after ten o'clock. Mrs. Thacker told us that her collection of porcelain birds had been stolen from their display case in the drawing room where the window was broken.

"Charley and I went immediately to the small garden in the back, right under the window, but we didn't see anything.

"We then asked to see the entire house, including all three floors. We also asked her about valuables—if there was jewellery, or a safe, or anything precious in the house. She showed us her husband's office. The room was in great disorder, the drawers were overturned, and papers were scattered everywhere. But the safe was intact. She verified the contents, and said there didn't seem to be anything missing. In any case, it didn't seem to contain anything of great value. As for her jewels, she said they were kept in her room, where she slept. Charley and I, we insisted on verifying to make sure they were safe. The jewellery was intact, in a small, black wooden casket. As I mentioned earlier, we searched the entire house, but we didn't find anything else.

"Well, then we had her explain, once again, what happened. She stated that she had been sleeping, and that she had heard a noise. She went downstairs, and she found the window had been broken and birds had flown away. I didn't tell her it was normal for birds to fly out the window, because I didn't think it would make her laugh.

"At that moment, it must have been about eleven, the woman servant came home. We asked her where she had been. She answered that she was coming home from the Elephant and Castle Theatre. I have even mentioned the name of the play in my report, I believe. A quarter of an hour later, the other servant returned home. He is a rather contemptuous man. We asked him where he had been that evening. He said he had been at the Bar of Gold.

"After that, we asked Mrs. Thacker if we had met everybody. She answered that the cook had been gone to Chester for several days. She also said her husband had left during the day, and that he had not come home yet, but that she was worried. Charley and I told her that she shouldn't worry, and that he was sure to come home soon.

"Then we returned to police headquarters to write up the report, and we notified Scotland Yard."

"We thank you for your detailed account," says Wiggins.

"Do you think those porcelain birds are worth a lot of money?" asks Richard Lane.

"I think they must have some value, yes," answers Wiggins without compromising himself.

"Ah, well. I prefer decorated beer mugs," says the policeman. "At least you can drink out of them."

## CLUE 29

Madame Desmoulins is a small woman with white hair, dressed all in black. She receives us in her apartment situated on the ground floor of a large house. Simple but well maintained and tastefully arranged, her modest drawing room reflects the qualities of the occupant of the premises. She invites us to sit down around a walnut table worn to a shine by many years of use. Her manner is friendly but she seems slightly anxious.

"I hope nothing grave has happened to my little Amelie," she says to us, "as you have come all the way from London to speak to me about her."

We try our best to reassure her, explaining that we are simply investigating a theft her daughter had been the victim of.

"We simply want to chat with you a few moments. You know, in our field, it's often the small details, revealed during a conversation which seem to have no importance, that puts us on the trial of the guilty party."

"I don't know quite what to tell you. I could talk about Amelie for hours, but I fear I may bore you. You know, at my age, you live by your memories."

Madame Desmoulins gets up to fetch a large porcelain plate decorated with fruits and flowers from the sideboard, arranges a few biscuits on it and then brings it over to us.

"I notice you are looking at the etching over the cupboard," she says to Francois le Villard.

"Uh, yes, a Daumier, I believe," he answers, a little embarrassed his inquisitive glance has not escaped the old lady.

"No, on the contrary," she says with a smile. "It's by Amelie. You know, she's a true artist. She has talent in drawing and painting as well as theatre. She could reproduce, often from memory and very quickly, any etching or painting for that matter. When she was finished, you couldn't tell the slightest difference between the original and the copy. I am sure she would have become very famous worldwide, had she not chosen to get married."

"Do you regret this marriage?" asks le Villard.

"Oh *mon Dieu*, no," exclaims Madame Desmoulins. "My daughter is so happy. You know, we haven't always had a very happy life, the two of us. And now my needs are taken care of and I will never have to worry. Henry, her husband, is so good to her. And to me. It's thanks to him that I have this apartment. Of course, I was used to my old apartment, on rue de Babylone, but the stairs were getting to be too difficult for me. When Henry and Amelie got married, they invited me to come live with them in London. But I would have felt lost. I don't speak English, of course, and at my age I am too old to learn."

"Do you regularly receive news from your daughter?"

"Indeed. She writes to me often. She even sends me money so that I don't have to work. Money is not the most important thing in life, but when one has gone without for years, I must say it does make a difference. She writes to me almost every week, telling me about London, her projects with the Salvation Army. Helping the poor is very rewarding for her. And then, she comes to spend several weeks with me during the summer."

"Does she entertain any old acquaintances when she comes to Paris, actors, people she was close to at one time?"

"No. We spend long hours chatting together, or going on long walks, just the two of us. She never had many friends in the theatre world. The only person she sees every year is Clarisse Brizaille. They write to each other often, I think, but they went their separate ways, as you would say. But for Amelie, these differences are of little importance. They are friends and will remain so."

"This friend, do you see her often?"

"No, she comes by from time to time, but it's rare. She is very busy. She has a husband, two children, and she works for a large department store. So she doesn't have much time to herself."

"You said they were childhood friends."

"On yes, they have been friends since they were small. They went around the world together."

The old lady's eyes show a sudden sadness.

"Yes, it was in 'seventy-five. Amelie was a young romantic girl. She read a great deal, and she often told me she wanted to see the world. What held her back was that she didn't want to leave me alone. I didn't want to keep her from going. Birds are meant to leave their nest, as I often said. Then one day, when she turned seventeen, she left. She came back in 'eighty-one, six years later. We never talked about this period in her life. My daughter was once again by my side, and that's all that mattered to me. That's when she started to act, and when she met with her first successes. And then two years later, she met Henry. She had come back sad and

bitter, and he taught her how to laugh again. Since then, she is happy and so am I."

"In her letters or on her visits to Paris has she ever spoken of any particular problems or difficulties, with her husband, for example?"

"No, as I said, Henry and Amelie are the image of happiness itself. Why do you ask me that?"

"It appears that Mr. Thacker brusquely left his house on Monday, without giving your daughter any explanation and she was quite upset."

"I don't understand. I can only repeat that they have always gotten along very well, and Amelie never mentioned any misunderstanding or difficulties."

We thank Madame Desmoulin for her hospitality, her biscuits and her welcome, assuring her once more that we are certain there is nothing for her to worry about, and that we would quickly find an explanation.

### CLUE 30

We see a policeman stationed in front of number 23.

### CLUE 31

We finally find Henry Ellis behind a desk covered with old newspapers.

"This is the first time we've been to the *Times* archives," says Wiggins. "Are they open to the public?"

"Normally, no. You know, old newspapers are more fragile than you imagine, and if they were damaged, it would be an irreparable loss. But I suppose that you have other questions besides that one to ask me?"

"Actually, yes. Do you know Mr. Henry Thacker?"

"If I understand you correctly, I wager you are interested in the disappearance of some porcelain birds. I would have thought that Holmes would have you investigating the death of the man at the Bloody Tower. From a certain point of view, this murder has an aspect of farfetchedness of the kind which usually attracts Holmes."

"But to answer your question, I will say that I do not know Mr. Thacker personally. I do remember his father, as many people undoubtedly do. His services were most valuable to the Crown. His son, from what I hear, is an engineer without rival. I believe he married a young French woman, a few years ago, an actress if I'm not mistaken. I can try to find the exact date of the wedding in the archives if you want," offers Henry Ellis amiably.

"I don't think that will be necessary," says Wiggins.

"If you should discover the name of the Tower murder victim, please let me know."

"That's a promise."

### CLUE 32

Francois le Villard joins us only after a long wait.

"It wasn't very easy to persuade the director to let me look at his records," he says, "but I nevertheless managed to learn this: McWyre's account has a good sum of money in it. The money comes from a regular transfer of funds from an agency in London."

### CLUE 33

"Yesterday's register? No problem, Wiggins, old mate. But don't forget, the driver writes down the address closest to the pick up and drop off spots. The register should give you a general idea of pick up locations and destinations. And remember, the rides given after eight o'clock in the evening are not noted. Sorry."

### CARRIAGE LOG DATE: 20 May 1889

TIME	EMBARK	DEBARK
7h 00	30, Grosvenor St.	Liv'Pool St. Station
7h 13	58, Gordon St.	8, Borough High St.
7h 42	11, Whitehall	4; Sidmouth St.
7h 58	69, St Georges Rd.	78, Vincent St.
8h 02	85, Gt Portland St.	41, Gower St.
8h 17	88, Lower Thames St.	87, Southwark St.
8h 34	Waterloo (gare)	31, Tudor St.
8h 51	49, George St.	79, Horseferry St.
9h 03	24, Fitzalan St.	53, Drummond St.
9h 14	1, Varnell St.	75 Old St.
9h 15	31, Westminster Bridge Rd.	30, Warwick Way
9h 45	29, Clarendon St.	1, New North Rd.
10h 06	2, St John's Rd.	8, Guildford St.
10h 24	53, Pont St.	19, Orsett St.
10h 46	35, Endell St.	1, Bevenden St.
10h 58	73, Macklin St.	73, Lillington St.
11h 21	55, Chester St.	2, Albany St.
11h 30	60, White Hart St.	89, Mortimer St.
11h 43	81, Hanover Sq.	21, Smith Sq.
12h 03	5, Grey's Inn Rd.	85, Whitehall
12h 09	7, Sun St.	44, Eaton Terr.
12h 41	77, Newington Butts	51, Phoenix Rd.
12h 48	76, Brook St.	66, Wallington Pl.
13h 01	41, Stamford St.	41, Fane St.
13h 17	36, Harley St.	37, Waterloo Rd.
13h 33	30, Eccleston Sq.	67, L'tle St Andrew's St.
13h 51	7, New Common St.	28, Farm St.
14h 05	41, Paddington St.	38, Gildspur St.
14h 18	5, Leonard St.	88, Mortimer St.
14h 45	68, Old Bond St.	56, Lppard St.
14h 56	45, New Cut	64, Great Russell St.
15h 08	27, Brick St.	28, Brook St.
15h 20	74, Newington Causeway	3, Rivington St.
15h 35	18, Leadenhall St.	38, Bentinck St.
15h 42	58, Lowndes St.	42, Chenies St.
16h 04	84, Grey's Inn Rd.	22, Princes Rd.
16h 05	5, Grey's Inn Rd.	22, Hutton Rd.
16h 10	34, Macklin St.	82, Suffolk St.
16h 19	88, Tower St.	14, Chancery Lane
16h 28	76, East Rd.	24, Trafalgar Sq.
16h 55	33, Orchard St.	5, Regent St.
17h 07	63, Fleet St.	4, Longford St.
17h 08	22, Hutton Rd.	4, Grey's Inn Rd.
17h 24	88, Titchfield St.	47, Aubin St.
17h 31	39, Upper Ground St.	50, Lever St.
18h 00	76, Southampton Row	Hopital St George
18h 12	50, Draycott Pl.	25, Victoria St.
18h 35	19, Maiden Lane	46, Hospital Rd.
18h 47	73, Dantzig St.	9, Tottenham St.
19h 02	5, Ampton St.	13, New Kent Rd.
19h 12	38, Stamford St.	11, Oxford St.
19h 30	81, Worship St.	25, Charing Cross Rd.
19h 32	4, Sidmouth St.	94, Strand
19h 38	34, Shoe Lane	93, Strand
19h 44	55, Walnut Tree Walk	4, Haymarket
19h 54	94, Strand	4, Grey's Inn Rd.
20h 00	89, Mincing Lane	31, Drury Lane

### CLUE 34

We enter a gift store, Evenson and Company, and we look around for a few moments waiting for a salesperson to offer assistance. We notice several pretty ceramic statuettes, miniature reproductions of masterpieces from antiquity, and elegant handblown glass birds. An employee, who had just finished selling a greek statuette, approaches us.

"Have you made your choice, gentlemen? Or can I help you in

any way? We have just received an 'Acis and Galatee surprised by Polyphemus,' which is approximately forty inches high. It is modern, of course, but . . ."

"Thank you," interrupts Wiggins, "thank you for asking, but we are not here to buy anything."

"In that case, how can I help you?" asks the salesman, obviously disappointed but still very cordial.

We are conducting an investigation and we would like to meet Mr. Evenson," declares Wiggins trying his best to sound official.

"Mr. Evenson is not in the store at the moment. His office is on the first floor. I can show you the way, but I'm not sure he will be able to receive you."

We follow the man down a hallway at the back of the store and then up a marble staircase. The salesman discreetly knocks on a double door which opens a few moments later.

"Mr. Evenson, these gentlemen are conducting an investigation and would like to speak to you."

"Please come in, gentlemen, and have a seat," says the white-haired man who greets us. He is dressed in a somber suit which enhances his appearance of natural dignity.

We enter a tastefully furnished large office. A splendid oriental carpet is spread in front of the table. To our right stands a display case full of knick-knacks, including, we notice, several porcelain birds. A bookshelf occupies the left wall. The majority of the books seem to be on the history of Art.

"What can I do for you?" asks Mr. Evenson.

"We are working for Sherlock Holmes, and we are investigating a theft committed last night at the home of Mr. Thacker. A collection of porcelain birds has disappeared. We believe that you recently attended an auction at the Bonham Gallery and that Mrs. Thacker was also there."

"Yes, that's correct. That was several weeks ago."

"Can you describe how the sale went?"

"Oh, it's very simple. You may have noticed that I am interested in knick-knacks, and that I own a few handpainted porcelain birds. On that particular day, a gorgeous robin was up for sale and I would have liked to acquire it. Unfortunately for me, Mrs. Thacker seemed to be equally enthralled by the robin. We bid against each other and then I finally let her finish the bidding."

"Could you tell us what made you drop out of the bidding?"

"Gentlemen, it was not the price of the bird, let me assure you. But, you see, I admired the tenacity of this young woman. She was so charming that I wanted to please her. The human soul is sometimes weak, isn't that what they say? I can't see what else I can tell you about the matter."

"Thank you, sir. You have been very kind in receiving us."

### CLUE 35

"He's a very nice young man," says Mrs. Hawgood, Mike Collier's landlady. "He has good manners and always helps me if he can. He is very serious, never brings anyone home or goes out, except to go to work or to take his fiancee on a walk. Or when he's busy with his activities at the Salvation Army. He is generous, you know and . . ."

"Are you acquainted with his fiancee?"

"Yes, she's a charming young lady, always smiling and so well mannered. I think they are going . . ."

We thank Mrs. Hawgood for the three cups of tea she has given us, assuring her that her gingerbread cookies were absolutely delicious, and we take our leave before she can launch into the future agenda of Mike Collier and his fiancee.

### CLUE 36

Marie Cathelineau is not at home.

### CLUE 37

"No, gentlemen, Mrs. Thacker was not here last night, her box was not occupied."

"Are you absolutely sure?" insists Wiggins.

"Absolutely, gentlemen. An elegant and ravishing young blonde such as Mrs. Thacker, if I may allow myself to say so, never goes unnoticed. Besides, she saw the play last week in the company of her husband."

As we are speaking to the usher, an old beggar, dressed like an ancient mariner, approaches us. He has only one arm.

"I have already told you a thousand times that you are not allowed to come in!" shouts the theatre usher. "Go beg outside if you wish, but I don't want to see you in here."

"Pardon me, mates, but I might know something that could be of interest to you," says the handicapped old sailor, ignoring the usher.

"Ah, well?" says Wiggins, immediately interested.

"Yeah, but it depends." The beggar rubs the tips of his first two fingers and thumb together in a universal gesture.

Wiggins, who understands the language of the humbler folk, takes a few coins out of his pocket, and slips them into the old man's only hand.

"You see, guv, I was here last night when all the fine folk were arriving. There's money to be made when people are on their way to the theatre. It makes them generous, so they often have a few extra bob for poor Booth Lacey."

"Well?" interrupts Wiggins who wants to get his money's worth.

"Well, I saw the little lady. A real beauty."

"She came to the play?"

"No, not at all, guv. Here's what happened. A hansom stops and the young blonde gets off. E gad, I says to myself, she's a beauty, not like the others you see around here. She looked around, sorta nervous like; she seemed scared like a little bird and she held something under her arm."

"What was it?" asks Wiggins, impatient.

"That, mates, I don't know. She was in a great hurry, and it seemed like she didn't want anyone to see her. She didn't go into the theatre, but instead quickly crossed the street and went in there," he says, pointing towards a pub.

"Over there?"

"Yeah, at the George and Vulture."

"You're sure?"

"That I'll swear to. I even said to myself, that's not the place or the clientele for a pretty young thing like that."

"Did she stay long?"

"That I can't answer, mate. After all I gotta do my work. I have to earn my living while I'm waiting to get rich. One day, I'll be so . . ."

"Thank you," says Wiggins cutting him off. Apparently Wiggins is not interested in finding out how Booth Lacey is going to get rich.

### CLUE 38

We see before us the long walls made of red brick, with large openings, of the Smithfield market. This district seems particularly animated. Carts come and go, blocking the neighbouring streets. The cages of squawking poultry are lying in one place, and a little further on men are unloading halves of hogs, entire sheep carcasses, and quarters of beef.

Fascinated by this area, Wiggins evokes the past by describing how this square was used as a tilting yard for jousting matches and how that was the spot where St. Bartholemew's famous cloth fair took place.

"This is also where the capital executions took place," he tells us, "before the live animal market was created."

Wiggins, who seems to have regained his good humour and his

spirit since embarking upon our investigation, suddenly seems to become gloomy and lost in thought.

"Not only did they sell animals, but wives, too. Unhappy husbands could come here and auction off their wives. Old traditions had their good points, I suppose."

It is difficult to tell if we should relate this last comment, linking cause and effect, to the moroseness demonstrated by Wiggins this morning, explaining perhaps his fascination for this market area.

After this interesting lesson on old London, we enter the stalls permeated by the faint and acrid odour of the slaughterhouse and the butcher shops. Butchers dressed in long white aprons are busy at work, marking the meat, weighing it and then hanging it from hooks hung from the market's rafters. We interrupt several of them as they are working, to ask them if they know Peter Rucastle or if they have heard of him.

Unfortunately for us, our man must not have had the same interest in Smithfield as Wiggins, for no one seems to know of him, and we have to resign ourselves to leaving without having learned anything new relating to our investigation.

### CLUE 39

Wiggins' natural charm and talent have once again proved to be of use for he joins us triumphantly holding a piece of paper in his hand.

"I have the list," he tells us.

a blanket  
beard soap  
a bottle of *Vera Cruz* port  
two shirts  
a packet of *Sipton* tea

### CLUE 40

Berthe Duchoux does not know where Mrs. Thacker's mother now resides.

### CLUE 41

A woman of uncertain age, her hair slightly grey, simply but tastefully dressed, opens the door.

"Mrs. Lexington?" enquires Wiggins.

"What can I do for you?"

"We would like to see Mr. Perry Lexington."

"Please come in," she says, ushering us into a modest dining room where order and cleanliness reign. "I will go and fetch him."

A few moments later a man with white hair, dressed in a long apron made of dark blue canvas and wearing wooden clogs, enters. His hands are scarred and scratched, and we notice traces of dirt under his fingernails.

"Gentlemen, my wife came and told me you wanted to see me. What can I do for you?"

We brief him on the facts that have brought us to him.

"Gentlemen, I believe all this gardening has made me hungry and thirsty. Jenny!" he calls.

Jenny Lexington appears with a teapot and a plate of very appetizing looking biscuits which she places in front of us.

"Eat and drink up, gentlemen," says Lexington to us. "You will soon see that my Jenny is a remarkable pastry cook."

After drinking two cups of tea and doing justice to his wife's

delicious biscuits, Perry Lexington suddenly remembers the object of our visit.

"You mentioned porcelain birds?"

"Yes, sir, handpainted ones. On small stands."

"Well, I don't know about such things. You see, I, as they say, retired from the business, quite a long time ago now. I rarely leave my garden or my greenhouse. I've lost touch with everybody. There's so much to do in the garden. For instance, at this moment, I am pruning the rosebushes, and I have all my flowers to replant. Nature is beautiful, but she is demanding, like a woman, and she doesn't leave me much time for . . ."

"But the porcelain birds, sir," interrupts Wiggins.

"Ah, yes, the birds. Well, I don't know anything about them, but I'll tell you this much, it's not easy merchandise to sell. If you want Perry Lexington's opinion, if I were in the business, I wouldn't want them to be my responsibility."

We hurriedly take our leave before our friend gets another chance to launch into a lecture on gardening and the pruning of rosebushes.

### CLUE 42

The director of the acting company is busy ironing out a few details with the stage manager, so he is unable to see us at this time. We succeed, however, in meeting a woman dresser, occupied in preparing the costumes the actors are to use that evening.

"I remember Hortense Beaupre very well," she says to us. "She left us in September of eighty-seven, at her prime, to go open a cabaret. Nobody really understood the reasons for her departure. She claimed she was tired of the long tours and voyages far from Paris."

"Where did she open her cabaret?"

"Here in Paris, of course!"

"Could you possibly give us her address?"

"It's on the Haussmann Boulevard, number one. It's a famous spot, often frequented by the right kind of people, from what I hear."

"Do you happen to remember one of her friends, Amelie Desmoulin, an actress like herself?"

The woman dresser thinks for a few moments before answering. "No, I'm sorry, I don't remember her."

### CLUE 43

No one here has ever heard of Adriano Gardelli.

### CLUE 44

"Surely, it was me who was on duty at that spot."

The man who answers us is a young policeman. Tall, thin with curly red hair, he speaks with an accent which leads us to think he probably comes from Belfast or Londonderry rather than Cambridge.

"And you say you saw a woman get out of the hansom carrying a wicker basket?" asks Wiggins.

"Aye. She was quite pretty. There weren't too many people outdoors yesterday. I don't know whether it was because it was Monday afternoon, but I had plenty of time to see her, even if I was far away."

"Could you describe her to us in detail?" asks Wiggins.

"Brunette, very pretty, as I said. She was wearing a dark grey or black dress. A simple dress, like the servants wear in the better districts. She was walking very quickly with her basket on her arm. She crossed Princes Road. I saw her a little later. She no longer had the basket. She hailed a hansom on Hutton Road."

"Did she exhibit any strange behaviour?" asks Wiggins

The police officer thinks for a moment, frowning in an effort

to remember.

"No, she . . . she was just a pretty woman in a hurry."

"Why do you say that?" asks Wiggins. "Did you notice anyone else acting strangely in the area?"

"Surely. The man that arrived right after her. He seemed to be making an effort to conceal his appearance. I even thought it was her husband trying to follow her. I have to add that we see so many strange things today, especially in that quarter!"

"What did he look like?" asks Wiggins.

"Oh, he was very normal. I didn't pay much attention to his appearance."

"Well, thank you for your time," says Wiggins.

"I hope I've been helpful," says the young policeman.

"Surely!" replies Wiggins.

## CLUE 45

Entering Mr. and Mrs. Martin Snelgrove's store, one of the oldest pawnshops in the United Kingdom, we have to make a path through all the heteroclitic and incongruous eccentric objects encumbering the store, trying to keep from knocking them over and breaking them.

When we finally reach an area where we can turn around, we notice the furniture is stacked any which way, linen and lace is piled on chairs, china is lying on tables. Old harnesses are hung on the wall next to all sorts of arms, guns, sabres, swords, and knives—vestiges from some earlier glorious combat.

In a display case we see numerous pieces of jewellery. Some appear to our untrained eyes quite valuable, but others seem to be mere baubles and trifles of questionable worth with such things as old dentures among them. In a corner we see, to our great surprise, several stuffed animals which remind us of Bilbo Underhill's shop.

"May I help you, gentlemen?"

We give a start when a small man, with a round face, little glasses perched on his forehead, and bright red hair, suddenly appears before us.

"Mr. Snelgrove?" asks Wiggins.

"Yes, I am Mr. Snelgrove, Mr. Martin Snelgrove. Do you have anything to sell, gentlemen, or is there anything I can show you?"

"To tell you the truth, we did not come to buy or sell anything," says Wiggins, a little ill at ease in all this balderdash and rubbish. "We came to see if you have porcelain birds, small handpainted birds."

"I have had that sort of thing in the past, but I don't at the moment. Actually it's been a long time since anyone has proposed to sell me any such items. However, I have a magnificent moustache cup, in Limoges porcelain. What a splendour! Wait a moment and I shall fetch it for you. It is carefully put away in a sideboard cabinet."

"I am sorry, Mr. Snelgrove, but we are interested only in the birds."

"Oh, well," answers the small man, looking sad and disappointed.

We take our leave and make our way out of the store as carefully as we had come in.

## CLUE 46

The rue Etienne Marcel continues in an easterly direction as the much smaller rue Aux Ours, and we immediately find the Cafe des Ours whose interior is not visible to passersby through the grime-encrusted windows.

We enter and head for the counter, behind which stands a bartender busy wiping glasses. Small wooden tables are occupied by hard-looking men murmuring to each other in low voices.

"We would like to see Werner Holtz," says Francois le Villard. "We are friends of his."

The bartender wordlessly looks at each of us in turn.

"You want to speak to Werner Holtz? Who is Werner Holtz?"

"A friend. We would like to see him. Surely you must know him."

The bartender slowly looks at us once more.

"Don't know him. He's not a customer. Sorry."

The bartender picks up his cloth and resumes drying the glasses. He then notices we are making no motions to leave, so after a few moments he adds, "No use waiting here. I told you he wasn't a customer. I don't know him."

We decide he is only going to become increasingly unpleasant, so we decide to take his unwelcome advice.

## CLUE 47

"No 'Miss Doolittle, flower girl,' lives here," says the hotel doorman haughtily.

He closes the door even before we have a chance to apologize for the error.

## CLUE 48

The bartender behind the counter points to a man sitting by himself at a small table, reading a copy of *The Times*.

As we approach him he raises his eyes to look at us and then slowly folds his paper.

"Mr. Stoners?"

"Yes."

"We are here on the recommendation of Frank Kearney," says Wiggins. "He told us you were well acquainted with the world of horse racing, and we would like to know if you have ever met Mr. Henry Thacker."

"Yes, indeed. I know him. Why do you ask?"

Wiggins briefly explains the reasons for our visit, observing the measure of discretion necessary in such affairs.

"Henry Thacker is an ardent advocate of horse racing and he bets quite regularly."

"How often?"

"Very regularly. I think it's a waste of time to bet unless you scrupulously follow the careers of each horse, and from what I've observed Thacker does study the horses quite carefully."

"Does he make large bets? Have you ever witnessed him losing a lot of money?"

"My answer to both questions is no. You see, I believe Henry is not very interested in the pecuniary aspects of horse racing. What fascinates him, are, to use Henry's phrase, 'the possible mathematical parameters.'"

"Can you elaborate a little on this theory?" asks Wiggins.

"I certainly would not be able to explain it as well as Henry himself could. However let's say that before every race, he would cover entire pages with equations and formulae, in which he would enter the age and the past performances of each horse as well as the current conditions of the track, the weight of the jockey, the distance of the race and whatever other factors might be involved. . . ."

"Did Mr. Thacker often win with this system?"

"Yes, or at least more often than the majority of players."

"Have you known Mr. Thacker for a long time?"

"I've known him for at least two to three years. I met him at the Simpson Cigar Divan, where he regularly plays chess, always with the same partner, I believe."

"Do you go often to Simpson's?"

"No, very rarely. I prefer the Carleton Club."

"One last question, if you permit," says Wiggins. "Outside of the world of horse racing, did you socialize with Mr. Thacker? Did you know his wife, for example?"

"No, not at all. We have never spoken about anything else besides horse racing."

We thank Arthur Stoners for having patiently answered our questions, and we return to the streets of London.

## CLUE 49

We see a policeman standing in front of number twenty-three.

## CLUE 50

Francois le Villard presents Alphonse Bertillon, a man about thirty-five years old with an energetic demeanour.

"Mr. Holmes, at whose request we are conducting this investigation in Paris, has mentioned your methods to us on several occasions," says Wiggins to the policeman. "Can you explain these methods in more detail?"

Alphonse Bertillon is obviously pleased at our display of interest in his work.

"The main principle is quite simple," he says with a smile. "However, it took many years for the merits of my system to be recognized by my superiors. An example, perhaps, would clarify my methods. As you entered my office, Monsieur Wiggins, I was immediately struck by your resemblance to one of your fellow-countrymen, a certain McWyre, who we suspect is carrying on some rather reprehensible activities. However, the man with an experienced eye would immediately realize that he is younger by several years than you, without intending any offense. But suppose for a moment that you resembled him totally, that you were like twins, my method then would allow you to perceive the difference. Do you grasp the importance of this?"

We nod our heads in agreement.

"Let's go back to the example of the twins. Even to a trained eye, they resemble each other totally. But if you measure them you will be able to distinguish differences."

"Measure them?" asks Wiggins surprised.

"Yes, of course, and I do not mean only to measure their height. In fact, one must take certain precise measurements, which necessarily vary from individual to individual. Specifically, I point out the length and width of the head, the width of the face across the cheekbones, the length from the tip of the left middle finger, and down the length of the arm to the elbow, a cubit. One can put these measurements together with the description of certain parts of the body, specifically with the ear, whose conformation of the pavilion is immutable: the border, the lobe, tragus and antitragus, etcetera. . . . You only have to group together all this information on a card to have at hand a precise description, and a method of identification that is infallible."

"And who is this Englishman who resembles me so much?" asks Wiggins, who seems somewhat amused by the comparison.

"A suspicious individual, as I said, whom we have seen in the company of Giraud, a very 'respectable' citizen."

"And do you interest yourself in 'respectable' citizens?" asks Wiggins.

"Respectable in appearance only. The system of justice will never dare to attack him, his connections are so good, in all circles. He never acts by himself, but we suspect he is behind a number of things going on in France at the moment. He never makes a false move, except for perhaps last week, when he went directly to one of our deputies, Eugene de Lestang, to make a proposition of a most delicate nature. Lestang, in turn, immediately informed the Minister of the Interior, who then turned the file over to us."

"What was the proposition?" asks Wiggins suddenly interested.

"Unfortunately I cannot give you the details, which are confidential, you understand. But if you are interested, perhaps you can speak with Adolphe Saulnier, the Minister of the Interior. You may use my name. Perhaps you will be able to lift a corner of the veil which covers this affair. But you have yet to tell me to what I owe the pleasure of this visit."

We sum up what we have learned so far.

"You know," says Bertillon, "the opening of the Exposition in Paris has attracted all sorts of people, among them several suspect individuals, who are anxious to join up with other criminals, always on the lookout for an opportunity to commit a crime."

"Could you put us on the trail of some of these individuals, give us a few names, perhaps?" asks Wiggins.

"It would be difficult to make it complete but I can mention several. The presence in Paris of Kurt Weinberg, a German, has been verified, and Henry Gould, an American, has been spotted. He has quite a reputation as a safe cracker. Vladimir Pojarski has probably met up with Jules Rambour, an old accomplice of Pierre Matin and of Thomas O'Neill. Those are the names I am able to give you. I hope this information will be of some help to you."

We thank M. Bertillon for having received us and assure him that the methods of identification which he has developed and explained to us so well seem extremely promising.

## CLUE 51

"I'm terribly sorry, but Mr. Holmes is not here at the moment."

"Do you know where we might find him?" asks Wiggins.

"I think he is at his office. Mr. Holmes is currently working with the Minister of War.

## CLUE 52

"Mr. Henry Thacker has not bought or sold any property or buildings in London. The house he now occupies at number four, Grey's Inn Road, was left to him by his father who died in eighteen-eighty-three."

## CLUE 53

Escorted by a Yeoman Warder dressed in the famous red and black uniform, with the letters "VR" on it, we cross to the Middle Tower. After passing over the moat, we reach the Byward Tower. Then we continue along Water Lane, passing by the foot of the Bell Tower until we reach Bloody Tower. At each stage of our trip the guide inundates us with historical anecdotes.

"This is the spot where the body was found," says the Warder. "He was killed with a single shot from a crossbow belonging to the Tower's collection of weapons."

"Where are these weapons kept?" asks Wiggins.

"In the White Tower, which is actually in the centre of the Tower complex. It's the most ancient part of the Tower, dating from the eleventh century."

"Is it easily accessible?"

"No, the security there is extremely tight, as you can imagine."

"The body was found yesterday morning, wasn't it?" says Wiggins, trying to prevent our guide from launching into another lecture.

"Yes, and that seemed, apart from the weapon used, bizarre to us."

"Why bizarre?"

"As you may know, the Tower is closed every evening according to a ritual which has changed very little in the last six centuries. Part of the ceremony takes place under the arch of this Tower, and so we are sure the body could not have been there the evening before."

"Can you describe the Ceremony of the Keys?" asks Wiggins imprudently.

Our speaker seems delighted at the idea of describing the steps of this ancient ritual which rules his role as a military guard.

"Every night, at nine-thirty, four guards of Buckingham Palace stand under the arch of the Bloody Tower, as I just told you. At nine-fifty-two, the Chief Yeoman Warder leaves the Byward Tower in possession of the keys of the Tower and the artilleryman's lan-

tern. The gates are closed, and then the Escort marches back along Water Lane to the Bloody and Wakefield Towers, right next to us. But here the sentry challenges them and the following dialogue takes place . . .

"This is all very interesting," says Wiggins beginning to show signs of impatience, "but why did you say you found the discovery of the body to be bizarre?"

"As I was explaining, our life at the Tower of London is carefully regulated, everything is timed, the grounds are always being watched, and I imagine it would take a particularly talented murderer to succeed at such a crime."

"The body, in addition to the fatal wound, had numerous scratches on the face. Could they have been made by the ravens which inhabit the Tower?"

"I don't think so," says the guard, a smile at his lips. It is obvious we are about to be treated to yet another anecdote on the history of this place steeped in such cruel memories.

"As you most certainly know, gentlemen, tradition has it that the day the ravens leave, the Tower will collapse and the kingdom will experience the worst kind of tragedies. That's why we feed them horsemeat daily, and if they start to show signs of independence, we clip their wings a little, without causing any suffering, mind you. One of them has lived here for over forty years."

Wiggins, once again, cannot help but to interrupt our chatty guard.

"We thank you very much. I believe we now know enough, and we promise to come back some day for a complete tour of the grounds."

## CLUE 54

A stylishly dressed maitre d'hotel approaches us and Francois le Villard asks him if we could speak to the waiter for a few moments.

The maitre d' calls over a young man about twenty-five years old, dressed in black, who seems bright and sharp.

"Do you remember serving any particularly interesting or remarkable customers day before yesterday?"

The waiter thinks for a few moments, staring intently at Wiggins with a perplexed look.

"At lunch time there was a family. A couple with three children . . ."

"I don't think they are the ones we are looking for," interrupts le Villard.

Again, the waiter appears to regard Wiggins with thoughtful curiosity.

"Well, that evening there were two Englishmen. I remember them perfectly well. They ordered a pair of woodcocks en gelée, which they complemented with a bottle of white Puligny-Montrachet eighteen-seventy-three, reflecting the refinement of a certain class. They proved themselves generous when it came time to pay the bill."

We immediately understand the allusion, and le Villard discreetly slips a bill to the waiter.

"Can you describe them to us," we ask him.

"One of them was fairly young. He looked a little like you, sir, if I may say so," he says, turning towards Wiggins. "The other man was about fifty years old, tall and strong, well built, but he seemed to be quite tired."

"Do you remember what they were talking about?"

"No, they only spoke in English, and they stopped talking when I approached the table."

"Perhaps you at least heard their names?" suggests le Villard.

"Wait, no . . . I would have to look at the reservation list . . ."

Another bill discreetly changes hands. The waiter leaves us for a few moments, then comes back with the register in his hands and a smile on his lips.

"The table was reserved under the name of Monsieur Attard.

That's the only name I know."

"Did your customers stay here long?"

"No, they seemed to be in a hurry. They even asked me at the beginning of their meal if it was easy to find a cab in this area and if it was possible to have one waiting for them."

"Would you happen to know, by any chance, where they wanted to go?"

"No, not really. . . . You know I don't spy on the customers."

The waiter smiles at us once more, and Francois le Villard, who seems to have grasped the rules of the game perfectly, slips him yet a third bill.

"As I was saying, they asked for a carriage the minute they sat down. Customers who order such a Puligny-Montrachet can only be good customers—for restaurants as well as for cab drivers. I have a friend who is a hack. I told him he should wait for them."

"What is your friend's name?"

"Leon Durbin."

"And where does he live?"

"Seven, rue du Vieux Colombier."

"Thank you very much," says le Villard.

"But it is I who should thank you," answers the waiter graciously. "I hope to have the pleasure of serving you in this establishment soon."

## CLUE 55

Mr. Attard is not in his office.

## CLUE 56

Ralph Parrish immediately recognizes us. "Are you still interested in the world of the theatre?" he asks us. "I'll be glad to help you in any way that I can."

"It's the audience that interests us this time," answers Wiggins.

"In that case, I should go fetch Sandy."

He leaves us for a few moments, and then returns in the company of a lively young girl.

"Do you know Mr. and Mrs. Thacker by sight?" says Wiggins to the girl.

"Of course! They come here often, but I haven't seen them in quite a while."

"Do you know their servants, Anny Forster and Nigel O'Brady?"

"No, I don't think so."

"Oh, well," says a somewhat disappointed Wiggins. "Did you happen to notice the presence, last night, among the audience, of a young brunette, about thirty years old, accompanied by a man her age? I believe they arrived in a hansom?"

"Did they have a box?" asks the attendant.

"I don't know, I don't think so," answers Wiggins.

"That description could fit any number of people, but it doesn't bring anyone in particular to mind. You know, there was quite a crowd yesterday for 'School for Scandal.' I can't possibly remember everybody, especially people in the audience, it was like a chicken coop."

We thank Ralph Parrish and the young girl and then leave the theatre with the sentiment that we had not learned anything new.

## CLUE 57

Eugene Peyrac is a tall, corpulent man with black curly hair and a full but carefully trimmed beard.

"How unfortunate you cannot fully appreciate the charm of his accent. He's from southwest France," whispers Francois le Villard, who is serving as our interpreter.

Peyrac continues, "I will not touch upon the subject of Thacker's current research, nor on the research he was conducting in Paris a few years ago, as I am not an expert in that area. It was

not exactly science that brought us together anyway, but rather the sharing by two men of a mutual appreciation for that which life is made of, of art and of progress."

"How did you happen to meet?"

"It was soon after he arrived in Paris. It must have been towards the end of eighty-three, if my memory serves me well, in front of a chess board—Henry was a remarkable player. In playing with him, I rarely won, but I learned quite a bit, or rather I tried to learn."

"Speaking of games, Monsieur Peyrac, was he also interested in horse racing when he was living in France?"

"Horse racing? No, he never spoke to me about that."

"Could you describe his life in Paris during that period?"

"He lived in an apartment on rue Soufflot, right behind the Sorbonne. He led a regular life, working, teaching, pursuing his research. His main distractions were playing chess, as I said, and the theatre. Perhaps I should mention that Henry spoke French remarkably well, much better than I speak English, unfortunately for me, and it was at the theatre that he met his future wife . . . Amelie . . . Amelie Desmoulins."

"Do you know her?"

"He introduced her to me shortly before returning to England. At that time she was a charming young woman, an actress."

"Can you tell us about her?"

"I unfortunately have little that I could tell you. He introduced me to her one night when we were dining in a restaurant on the Champs Elysees. She was in the company of another actress, who was more of a celebrity at the time, Hortense Beaupre, with whom she had a close friendship. The dinner was very enjoyable, but I don't remember the details of the conversation. It was the only time that I saw her, and I don't recall that he spoke of her with me very often."

"Do you know where we could find Mademoiselle Beaupre?" asks Francois le Villard.

"Do you know where we could find Mademoiselle Beaupre?" asks Francois le Villard.

"No. I was not a frequent theatre-goer like Henry. But I believe you could find out by reading the *Theatre Gazette*."

"Did you remain in touch with Mr. Thacker?"

"No, you know, the years go by, and everyone goes along his own path."

We thank Eugene Peyrac, and we promise that if we ever return to Paris, we would compare with him the relative merits of Armagnac and Cognac.

## CLUE 58

Edward Hall ..... CLUE 73  
Police Station ..... CLUE 117

## CLUE 59

The landlady is a big woman armed with a broom busy sweeping the staircase.

"It's not possible, dear God," she says turning towards Wiggins, her eyes as big as saucers. "You must be the brother of Monsieur McWyre. The family resemblance is amazing."

We prudently content ourselves to acquiesce silently.

"If you are looking to see him, you are out of luck. He came by awhile ago, but he left again almost immediately."

"Perhaps you could open his room for us?" asks Wiggins through our intermediary, le Villard. "I have a package to leave for him, and I would also like to leave him a little note."

"Would you like me to take care of that?" offers the landlady.

"That's very kind of you, but I wanted to surprise him."

"Ah, well, he's not expecting you then? I thought the letter he received yesterday was from you."

The landlady is visibly hesitating to let us enter the room. "You see," she says, "you're brother is a very unfriendly and taciturn

man. Oh, I'm not complaining. His room is kept perfectly clean, he never brings home women, and he pays his rent regularly. But I think he wouldn't like it if I let someone into his room."

"You don't have to mention it to him," suggests le Villard. "That way it will be a complete surprise." As he speaks he slips her a small bill.

"Well," she says with a sigh, "go ahead. It's the room at the top. On the fourth floor. Here is the key. But you must promise not to touch anything. You leave your package and your letter and you come back down and give me back the key."

After having climbed the four flights, we enter McWyre's small apartment—two tiny rooms and a miniature kitchen—which we immediately start to search.

The room is soberly furnished with a bed, a dresser and a wardrobe. Taking from his pocket the piece of wire he always carries, Wiggins begins by opening the doors of the wardrobe. It contains only clothing. Wiggins rapidly examines the pockets of the grey suit hanging inside.

"A small amount of money, a package of cigarettes, a bill from the restaurant of the Eiffel Tower, for consumption of two meals, dated the day before yesterday. Table seventeen. Hey, that's quite a bill. That's it for the wardrobe."

Wiggins carefully closes the doors.

"I also found something," says Francois le Villard. "But it might not be very helpful."

He shows us an empty envelope, addressed to M. McWyre, 6, rue de L'Arcade, Paris VIII. The envelope has on it, printed in large black letters, the name of the sender, the Lyonnais Credit Bank.

Wiggins turns the envelope over and reveals a list of names written in pencil. Some of the names have been crossed out.

<u>Vladimir Popanski</u>	
<u>Werner Holtz</u>	rue aux Ours 30 000
<u>Nicolai Gortoff</u>	dong Ping Tong Pl. Maubert
<u>Jules Corcette</u>	Expo fluer.
<u>Adriano Gardelli</u>	Arts liberaux 20 000
<u>Burt Weverberg</u>	
<u>Frédérico Suarez</u>	Saint Lazare
<u>Hans Grossenberg</u>	Beaux Arts

We finish searching the first room without discovering anything else, and then continue our search in the adjoining room.

It is quite small, simply furnished with a big wooden table on which is sitting a kerosene lamp, and a straight chair. In the corner are piles of old copies of *The Times*.

"McWyre seems to have the soul of a collector of old newspapers, not unlike our friend Mr. Holmes," comments Wiggins.

We carefully examine the room.

"Look at this!" exclaims Simpson, pointing at the newspapers on top of the pile. "This item from the agony column in Tuesday's *Times* is circled. It looks like a secret message. And stuck inside the paper is a page from an old issue, from the fifth of March."

"This is not at all clear," says Wiggins in frustration. "I wonder what it means."

We finish our search without discovering anything else of note, go back down the four flights of stairs and return the key to the landlady.

"You didn't touch anything, now did you?"

We succeed in assuring her without blushing too much.

## CLUE 60

Mycroft Holmes ..... CLUE 71  
Minister of War ..... CLUE 99

## CLUE 61

Under the arrival board for the international trains, we observe the arrival of the train from Mantes for a few moments and watch the activity on the quai as a small manoeuvring machine, with three low wheels, begins the uncoupling of the train, and brings the wagons onto the changing tracks. Then we mingle in the crowd, as the porters, hurrying along, whistle loudly for the right of way. We talk to workers, and even interrogate the station master. We examine the passengers embarking and disembarking the train cars. We blend in discreetly with the groups of French people and foreigners alike, pretending to be waiting for the train to Caen or for Le Havre, but we do not learn anything of interest and we finally leave the train station.

## CLUE 62

At the headquarters of the Sipton Tea Company, we are greeted by an employee who asks us who we are and what we want.

"We would like to meet Mr. Stillwater. Could you tell him that Henry Wiggins and his friends are here to see him, if you please?"

"Please wait here, gentlemen. I'll see if he can receive you now."

A few moments later, the clerk returns and leads us to a door marked, "DIRECTOR."

Behind a large desk, his thick gold-rimmed glasses perched on top of his large pointed nose, sits Donald Stillwater.

"Hello, my friends. Please come and sit down." He gestures towards comfortable fawn-coloured armchairs. "I don't have much time to spare, but I suppose that you must need my help to have come all together like this. Is it the theft committed last night at Henry Thacker's that brings you here?"

"How did you know?" asks Wiggins surprised.

"I simply read *The Times* this morning, like everyone else," says Donald Stillwater with a smile.

"Can you talk to us about Mr. Thacker?" asks Wiggins.

"Henry is a brilliant man, very intelligent and, if I may add, quite congenial. He is an engineer, as you well know, and he has a passion for new technology. I always appreciate his conversation as well as his company, even if I do not always approve of his activities."

"You might know already, but he is very interested in horse racing. I personally think he would better employ his time and energy by joining the Salvation Army. I have often told him this, without succeeding in convincing him, unfortunately."

"Of course, Amelie is a friend of Cissy's, a charming young woman. She helps Major Barbara in the battle for the glory of God against the forces of evil, against the works of Satan. Cecilia wants to invite Amelie and Henry to our impending wedding."

"Do you know that Henry Thacker left his home rather suddenly yesterday and has not reappeared since?"

"No, I didn't."

"Can you think of an explanation for this sudden departure?"

"Sorry, no, none."

"The two servants, Anny Forster and Nigel O'Brady were arrested this morning by Scotland Yard. Do you believe they could be involved in this theft?"

"I don't know Miss Forster very well, but she actively participates, at the side of her mistress, in our battle against evil. I do not believe she is guilty. What you have just now revealed is quite disturbing, having been in that situation myself only a few months ago."

"And O'Brady?"

"A sheep that strayed from the flock at one time. But I believed the good Major Barbara had helped him find the path to salvation. It is true that Satan does not easily abandon his prey, alas. I would, however, not want to say anything against him, please understand me."

"Do you know Mary Flannagan, the Thackers' cook?"

"No."

"Can you think of anything else you could tell us, Mr. Stillwater?"

"No, nothing else, alas. But I notice with some pleasure that you leave no stone unturned in an effort to exhaust all possible clues. And I am sure that justice will triumph in the end, in this world or the next."

"It would be better for it to be this world. We thank you for answering our questions and for having received us on such short notice, in view of all your work," says Wiggins.

"I'm afraid, alas, that I have not been of much help," says Donald Stillwater as he escorts us to the door.

## CLUE 63

"You are lucky to find me here," says Leon Durbin. "Normally, at this hour, I wouldn't be here." We quickly sum up the object of our visit.

"Englishmen. I shuttle quite a lot of them, these days, Englishmen and other foreigners as well. With the Exposition, we don't lie around. In that way, it's not so bad, it's certainly good for business."

"But the ones we are particularly interested in?" insists le Villard. "Do you remember them?"

"I think so. You said that I picked them up Tuesday night at the Exposition Tower. Those my friend the waiter told me to wait for?"

"That's exactly the pair we're looking for."

"Ah, well. I first let one off at the Montaigne Hotel. From there, I took the other one to rue de L'Arcade. A man who is generous with his tips! . . ."

We understand exactly what he means and try our best to be equally generous.

## CLUE 64

The landlady is a small round woman, with bright red cheeks, lively eyes and ruffled hair, who is busy cleaning the staircase with big sweeps of her broom when we cross the threshold of her home.

"Be careful, wipe your feet on the mat, and don't bring in any dirt. I never stop polishing this darn house."

"Is this the house Peter Rucastle lives in?" asks Wiggins timidly, a little anxious in front of this brusque reception.

"Aye, that it is."

"We would like to see him."

"He's not here."

"Has he been gone for long?"

"I don't know. I don't care what the tenants do, as long as they pay their rent on time."

Realizing our dialogue with Peter Rucastle's landlady is going to be difficult, Wiggins discreetly slips her a few coins, and once again, we are amazed at the immediate change in her manner.

"I don't care to talk about my tenants. Their private lives don't concern me, but him, he's a funny one. An old soldier, from what they say. He keeps odd hours, never leaving the house the times ordinary folk do nor coming home normal times either. He doesn't receive very many people, and I don't like any of them. Bizarre people who don't seem very Christian to me."

"Could we possibly take a look in his room?" asks Wiggins.

The landlady hesitates for a moment before answering.

"It is sure to be locked. He never even allows me into his room. If I happen to go upstairs to tell him something, which doesn't happen very often, he only opens the door just enough to talk. And the stairs, I've got such pains these days with this unpleasant weather, I really can't accompany you up there."

"Let me assure you," says Wiggins in a conciliatory tone, "we are quite capable of seeing ourselves up."

"You aren't going to disturb anything, are ye?"

We reassure her and then climb the steep stairs leading to Rycastle's room. Prudently, Wiggins knocks on the door. When there is no answer he takes a short length of wire he keeps in the bottom of his pocket and introduces it into the lock. One turn to the right, a turn to the left and the door is opened.

We enter the small, simply furnished room, its walls yellowed by age and humidity. The bed is unmade; the table is piled with old papers. A half empty bottle of gin and a glass of dubious cleanliness are sitting next to an inkwell and a quill pen, and a pile of chipped dishes. Wiggins carefully examines this mess, sorting through the old papers, and picks up a packet of post cards.

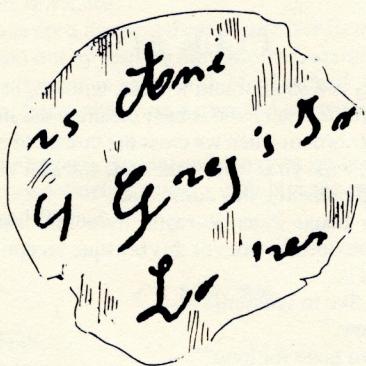
"Here," he says to us, turning over the cards, "our man must like to travel. Souvenirs from Australia."

On the back of a card, we read the badly written text, "Greetings from Adelaide." The card is not signed, and it bears neither stamps nor address. We notice that all the cards represent the same view.

"Every one has their hobbies, he seems to have quite a collection here," says Wiggins as he continues his investigation. He opens the wardrobe, where everything is carefully put away, in contrast to the rest of the room. He looks under several piles of used clothing and suddenly discovers a small locked wooden box. With the help of his wire, he manages to pop open the lock. The box contains stamps, which Wiggins carefully examines. "I don't see anything special. These are ordinary everyday stamps you can buy anywhere."

Wiggins closes the box and puts it back in its place. We continue our search. Near the bed, we discover an ashtray full of cigarette butts. "Mr. Holmes would most certainly notice more things than we can," says Wiggins.

"Look at this!" he exclaims as he picks up a charred and crumpled scrap of paper with great delicacy and holds it out to us for closer examination.



"How unfortunate, not more of it is left!" says Wiggins.

We finish our search of the apartment without finding anything else of special interest; then we meticulously erase any signs of our presence.

We carefully close the door of the quarters and go back down the stairs, and after gratifying the landlady with a big smile, we quickly exit.

## CLUE 65

The landlady is a large woman about sixty years old, wearing a black dress and a large grey apron. Her white hair is up in a bun on top of her head and held there by a comb made of horn.

"Little Amelie! Of course I remember her. I knew her when she was little, my little Amelie."

"Madame Desmoulins, her mother, was very proud of her. Granted, she was very pretty, even, yes, beautiful, all fresh and blonde. When she was little, she already had everyone's admiration. And so nice too, always smiling, not too proud, always willing

to help, to say a kind word, even when she was in the theatre and beginning to be famous, before her marriage."

"But here I am talking nonstop, leaving you standing there on the doorstep. Please come in."

"Ah, yes indeed, she should be proud of her daughter, that Madame Desmoulins, and in the job she did raising her. I must say she did all that was possible for her, left alone after the death of her husband, working as a cleaning lady at the National Library. She explained to me one time, it was a sort of Palace where one finds all the books ever written. Me, I can't read, but it must give you quite an impression."

"Amelie's father died when she was young?" intervenes Francois le Villard, who hopes to steer the conversation back on course.

The landlady suddenly seems to become sad.

"Yes, well, she was almost a young woman by then. It would have been eighteen years ago this week. My husband was with Monsieur Desmoulins. It was the Commune, as we say. There were barricades everywhere, at the Pantheon, rue Racine, rue des Ecoles, rue Gay-Lussac, everywhere. It was on rue Montorgueil that they both died. After that it was difficult for everyone. At least I didn't have any children, but Madame Desmoulins had her little girl and she didn't want her to work right away. She wanted her to be educated before going out into the world. So, it gave her quite a shock when her daughter left."

"Do you mean when she got married?"

"No, when she left for the first time. She must have been sixteen or seventeen. We never did know where she went. But her mother found herself alone and it was quite a shock. Then, her daughter came back, and she began to act in the theatre—you can imagine how happy her mother was. It must have been in eighty or eighty-one. And then, she found herself alone again when Amelie got married. But she was happy then. And, her daughter regularly sent her money so she didn't have to work at all."

"We understand Madame Desmoulins no longer lives here?"

"No, it must be two years or so since she left. Of course she was used to the neighborhood around her old lodgings, but her daughter could offer her better. And she was having more and more difficulty climbing up the stairs to the fourth floor."

"You must certainly know where she lives now?"

The landlady thinks for a moment.

"No, I am sorry. You know, I'm beginning to forget things. I think it's on the right bank, but I don't know the exact address. You know, I never did go and visit her. I can't leave the lodgings just like that. But she comes to see me once in a while, when the weather's nice. But why did you come and talk to me about little Amelie like this?"

"Nothing grave brings us, let me assure you. A small simple investigation in regards to a theft."

The landlady smiles once again. "Ah, well, I like that better. Money woes won't kill you, as they say."

## CLUE 66

The landlady advises us to go to the J. Small & Co. Ceramic Factory.

## CLUE 67

We push the door open and are immediately transported into an enchanting garden, surrounded by green plants and multi-colored flowers with delicate and magical fragrances.

A small frail lady with rose-coloured cheeks and grey eyes, elegantly attired in a pale yellow dress, approaches us with a friendly smile.

"Can I help you to compose a bouquet or to choose a pretty plant?" she asks Wiggins who is contemplating the jasmine plant, the camellias and other flowers.

"Uh . . . well . . ." he stutters, nervous every time a pretty

young woman approaches him. "Actually, we didn't quite come for that." He is visibly trying to regain his composure.

"In what way can I help you, gentlemen?" continues softly the young woman.

"We understood a certain Mike Collier works here, and we would like to see the owner of this shop."

"Well, I am Shirley Thomas, and I am the proprietor of this shop, which I run with my husband. Mike Collier is indeed one of our employees. Do you wish to see him?"

"Is he here?" asks Wiggins surprised.

"But of course. He told me when he arrived this morning that he had problems of a personal nature but did not tell me anything more. I hope nothing serious has happened to him."

"No, we don't believe so, but would it be possible to keep our visit confidential?"

"Of course, if you wish to. But I still don't quite understand why you are here."

"To be perfectly blunt," explains Wiggins, "we would like to know your opinion of Mike Collier."

"Gentlemen, Mike is a well-behaved and serious young man. He is very loyal to us and we consider him to be a model employee. He is, among other things, in charge of the purchases made at Covent Garden, and my husband has every confidence in him. In addition, he has a noble and courageous heart and devotes all his spare time to work at the Salvation Army shelter."

"Do you know if he has any family in London?"

"No, if by that you mean parents, but he is engaged to be married to a charming young lady."

"Can you tell us where he lives?"

"Yes. He rents a little room at Mrs. Hawgood's."

"One last question, if you permit," says Wiggins. "Would you be able to tell us precisely what he did yesterday?"

"He came to the store at eight-thirty, as he always does on Monday, because Covent Garden is closed on that day. He worked in the greenhouses and in the back of the store, eating his mid-day meal on the premises, as he is in the habit of doing, and then he left the shop shortly after five o'clock, also as usual."

We thank Mrs. Thomas for her hospitable co-operation, and we leave the flower shop.

## CLUE 68

We enter the office furnished to the taste of Matthew Kenwick, director of the Bonham Gallery. He invites us to sit in the armchairs placed before his large desk. A few items judiciously chosen and arranged with a discerning eye give the room a refined atmosphere and testify to the sense of aesthetic developed by the occupants of the premises. Matthew Kenwick is a man of medium height, with white hair, sporting a thick moustache which contrasts with the fine bone structure of his face. He is dressed in a somber suit most certainly made by one of the best tailors on Bond Street.

"What can I do for you gentlemen?" he asks in a friendly tone.

"We are working for Sherlock Holmes, the celebrated detective, and we would like to ask you a few questions, in reference to an investigation we are currently conducting," answers Wiggins.

"I suppose you have taken on the case of that . . . of that Jonathan Small? It's about time the police interested themselves in that sort of individual." Mr. Kenwick suddenly becomes animated, and anger colours his face a light shade of purple.

"Uh...not really...no," stammers Wiggins, always one to proceed carefully when our investigation takes us to potentially fertile territory.

"Oh, well, it's really too bad. He is quite a disreputable character, who tried to sell us copies, yes, gentlemen, copies of ancient statues and various . . . objects." Mr. Kenwick seems to inject all his contempt for the man in these last words. "Objects, there is no other word for such things, which he pretended were made of fine porcelain from France. Fakes, gentlemen, vulgar fakes, gross ceramics. Not one single piece is the least bit valuable."

2

Matthew Kenwick is still quite agitated, emotional at the thought of the tribulations he has suffered. "But what then," he continues, "if you have not come in connection with that, what then have you come for."

"We are terribly sorry to deceive you, sir, believe me," answers Wiggins, "but it is quite another affair which has brought us here. We are investigating a theft which was committed last night at the home of Mr. Henry Thacker. We believe that his wife, Mrs. Amelie Thacker, is one of your clients."

"Yes, that's correct," answers Kenwick, "she comes here quite frequently. She is interested in small pieces of furniture, and in porcelains."

Kenwick twists his fingers in a new burst of nervousness. It is not necessary to put into practice the lessons of Sherlock Holmes to see his thoughts are once again directed towards his current pre-occupations.

"Yes, well," says Wiggins, "a collection of handpainted porcelain birds has been stolen. You would know better than us the value of such a collection."

"This sort of thing, if from the right artist or concern, can be quite valuable, not exceptionally valuable, mind you, but such items routinely fetch a good price. What do you want to know, exactly?"

"Mrs. Thacker has bought such birds from you, hasn't she?"

"Wait . . . yes, of course. I even remember she attended one of our recent sales. Dame Agnes Smedley was also there, as well as the proprietor of Evenson and Company, an amateur collector of objects of beauty. Several different subjects in porcelain were up for sale. A bird—a robin, I think—in fine, handpainted, Limoges porcelain was of particular interest. It was a beautiful piece, assuredly, but others were just as nice. I don't really know why this bird caused such an outburst of passion on the part of the buyers. Everybody wanted it. Dame Agnes was first to abandon the bidding, then Mr. Evenson dropped out. Mrs. Thacker wanted it as well, and she was ultimately the final bidder. I think it was Mrs. Thacker's charm which appealed to Mr. Evenson, a very gallant man, to stop. Mrs. Thacker left beaming with joy."

"Has Mrs. Thacker returned since that day?"

"Yes, I think I saw her again, but I don't remember if she bought anything."

"Thank you, sir, you have been most helpful."

"I am glad I could be of assistance. But I would be even happier if the police managed to put that Small out of business. Good day, gentlemen."

## CLUE 69

Madame Zaccharie passed away six months ago.

## CLUE 70

"Indeed, I know Mademoiselle Brizaille," replies the personnel manager. "She worked here from January eighteen-eighty-two to September eighteen-eighty-four. That's all I can tell you."

We wander around the store, admiring the silks on display, while Francois le Villard is engaged in conversation with a saleswoman.

He joins us a few moments later, a smile on his lips.

"I have the information we are looking for," he tells us. "Clarisse Brizaille now works at the large department store, Magasin du Printemps."

## CLUE 71

We climb the large marble staircase. Arriving on the landing, we turn right and start down a long corridor. On our left, several doors open on the offices of the ministers. On the right, a series of

windows offers a fine view of Whitehall. Arriving at the end of the hallway, we begin climbing another staircase, this one in wood, at a snail's pace.

"Be careful, the stairs are fairly steep," says our guide who precedes us, a sort of bald giant with porcelain blue eyes and pale skin.

"And it's awfully narrow, too! What were they thinking of when they built this place!" adds Wiggins.

Arriving at the top of the stairs, we meet a delivery man wearing the familiar uniform of Cummins and Goins. He is almost as big around as our guide, but he must measure a full foot and a half less in height.

"Fortunately for you, I heard you climbing the stairs," he says laughing. "I doubt I would have been able to get around you. A stairway like this is built to break necks."

"Mr. Holmes's office is at the end of the hallway, the second door on the right," says our guide, obviously out of breath.

We knock at the door he has indicated.

"Come in!" cries the powerful voice of Mycroft Holmes.

Mr. Holmes is sitting behind his desk, several files spread out before him.

"Master Wiggins and his friends!" he exclaims upon seeing us enter the room. "I suppose Sherlock has once again sent his best bloodhounds on the trail in some somber affair!"

"Uh, yes, sir," says Wiggins, intimidated as he is every time he meets Mycroft. "We will try our best."

"And what can I do for you, my young friend?" asks Mycroft.

"Well. A burglary was committed last night at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Thacker, and a collection of porcelain birds was stolen."

"Porcelain birds?" says Mycroft with a raised eyebrow. "I didn't know my brother had such a romantic soul, or even bucolic, to interest himself in birds, whether they be porcelain or . . . Bees I imagine might interest him, but birds, now there you surprise me."

"It just so happens Mr. Thacker has also disappeared. He left his home yesterday at noon and he has not yet returned. Do you know him?"

"Indeed, I know him," declares Mycroft Holmes who seems pleasantly distracted by our conversation and does not seem to be in a big hurry for a change.

"Could you tell us what you know about him, and under what circumstances you met him?" asks Wiggins who seems anxious to profit from the good mood of Sherlock Holmes's brother.

"It's very simple. Henry Thacker is known for his brilliant mind. He is an eclectic scientist whose analytical and synthesizing faculties are unanimously recognized by his colleagues. I must add he is a staunch patriot, which is not surprising, because he is none other than the son of Richard Brinsley Thacker."

We listen respectfully to Mycroft Holmes, not daring to interrupt him, but not quite following his point.

"It just so happens that Lord Holdhurst, who is, as you surely know, Minister of War, asked me some time ago if I knew of a scientist whom he could hold in the strictest confidence. He wanted a special report done, an extremely sensitive report, concerning certain modern techniques. Specifically, Lord Holdhurst wanted a report on the current status of research on the possibility of flight in machines heavier than air. I'm sure you can see the main application would be in the military sector. Thacker seemed to be the best man and I introduced him to Lord Holdhurst. That is all I can tell you."

"Mr. Thacker is married to a French woman. Do you know her?"

"No, but from what I hear she is a charming young woman."

"Do you think that Thacker's disappearance is related to the work he is doing for the Minister of War, Mr. Holmes?"

"'Disappearance'? That's quite a big word you use there, Mr. Wiggins, if you want my opinion. I believe any man can be called away suddenly from his home, without classifying it as a disappearance. If I were you, I wouldn't worry too much."

"And the birds?" asks Wiggins.

"Birds are made to fly away, I believe."

We thank Mycroft warmly for having received us, and we carefully make our way back down the steep, narrow wooden stairs.

## CLUE 72

We are sitting in the dressing room of Gervaise Galimard, one of the actresses of the Phillip Arneau Company, who is currently playing in "Around the World in Eighty Days" at the Chatelet Theatre.

"I've known Amelie Thacker since her debut in our troupe, when she still went by Amelie Desmoulins. She joined us in eighty-two, if my memory is correct. She was a charming young woman, almost still a child. Her courage, her determination, and her reserve, which are unfortunately not qualities often found in young actresses, impressed me and were certainly the reasons for our close friendship. She stayed with the company until eighty-five, I believe, when she decided to leave the theatre to get married."

"Did she speak to you about her private life?"

"Rarely. As I have told you, she was very reserved. She spoke to me about her mother, with whom she lived and for whom she had great affection. She rarely spoke of her father, who had died when she was just a girl."

"Did you ever visit her at her home?"

"No, I think I remember her living on rue Babylone, but I never knew the exact address."

"Are you still in touch with Mrs. Thacker?"

"No, you know, the world of the theatre is a world different from others; you never know where your company will tour next."

"Did she show an interest in art during this period?"

"In art? Do you mean the theatre?"

"No. In art objects, in particular."

"I don't know. I don't believe so. I know she liked to draw for pleasure, but she certainly didn't have the means to be an art collector. On the other hand, it's true that she did often enjoy visits to the museums. Why do you ask?"

"A collection of porcelain birds was stolen from her home, and that incident precipitated our investigation."

"Did you say birds?"

"Yes, that seems to surprise you."

"No, not in the least. Amelie once told me she liked to wander in the public gardens by herself to listen to the sounds of the birds, and to watch them fly away, because they represented the ideal of innocence and purity to her. I don't quite know why that remark struck me except it seemed to have unleashed a strong emotion in Amelie."

"Were you acquainted with the man whom she married, Mr. Henry Thacker?"

"No, she introduced me to him, and she did mention that he was an engineer and a scientist, and that he was interested in the theatre. But that was all I ever knew about him."

We thank Mademoiselle Galimard for the time and attention she has given us and promise to attend the next time the Arneau Company tours to London.

## CLUE 73

We catch up with Edward Hall who is almost running down the long somber halls of the Old Bailey.

"Mr. Hall, Mr. Hall!"

"Ah, Wiggins, I thought I would probably see you today. You must excuse me, but I must plead a case before the bench now."

Noticing our long faces, he quickly adds, "Rest assured, I arranged for you to be able to speak to Miss Forster and O'Brady for a few moments. It's not the first time he's been here, if I remember correctly. Good day."

A guard leads us into a small white room, simply furnished with

a rough wooden table and two benches. It is the same room in which we had met Donald Stillwater only a few months ago.

"Who would you like to see first? Anny Forster or O'Brady?" asks the guard in a gruff voice. "But I must remind you, not more than fifteen minutes with each. You're already getting a special favour."

"Miss Forster, if you please," replies Wiggins.

The guard leaves and then returns a few moments later in the company of young woman about thirty years old. He closes the door behind her and we hear the sinister sound of the key turning in the lock.

Anny Forster sits down in front of us, on the edge of the bench, looking very pale in her dark grey, almost black garments. Her pale, drawn face reflects sadness and resignation. She softly dabs her tear-redened eyes. Her long brown hair is drawn up in a bun above her neck.

"We have come to help you, Miss Forster," says Wiggins gently. "Could you tell us what happened last night?"

"It's very simple. Mrs. Thacker gave me two tickets to go to the theatre with my fiance. 'School for Scandal' was playing at the Elephant and Castle. Mike came by to pick me up at seven o'clock. We took a hansom. After the play, we came directly home. The house was all lit up. The police were there. They said there had been a theft at the house. This morning, men from Scotland Yard came and arrested me, with O'Brady, the other servant."

Her voice breaks and she starts to sob.

"Did you notice anything unusual happening during the day yesterday?"

Anny Forster hesitates a few seconds before answering. "Mr. Thacker left around noon. He had a conversation with Mrs. Thacker in the morning, and she seemed to be in shock afterward. Normally, they seem so happy together. This morning when the police arrived, I believe Mr. Thacker had still not returned home."

"What did you do before going to the theatre?"

"Nothing in particular, my duties as usual." Anny Forster appears to be overwhelmed with chagrin.

"Don't worry," says Wiggins gently, "we'll succeed in proving your innocence."

"I did nothing wrong," sobs the young woman. "I beg you to believe me, I did nothing wrong."

The door clicks open. "Miss Forster, time's up!" says the guard, who then adds turning towards us, "Remain seated! I'll bring O'Brady."

Nigel O'Brady is a man of about forty, with slightly greying hair, who seems affected with an air of contemptuous superiority.

"I have nothing to say to you," he declares to us. He doesn't even bother to sit down and remains standing by the table.

"You have had some trouble with the law, I believe?" says Wiggins.

"Yes, and that's why I have nothing to say to you."

"Do you know what you're being accused of?" asks Wiggins.  
"No!"

"At what time did you leave your station yesterday?"

"When Mrs. Thacker gave me the afternoon off."

"Does she often give you the afternoon off?"

"Madame is free to do what she wishes."

"And what did you do with your free afternoon?"

"I went for a walk."

"Where?"

"Towards Hyde Park. And then I went by the Bar of Gold."

"What time did you return home?"

O'Brady does not answer. Wiggins repeats his question, but the servant seems to have made up his mind not to say another word. Simpson goes to the door to call the guard as it is clear we will learn nothing more from O'Brady.

## CLUE 74

"You are fortunate to find me here in Paris" says M. Verne,

who is accompanied by a younger man whom he introduces as M. Hetzel's son, director of the Library of Education and Recreation since the death of his father in 1886.

"As you can see, I am lame in one leg, so I rarely leave Amiens and now that I am sixty-two, I am categorized as a senior citizen. I should add that had you not been referred by my friend Lomax, I would never have met with you, despite the urgency of your request."

We thank M. Verne for his graciousness and assure him that we will be brief and to the point. Francois le Villard quickly outlines the details of our investigation.

"Your Mr. Thacker seems to be a very interesting man and his ideas on creating flying machines heavier than air to transport men is fascinating. Put into the service of mankind, that discovery will certainly be a step forward for humanity. However, social progress must also accompany scientific progress because the two are intimately linked.

"But to return to your enquiries. I am a writer and I make it my duty to educate through my novels and to draw my scientific, geographical, and historical facts from reliable sources. I am not, however, an expert myself, and I doubt I can help you in your investigation of Mr. Thacker's work.

"However, I have written several plays, operettas and comic-operas and have become well acquainted with the world of the theatre. I do remember Mr. Thacker's wife as a promising young actress in the early eighties. Miss Desmoulin, that was her maiden name, had a part in one of my plays, 'Voyage à travers l'Impossible,' one which I had written with Adolphe d'Ennery. I had the pleasure of enjoying the production which featured Miss Desmoulin."

"Did you know her personally?"

"I can't say I knew her well. But her charm and beauty as well as her modesty were renowned through all Paris."

"What theatre company did she belong to?"

"The Phillip Arneau Ensemble, the one which recently completed a long run of another one of my plays 'Around the World in Eighty Days.'

We notice the famous playwright beginning to look fatigued.

"We must thank you and take our leave," says le Villard.

"It was a pleasure to be able to chat with you," says M. Verne, "Many people think that I am English or American, maybe because many of my characters are."

We bid each other good day.

## CLUE 75

We wait patiently while Disraeli O'Brian examines his files.

"Unfortunately I don't have much information to give you," he says with disappointment, returning to us the list we had given him.

"Nigel O'Brady had problems with the law when he was young. I didn't find anything on the others."

"Would you give us the details on O'Brady?" asks Wiggins.

"Certainly. Nigel O'Brady, was born on May seventh, eighteen-fifty in Liverpool. Currently employed by Mr. and Mrs. Thacker, four, Grey's Inn Road, London. Arrested on the fourteenth of November eighteen-sixty-nine, charged with pickpocketing and sentenced to six months' imprisonment at Newgate. Arrested the thirteenth of July eighteen-seventy-three, charged with being an accomplice in a theft. Condemned to one year of prison at Millbank. Arrested the twelfth of January eighteen-seventy-five charged with breaking and entering. Acquitted. That's it."

"Thank you for your help regardless," says Wiggins. "We will see what leads we can draw from this information."

## CLUE 76

We see a bobby standing in front of number 23.

## CLUE 77

We climb several worn stone steps to the heavy, black painted door at number sixty-five Stratton Street and ring the doorbell.

After a few seconds, a man opens the door. He is old and wrinkled like an apple and wears the uniform of a hotel head waiter, black vest and marenco pants.

"Greetings, gentlemen," he says in a slightly trembling voice, "How may I help you?"

"We would like to see Mr. Stoners," replies Wiggins.

"Mr. Stoners is not in," says the elderly servant. "If you wish to leave your calling cards, I will relay them to him upon his return and inform Mr. Stoners of your visit."

"This matter is quite urgent and very delicate," says Wiggins in his most convincing manner. "Could you possibly tell us where we might be able to find Mr. Stoners?"

The old and venerable servant, visibly impressed by Wiggins' polite insistence, hesitates a few seconds before answering, trying to balance his desire to be discreet and his fear of committing an error, trying to decide where his duty lies.

He finally says "Mr. Stoners is undoubtedly at his club, the Carleton Club."

We thank the old servant for his kindness as we leave.

## CLUE 78

"Ernestine Desmoulins lives at forty-six, rue de Babylone," replies the man in charge of personnel.

"She has moved from there," insists Francois le Villard. "We would like to know her most recent address."

"That is the last address I have for her. I assume, in that case, that she must have moved after she terminated her employment with us. I'm sorry."

"Can you give us the addresses of the people she worked with?"

The man seems to hesitate for a few seconds, then he reaches for his pen and checks his directory.

"Here is a list of women who knew her here," he says, moments later handing us a piece of paper.

*Marie Cathelineau, 49 rue de Haël  
Simone Delorme, 73 rue St Dominique  
Béthe Duchaux, 13 rue du Temple  
Noémie Pizare, 44 rue du Châlon d'Or  
Louise Renard, 80 rue des Acacias  
Marceline Sicard, 63 rue du Commerce  
Raymonde Zucharie, 35 rue de la Grange*

## CLUE 79

We enter the shop where a sign over the door proclaims "Tailors of the West End." We are immediately greeted by a smiling middle-aged woman elegantly dressed.

"What can I do for you, gentlemen?" she asks.

"We would like to meet the manager of this shop. We are carrying on an important investigation and we would be grateful if he could help us," says Wiggins.

"Please wait a moment while I announce your visit to Mr. Norbury."

She soon returns with her friendly smile intact and invites us to follow her.

"Please go in," she says after knocking softly at the door.

"Thank you," replies Wiggins with his suave voice and most charming smile.

We enter a dimly lit room. On Mr. Norbury's large work table lay samples of silk, flannel, cashmere and other quality materials. Sketches of outfits and colour engravings of the latest Parisian fashions adorn the room. Wiggins' eyes devour his surroundings as introductions are made and Mr. Norbury gestures for us to sit down.

"Please sit down. We are a little short of space, but we are doing well and are very busy. Women, as you well know, need a new ensemble this time of the year, and we must not forget the opening day of the races. What can I do for you?"

"We work for Sherlock Holmes, sir," begins Wiggins.

"The famous detective?" interrupts Norbury, obviously intrigued.

"Yes, sir. We are helping him on a case concerning one of your customers."

"Oh?" says Mr. Norbury, increasingly interested.

"Mrs. Thacker is one of your clients, isn't she?"

"Yes, indeed. Such an attractive woman. Parisian, I believe. She is so elegant and refined. She can wear anything; she possesses so much charm and grace."

"Did you make any deliveries to her home yesterday?" asks Wiggins.

"Wait a moment. Yes! You are right. We were supposed to make her a dress, and Mrs. Thacker was in a great hurry to have it finished. We didn't think we'd have it done by the end of the week, which is what we told Mrs. Thacker. She was upset. By luck, the dress was ready by yesterday morning and one of the fitting girls was to take it over right away."

"A 'fitting girl'?" asks an interested Wiggins.

"Yes, in case a last detail has to be taken care of on the spot. A house like ours has a reputation to uphold."

"And the delivery was made?" asks Wiggins.

"Unfortunately, I think no one was home."

"May we speak to your employee?" asks Wiggins.

"Of course." Mr. Norbury leaves the room for a few minutes and returns in the company of a young girl with many freckles.

"Miss Alice," he says "it was you who attempted to deliver a dress to Mrs. Thacker's yesterday afternoon, wasn't it?"

"Aye, it was, sir," she answers promptly.

"These gentlemen would like to ask you a few questions."

"Can you tell us what happened?" asks Wiggins.

"Oh, it was very simple. I arrived in front of the house. I was holding a large cardboard box which contained the dress. We always carry the dresses to the customer's home in these boxes so they don't wrinkle. I rang the doorbell several times. After a few minutes, when nobody answered, I came back to the shop with the dress."

"Did you notice anything in particular?"

The young girl thinks to herself for a minute.

"No, not really, but I had a strange impression. I could have sworn I saw Mrs. Thacker near a window when I arrived. That's why I was surprised when nobody answered the door. When I left I looked carefully at the same window but there was nobody there. I think I must have been dreaming."

"Anything else?" asks Wiggins.

"No, except for the beggars at the corner of Grey's Inn Road and Ampton street. They are always there at that same spot. They frighten me."

We thank the girl for her statement and compliment her on her keen powers of observation. When we are once again alone with the manager, he decides to ask the question that has been burning on his lips since our arrival, "Can you tell me what your investigation is about?" he asks, trying to mask his excitement.

"Unfortunately not at this time," says Wiggins. "But rest assured that the information you have given us is most helpful."

## CLUE 80

M. Legrand is a slightly built man of about sixty, very well

dressed. He is wearing a Prince de Galles grey suit and a maroon bowtie. He approaches in a friendly manner and asks if he can be of any help. We are so impressed with the surroundings that we hardly hear his question.

"My English friends are looking for hand-painted porcelain birds," says le Villard.

"Gentlemen," says the owner of the store in perfect English, "I am always honoured to have customers from the British Isles. England is a country I admire and I have attended auctions at both Christie's and Sotheby's, and I have even visited the Bonham Art Gallery."

"Bonham!" exclaims Wiggins, "that brings us directly to the heart of the matter."

"Am I to understand that you are not buyers?" asks M. Legrand with a smile.

"To be honest, we are working with the famous Sherlock Holmes, and we are here investigating the theft of porcelain objects. Miniature hand-painted birds on small stands. We read your ad in *Le Figaro* about porcelain miniatures and we would like to know if you sell such objects or if you have been approached to sell such a thing."

"I understand the object of your visit now. It is true that I am expert in porcelain and in miniatures. But in this trade the term miniature has a particular significance, even though these days miniature has come to encompass everything which is small. If you look in this glass case you will see what we call miniatures."

M. Legrand leads us to a superb display cabinet made of dark walnut. "Here is a gorgeous miniature, a portrait of Napoleon dressed as the colonel of the Guard, wearing the Legion of Honour, and the Iron Crown. This is a rare piece of great beauty judging from the relief work. It was made by the Nanceien Jean-Baptiste Isabey. Here, you can admire the wonderful figure of a child in the centre of a landscape. It is painted on a flat piece of ivory. Look at these two pretty boxes. One represents a rather risque scenario, but such things greatly inspired the miniaturists. The other one is a finely painted still life in soft tones. That one is made by Lelong, who specialized in creating still lifes."

"Here you have examples of what we refer to as miniatures."

"Do you have any porcelain objects?" asks Wiggins.

"Concerning the birds you mentioned earlier, I have not been offered such a collection recently. I am not a specialist in this area; I prefer to concentrate on figurines in Saxe porcelain. However, I do buy such birds on occasion. Ladies like porcelain birds and they are usually affordable. That is why when I do buy them, I usually sell them quickly."

"Would you happen to know someone who might be able to help us?"

"Well, perhaps Albert Frank at twenty-five Enfer Boulevard. I think his specialty lies in this area."

## CLUE 81

Registrar of Births .....	CLUE 17
Registrar of Deaths .....	CLUE 91

## CLUE 82

Sir Jasper Meeks is seated at his work table, a cup of tea in his hand, a pile of files and reports spread in front of him.

"Hello, Wiggins," he says as he catches sight of us. "Anything new? Still on the go?"

"Yes, always. And what about you, Sir Jasper? Have you received a new batch of cadavers recently?"

"Only one, and I've just completed the autopsy. Now I have a little free time to reorganize my notes, for once. Care for a cup of tea?"

We politely refuse.

"If I understand correctly, what interests you is the corpse

of the Bloody Tower?"

"Perhaps," answers Wiggins. "Have you identified the body?"

"No, we have yet to discover his identity. Here's what I do know." Sir Jasper takes a piece of paper out of his drawer.

"The body was brought here yesterday. The victim was approximately sixty years old, white, five foot seven inches tall, one hundred sixty pounds. His face is weatherbeaten and covered with scratches. His hygiene is somewhat questionable, I might add. There are several ancient scars on the left leg, on the right arm and the abdomen. He was killed by the quarrel of a crossbow—hardly the most common of murder weapons—which entered near the sternum on the left side, piercing the heart and shattering the left shoulderblade. Needless to say, he died instantly."

"Anything else?" asks Wiggins.

"No...ah, perhaps. One last detail. He has a black spot on the fingernail of his left index finger. It's hard to analyse its exact nature. It may be ink, but I'm not sure."

We thank Sir Jasper for his help.

"Please inform me if you should find anything of interest relating to this case," he says, accompanying us to the door of his office which always smells slightly of formaldehyde.

## CLUE 83

At the home of the O'Neill's, we are met at the door by Mary, the gracious wife of Barry, who invites us to enter and ushers us into the parlour with her usual hospitality.

"What can I do for you?" she asks politely.

"We've come to see Barry," says Wiggins. "Is he in?"

"Yes, you will find him in our room on the first floor. You see, he is resting because he has not completely recovered from his accident. He is very courageous, but he has suffered greatly and his recovery has been difficult. And I think he misses his travels. However, Doctor Ainstreet thinks that he is now well along the road to recovery."

We leave the parlour with Mary who accompanies us only as far as the stairs. "Ours is the room at the top, the first door on the left."

We have hardly started up the stairs when Mabudo appears above us, makes a perilous leap and lands just in front of our noses. He brandishes a blowpipe and dances as if he were possessed. "Mo ku niha sawaba! Saka wa mo... wami ka so!" He suddenly becomes still and stares intently, ready to leap at any moment.

He lets us pass, and we slowly climb the stairs, followed by the small dark man, bare-footed and bare-chested. We knock at the door on the left and a voice invites us to enter. We find Barry stretched out on his bed, a blanket spread over his legs and two canes leaning against the nightstand.

"Baku sube wa kana no ka!" he cries to Mabudo who has followed us into the room. The small man crouches in the corner.

"Mr. O'Neill, we will not keep you long," says Wiggins, "We understand you still suffer from your injuries, but we were hoping you might spare us a moment?"

"Gladly, I will be happy to help you if I can."

"A burglary was committed last night at the home Mr. Henry Thacker. A collection of hand-painted porcelain birds was stolen. The pieces are quite valuable. Would you happen to know of anyone who might have committed such a crime?"

"Did you happen to notice anything unusual in the style of the burglary?"

"No, a window was broken, that's about all we know."

"To tell you the truth, I don't think there are many porcelain thieves, because it is difficult merchandise to sell."

While Barry reflects on the problem, Wiggins helps him to readjust his pillows, which have slipped down.

"The only person who comes to mind is Jonathan Small. He was acquitted of all charges in the DeVries Diamond affair, but he

and his mates are capable of pulling something like that. Besides, he now owns a small ceramics factory and he employs some dubious characters."

"Would you happen to know where might find him, Barry?"

"His type usually spends a lot of time in taverns. I hear it's Small's main preoccupation."

"Have you heard from your brother Thomas?" asks Wiggins.

"Tommy? It's been a year since I've seen him. I think he's on the Continent. He always liked living there. He's always found Paris an attraction. Especially now during the Exposition . . ."

"Thank you for so freely answering our questions—especially considering your obvious discomfort. Good day."

We leave the bedroom and head back down the stairs as fast as possible escorted by Mabudo making his strange cries and waving his blowpipe.

## CLUE 84

Advertising Office ..... CLUE 143  
Henry Ellis ..... CLUE 31

## CLUE 85

We learn through the saleslady in the hat section that Clarisse Brizaille works at the Magasin du Printemps department store.

## CLUE 86

"Anything new, Porky?"

"Wiggins, old chap. What are you and your mates chasing today?"

"Birds. Porcelain birds."

Porky bursts out laughing. "They must fly pretty fast, those buggers."

We explain to him the whole story.

"I can't help you, old chap. I've never heard of your Mr. Thacker. He doesn't sound like the type of chap who comes here. And his bourgeois lady even less."

"Do you know of anyone who would be interested in porcelain figures?"

Porky is thoughtful for a few moments. "You can always check out the O'Neills. You never know what to expect with them. If I were you, I'd also find old Perry Lexington. In his day he used to know everything that was going on."

"Who is he?" asks Wiggins.

"An old ex-convict who retired from the business. He now has a small house on the corner of Borough High Street and Long Lane. It's quite a ways from here, but it might be worth your while."

A drunk sitting by himself at a small table begins to talk loudly to no one in particular.

"Silence!" shouts Porky at the drunk. Turning back to us he adds, "Any more of that and I'll have to throw him out like a I did the General."

"You threw . . . out a general?" asks Wiggins surprised.

"Oh, not a real one. He's an old veteran, goes by the name of Peter Rucastle. He was here the other night. He must have drunk at least a dozen pints, and he was shouting at the top of his lungs about how he had defended England in the four corners of the earth, and how it is not necessarily that one is dishonest that he agrees to betray his country. At first he made the customers laugh, but then he became aggressive towards everyone. I finally had to toss him out. Ah, business is not always easy, old chap."

"Do you know where he lives?" asks Wiggins who wishes to leave no stone unturned in his investigation.

"No idea. You know these old soldiers don't really cause much trouble, except to talk endlessly of their years of army life."

"Apart from that, Porky, has anything else happened lately, any

rumours of . . ."

"I see what you're trying to say," answers Porky, lowering his voice. "No, everything is calm. I have to admit, though, that in this kind of weather, people aren't thirsty enough."

The drunk at the back of the pub begins his shouting again.

"Excuse me, mates," says Porky. "Looks like duty is calling me."

## CLUE 87

We interrogate the salesladies discreetly and finally learn that Clarisse Brizaille previously worked at "La Belle Jardinier."

## CLUE 88

Dr. Moore Agar ..... CLUE 115  
Mr. and Mrs. Snelgrove ..... CLUE 45

## CLUE 89

At the French Embassy we ask to meet with the Vice Consul, Paul Zobar. We are ushered into a large office with garnet coloured curtains. The walls are covered with shelves containing books and reports. A thick-set man of medium height, dressed in elegant clothes, offers us comfortable chairs placed in front of his desk.

"It is good to see you again. What can I do for you gentlemen?" he asks us in a friendly manner. He has a slight French accent which we notice right away.

"We are investigating a burglary committed at the house of Mr. Thacker, who is married to a young woman of French origin. We would like to obtain some information on this young woman and we thought you might be able to help us."

Paul Zobar thinks for a moment before replying.

"That is a rather delicate request, for our files are strictly confidential. However, in view of our past relations and in appreciation for your help in the past concerning my daughter Annette, I will make an exception, providing, of course, that you will avoid any indiscretions."

We observe with pleasure that the anglophobic sentiment we had encountered last year has been replaced with a kind of neutral benevolence.

"What was the name again?" he asks us.

"Thacker. Mrs. Amelie Thacker."

"Please wait a moment," he says getting up from his chair. He leaves his office and returns shortly, carrying a thick file.

"I think this register will provide the information you desire, Mr. Wiggins." He methodically turns the pages.

"Here we are. Mrs. Amelie Thacker, her maiden name is Desmoulins, Amelie Lise Marie Desmoulins. Born the fourth of April eighteen-fifty-eight in Paris, daughter of Camille Alphonse Honore Desmoulins and his wife Ernestine Jeanne Amelie Lebigre, address forty-six rue de Babylone, Paris VIIth. She married Henry James Thacker on March twenty-sixth, eighteen-eighty-six in London, and her current address is four, Grey's Inn Road, London WC.

"This is all the information I have to give you."

We thank Mr. Zobar who accompanies us to the door of his office and wishes us a good day.

## CLUE 90

We gaze at the reproduction of the laborer's shack recreated by the famous chocolate manufacturers and then we head in the direction of the "Lighting and Heating by Gas" pavilion. From there we go to the "Goldsmith and Morocco Leather Tanning" pavilion. We then visit a typical Portuguese home reproduced exactly down to the last detail, an exhibit of living quarters down through the ages which includes Roman, Gallo-Roman and Athenian homes,

a Russian peasant building a log hut, and his Asian counterpart wearing a pointed hat and pulling a group of visitors in his rickshaw.

"If we continue like this," says Wiggins as we approach the Turkish Tobacco pavilion, "we are going to waste the day and learn very little. I think we would be better off leaving the Exposition."

## CLUE 91

Henry James Thacker drew up a will in April of 1886 in which he leaves his entire estate to his wife Amelie.

## CLUE 92

Bruce Nigel, the butler, welcomes us into the magnificent entrance hall of the Carleton House.

"Madame has asked me to escort you directly to her quarters upon your arrival."

In a very dignified manner he accompanies us to the first landing where we find Mrs. Cecilia Sipton, a striking beauty, sitting on a divan in her drawing room.

"Ah! greetings, gentlemen. Isn't this a troublesome affair? Poor Amelie told me the news. She is devastated and distressed. I had a feeling you would come and see me. I have every confidence in your ability to help her out."

"Thank you," says Wiggins blushing like a shy young man. "Have you seen Mrs. Thacker recently?" he asks.

"Yes, of course. As you know, Amelie is Parisian and I frequently solicit her advice on the latest fashion. And we also discussed a modest upcoming production she is organizing under the auspices of our movement. She is a good and generous soul who has done a great deal for the poor and actively participates in our ongoing struggles against the forces of evil and against poverty."

"Has she seemed particularly anxious or distressed lately?"

"To tell you the truth, yes. Amelie is occasionally sad and melancholic. I suppose it's only normal when one lives far from one's family and country."

"Can you tell us anything about the relationship between Mrs. Thacker and her husband? Did they ever have any differences?"

"Not that I am aware of. Amelie simply adores her husband. As for Henry, he is a brilliant, extremely intelligent man who is in love with his wife."

"Since Mrs. Thacker told you about the facts that led us here, you must know the two servants have been arrested. Do you know them?"

"Of course, and I simply don't understand the attitude of Scotland Yard. I know Anny Forster quite well. She is a young woman who is devoted to her mistress; she would never do anything to harm Amelie. She is also a generous soul who helps to alleviate the misery of the poor with the help of her fiance."

"Do you know him?"

"Yes, he works in a flower shop, and he is very well mannered. Mike Collier has a noble heart and is one of God's faithful soldiers."

"And Nigel O'Brady?"

"His past has not always been exemplary, I'm afraid. But with her generous and good soul, Amelie wanted to give him a new chance and asked her husband to take him into their service. I believe he has repaid that trust and been a satisfactory employee."

"Do you know the cook, Mary Flannagan?"

"Not really. She had already been in Henry's service before his marriage to Amelie. In fact, I think she was in the service of the elder Mr. Thacker, Henry's father, when he was still alive."

"I suppose that you know that Mr. Thacker left his home yesterday in the middle of the day, and that his wife has not had any news since then."

"Yes, Amelie confided her worries to me. She doesn't know where to go or what to think."

"The question I am about to ask you is rather delicate," says Wiggins. "Do you think Mr. Thacker could possibly be leading a double life?"

"My heavens, no!" answers Cecilia Sipton. "He consecrated his life to his work and to his wife. He does go to the races regularly and Donald has reproached him, telling him he could better utilize his time, but it wasn't what you would call a double life."

"Speaking of Donald, could you tell us the whereabouts of Mr. Stillwater?"

"Donald is at the offices of the Sipton Tea Company. You may not be aware of the fact, but he has decided to take the reins of the company, and he is very busy with his work."

"You know that the thieves took Mrs. Thacker's porcelain bird collection. Were you familiar with the collection?"

"Of course! Amelie was very proud of it. She had put it together piece by piece and was very partial to it, particularly to the ones from France, from the Limoges or Sevres regions. Maybe because they reminded her of her country."

"Now, gentlemen, I must take leave of you. I have so much to do in preparation for my marriage to Donald. Henry and Amelie are invited to the ceremony, and I do hope that these painful events are but a distant memory for Amelie by then."

## CLUE 93

The dean is a small nervous man, entirely bald, whose bulbous nose holds up a pair of thick old-fashioned glasses.

"Monsieur Thacker was here from September eighteen-eighty-three to October eighteen-eighty-five. He taught science and was conducting some research in acoustics. It is certain that his work preceded the work of Monsieur Edison in perfecting the phonograph which he is currently demonstrating at the World Fair in the Machinery Exposition hall. Despite the interest such inventions hold for the public, I believe scientists belong in the laboratory."

"What do you think of Mr. Thacker?"

"I was pleased at my choice. He proved to be a dedicated and competent worker."

"And his personal life?"

"I don't interest myself in the private matters of those who teach here, provided that their private life does not interfere with the quality of their work and the reputation of the Sorbonne."

"Was he particularly close to any of his colleagues when he was in Paris?"

"If I remember correctly he knew Eugene Peyrac quite well. They worked together."

"Could we possibly meet with him?"

"He teaches at the Polytechnical Institute. I cannot tell you anything more."

We thank the dean of the Sorbonne for granting us an interview on such short notice and we leave.

## CLUE 94

We approach the beggar sitting on the sidewalk, near the entrance of number eighty-four. He is sitting on the ground, his legs crossed, a small supply of matches and candles resting in his lap. At first glance, we are shocked by his bloated face, sickly, worn by the winds of London and by life. A discoloured black eyepatch covers his right eye. His face is covered with a layer of grime which emphasizes each wrinkle, giving his mouth a disquieting grin. His plaid shirt, made of coarse material, is partially tucked into his pants. A leather cap lies in front of him holding a few coins.

"Matches, good sirs?" he cries as we approach. His husky voice leads us to believe he invests the meager profits of his small business in bottles of cheap gin.

"We would like to ask you a few questions, sir," says Wiggins throwing a few coins in his cap.

"Questions? You want to ask me a few questions?" says the

man in a menacing tone. "I don't know of any questions I'd want to hear and I don't know of any answers either. Thanks for the charity."

"All we want to know is if you happened to be here yesterday?" asks Wiggins unperturbed.

"Why do you ask me that? You're not coppers and I ain't done nothing wrong. I'm not begging, I'm selling matches."

"True we are not the police," answers Wiggins. "We're friends of Sherlock Holmes, and we are helping him in a small matter."

With these words the beggar's expression suddenly changes. The bitter downturn of his mouth and his hard and arrogant glare fade as if by magic and his voice softens even as he speaks.

"You work for Sherlock Holmes? I've often heard of him, and I know he tries to combat evil wherever he goes."

To our great surprise, we notice our poor beggar now expresses himself in flawless English.

"How may I help you?"

"Were you in this same place yesterday?" asks Wiggins.

"No. Listen, you say you work for Mr. Holmes and this seems like reason enough for me to help you. I'm not really a beggar. I do this as sort of a hobby, just as others cultivate roses or play cricket. Those of us who belong to this small select group devote ourselves to this amusement which I'm sure you'll agree is quite innocent."

"To answer your question, I will tell you this: we install ourselves in a different spot each day, to avoid the attention of the official police. For that reason I was not here yesterday."

"Can you tell us who was here?" asks Wiggins.

"You understand I cannot answer that question. Anonymity is the *sine qua non* condition of our existence. But you may present yourselves on my authority at the headquarters of our society."

"Your society?"

"Yes, the Society of Amateur Mendicants. It is located in the basement of a furniture warehouse at fifty Lambeth Palace Road."

"To whom shall we address ourselves?"

"Ask to see John."

"John?"

"Yes, simply John. Tell him Peter sent you."

We thank the match vendor enthusiastically for the confidence he has shown us. As we turn to leave, Wiggins starts to throw another copper coin in the cap sitting on the sidewalk, but he catches himself in the incongruity of his gesture and instead chooses to shake Peter's hand warmly.

## CLUE 95

"Me very flattered to receive honourable gentlemen in humble restaurant," says a small round Chinese man in a high pitched voice as he ushers us in. Francois le Villard is visibly amusing himself as he interprets for us the greetings of Long Ping Tong, imitating his irresistible Chinese accent.

"Aah, my cousins gone to America open laundry. Me prefer open Chinese restaurant in Paris. Me think Maubelt very good place to open Chinese restaurant. Very good food in Long Ping Tong's restaurant. Me make peking duck for honourable gentlemen."

"Unfortunately we did not come to taste your specialties," says Francois le Villard. "We would like to know if you are acquainted with a Russian by the name of Nicolai Gorstoff."

"Why do you ask about Nicolai Golstoff, honourable visitors?"

"We would like the opportunity to meet him, if possible."

"For Chinese, all white people look alike. Very difficult to recognize honourable customers."

A large smile appears on the face of the Chinaman who continues to observe us with his inscrutable look.

Francois le Villard begins to distract himself by playing with a pair of chopsticks lying on the table, while we are absorbed in the contemplation of the room's decoration, an immense golden dragon hanging against the red lacquered wall.

"My friends can be very generous, you know," says le Villard

after a few minutes, slowly pulling out a few bills from his wallet. "But they really would like to meet Nicolai Gorstoff."

"Golstoff. How you write name of honourable foreign customer?"

Le Villard writes the name of the man we are seeking on a page of his notebook and holds it out to the restaurant owner.

"Me look to find customer in big book," says Long Ping Tong disappearing behind the counter taking with him the bills that le Villard had left on the table.

He reappears a few seconds later. "I find. Nicolai Golstoff live lue Lambuteau."

"Rue Ramuteau?"

"Yes, honourable visitor. Lue Lambuteau."

"That must be the first time I've been the object of such bowing and scraping upon leaving a restaurant without having even eaten there," says Wiggins to us, laughing heartily as we exit the restaurant.

## CLUE 96

We approach a constable who appears to be observing the events in Prince Street.

"Excuse us," says Wiggins, "we would like to know if you were stationed here yesterday?"

"Why do you ask?" says the bobby, somewhat taken aback.

"We are friends of Inspectors Lestrade and Gregson of Scotland Yard," answers Wiggins, never hesitating to exaggerate his connections when investigating a case, "and they asked us to verify several details for them."

The constable is visibly impressed by our important connections in the London police force, and he immediately stiffens into a respectful stance.

"Unfortunately I wasn't here yesterday. This is a rather dangerous district, and we change posts every day. I don't know who was stationed here yesterday. Perhaps you could go see the Lambeth superintendent's office. They will be able to help you no doubt."

We thank him for his help and leave him at his solitary post.

## CLUE 97

"Hello, gentlemen. What can I do for you?"

M. Frank is a small bald man, whose piercing hazel eyes gaze intently at us.

"We are interested in porcelain birds, miniature reproductions of birds," explains le Villard.

"In that case, gentlemen, I think I might be able to help you, for I am one of the few specialists in such art objects in Paris."

He invites us to follow him to a display case occupying part of a wall on the left side at the back of the shop.

"Gentlemen, here are all the porcelain birds I have to sell at the moment."

He indicates a stunning collection of about thirty brightly coloured ravishing birds. A magnificent cardinal with fiery red plumage is surrounded by a blue jay, a black titmouse, and a charming red-breasted robin with outstretched wings. . . . It would be difficult to choose a favourite if we were asked.

"Magnificent collection," says le Villard, turning towards M. Frank. "I suppose you know the origin, the history, of all these birds?"

"Of course," he answers, looking surprised. "Why do you ask this question?"

We explain to him quickly that we are investigating a theft which involved the disappearance of handpainted porcelain birds, similar to the ones on display. "My friends and I have come here solely with the intention of educating ourselves," explains Francois le Villard. "Of course we by no means intend to imply that these stolen birds could possibly find their way into your gallery."

"I understand perfectly well," says M. Frank, "and I will do

my best to answer your questions."

"We would like to know how you know the origin or provenance of the pieces you sell."

"It's quite simple. When we purchase one of these pieces, we draw up a sort of certificate with the name of the seller on it. When we sell the piece we, in turn, deliver a copy of that certificate to the buyer. He can then prove the origin of the object. Needless to say, we are extremely vigilant as to the identity of the persons from whom we buy. I should add that the police come and verify our books on a regular basis."

"Do all antique dealers proceed in the same manner?"

"Yes, if they choose to uphold the honourability of our profession. But, as in all professions, there are always a few less scrupulous individuals."

"What action do you take if a suspicious sounding seller proposes to sell such pieces?"

"I simply refuse to do business with him."

"Has anybody recently proposed to sell you any porcelain birds?"

"No, not for several months."

"You must know the market for art objects well?"

"Certainly, I have had this shop for forty years."

"How could such a collection of stolen porcelain birds be fenced?"

"I told you earlier. It is not impossible that certain merchants might accept to buy such objects, but I would prefer not to name any names; it would be a grave accusation. I think the thieves would probably prefer to sell through certain receivers of stolen goods."

"Do you happen to know of any?"

"You know, it's a very clandestine world and very likely to change often. In addition the Exposition has brought to Paris all sorts of people of dubious morality."

"Could you possibly give us at least a few names to go on?"

The antique dealer hesitates several seconds before answering in a low voice. "I think a man like Jules Rambour could be interested in this sort of thing. I have also heard of a German fellow by the name of Weinberg, I think, but these are but rumours."

"One last question," says le Villard. "Is it easy, in your opinion, to find buyers for this kind of object, when the origin is doubtful?"

"Yes and no. Yes, because one can always find amateurs who want to profit from a cheap price. No, because, in contrast to jewellery, for example, which can be recut or mounted differently, these objects cannot be disguised."

We thank M. Frank for his assistance, and, after admiring his collection for one last time, we leave the gallery.

## CLUE 98

We address ourselves to the harried employee at the reception desk. "Excuse me," says Wiggins, "would you happen to know a Mr. Arthur Stoners?"

"No," replies the clerk. "No one by that name is here."

"Yes, I see," says Wiggins, "but we know he lives across from the hotel, and we thought you might know him."

"If he lives across the street, why don't you try over there." The man abruptly turns his attention once again to working on the hotel register.

## CLUE 99

We wait a few moments before being ushered into the office of Lord Holdhurst, Minister of War.

He rises brusquely as we enter and approaches us, a cigarette in his hand. A few papers lie scattered upon the table. We notice an enormous crystal ashtray, full to the rim with cigarette butts, Benson & Hedges Imperials.

"I'm glad to see you," says Lord Holdhurst.

He is about sixty years old, tall and thin, with curly, slightly greying hair. He is dressed in a dark, formal suit.

"I was told you would be coming as representatives of Mr. Sherlock Holmes. I must admit that I am not unhappy to see him taking an interest in Thacker's disappearance. I telephoned Lestrade this morning to find out if any progress had been made, all in the greatest confidence, of course. He told me Gregson is taking care of the case. It's the best thing that could happen at this point, but I don't think we can count entirely on the efficiency of the Yard, once again."

"Can you fill us in a bit about Henry Thacker?" asks Wiggins.

Lord Holdhurst sits down, lights a cigarette, and begins to nervously fidget with his pocket watch, which is attached to his waist by a thick gold chain. "A few weeks ago," he begins, "I asked Mr. Holmes, Mr. Mycroft Holmes, if he knew someone who was a scholar, a technician and trustworthy. He suggested a man by the name of Henry Thacker, whose father, in his time, had taken care of important functions in the service of the Empire.

"I immediately authorized a discreet enquiry on Henry Thacker. Certain aspects of his background were not favourable, particularly his marriage to a young French woman and his strong interest in horse racing. However, his intellectual capabilities were undeniable, and I was convinced of the strength of his patriotism. Despite his gambling and ties to France, I chose him for a very special confidential mission."

"Can you reveal the details of this mission?" asks Wiggins.

"Without going into too much detail, simply because they would be of no use to your investigation, I asked him to synthesize the work of several areas of research and to study the possibility of building a heavier-than-air flying machine. It goes without saying that the possibilities are of great interest to the military."

"Do you know what conclusions were drawn from this study?"

"Not really. Thacker simply let me know that his research was going well, and that his plans were beginning to look promising and to come together."

"Would this work be of any interest to a foreign power?" asks Wiggins, to whom the whole affair seems most fascinating.

"Yes, very much so."

"Do you think Thacker would betray his country if he were offered enough money, or could there be another motive?"

"That was the obvious thought which occurred to me immediately upon learning that Thacker had left home suddenly and had not reappeared. However, if he were going to betray England, it would be far easier and more logical for him to transmit the information in writing. We would notice nothing unusual."

"Have you thought of the possibility of kidnapping or murder?" asks Wiggins.

"Murder? It's a possibility. But only one body has been recovered in London, at the Tower. I immediately questioned Sir Jasper. The description did not fit Thacker. As for kidnapping, nothing excludes that possibility for now."

Lord Holdhurst lights a new cigarette after having crushed out the last one with great vigour in the ashtray which is now overflowing.

"I spoke to Mycroft Holmes this morning, but he doesn't seem particularly concerned. You can see he will not bear the brunt if the information falls into the wrong hands."

"I'm sure you know that the Thacker home was burglarized. A collection of porcelain birds belonging to his wife was stolen. Do you believe the two events are linked?" asks Wiggins.

"Porcelain birds! Do you think I have the time to occupy myself with birds, whether they are stuffed or made of porcelain?"

"Gentlemen," says Lord Holdhurst brusquely rising from his chair, "I expect fast results from you. Call me if you learn anything. And I count on your discretion."

## CLUE 100

While we are walking along, Francois le Villard points out the

architecture of the Parisian houses and the nattily designed shop windows for us to admire.

"What I find fascinating," says Wiggins as we stop in front of a store which interests us, "are all the cafes with their terraces where one can relax in the sun and watch the passersby. Our pubs have their charm, but I find what you French have here a thoroughly enjoyable custom."

We admire the Cafe des Capucines for a moment, across from us on the other side of the street, painted in red and green. White tables set up on the sidewalk are occupied by men in somber city suits and elegant women dressed in the latest fashion. Glasses filled with drinks give this symphony of colours a final touch.

"Well, let's go!" finally says Francois le Villard for whom the spectacle of the streets of Paris do not have quite the same charm or appeal.

We enter the bookstore and a young saleswoman immediately approaches us, a copy of *The Times* in her hand.

"Hello," she says in English, addressing herself to Wiggins.

Our surprise must be evident, for she blushes and looks confused. "Oh, pardon me, sir. I mistook you for one of our customers who comes to get his paper every day."

"That's quite alright," replies Wiggins. "We were coming to get a copy of *The Times* anyway."

The girl blushes again lightly. "I am sorry, sir. This is the last copy I have left, and it's reserved."

"Oh well, it's not a matter of great importance," says Wiggins, with all the amiability he can muster for pretty young women. "We will go without today."

## CLUE 101

We push open the door of the tavern and manage with some difficulty to find some room at the far end of the counter.

"A round of beer for our group here," cries Wiggins to the bartender.

"Hear, hear!" we answer, smiles appearing on our faces.

"You seem to be crowded," says Wiggins, exhibiting his usual skill of engaging others in conversation.

"Oh yes, lads. It's always like this here; we don't sit around."

"I was wondering if you remembered seeing a beautiful young blonde woman in here last night at about eight o'clock. She may have had a rendezvous with someone."

The bartender bursts out laughing and gives no sign of stopping. "Hey, do you think I have time to notice someone like that here? This place is always full of pretty young women, blondes, brunettes, even redheads. And many of them have what you call rendezvous."

"Hey, Jack!" shouts the other bartender from the end of the counter. "This bloke is asking if we found an umbrella. He says he lost his. Have you found one by any chance?"

"Yes," says our bartender, "but it can't be his. The one I found belongs to Mr. Attard. He forgot it yesterday. Remind me to give it to him next time he comes in."

Having understood that our conversation has ended, we finish our beers and quickly leave the crowded pub.

## CLUE 102

Apparently no one here has ever heard of Clarisse Brizaille.

## CLUE 103

"Wait a moment!" says Wiggins to us as we are poised over the doorbell about to ring it. "Look at the name written on the brass plate."

"Breckenridge," reads Simpson.

"Yes, and it's Mr. Breckinridge we are looking for."

We leave promising ourselves to be more careful next time.

## CLUE 104

Inspector Lestrade is deeply absorbed in reading a report from one of the numerous piles on his desk. The corner which serves as his office is covered with cardboard boxes filled with papers and open folders. Hearing us approach, he abruptly looks up.

"You again, Wiggins! What do you want this time?"

"It's concerning the Thacker affair, Inspector."

"If it's about the disappearance of Thacker, you can go talk to Gregson. I passed the case on to him. As if we could call it a disappearance when a man goes for a walk in the afternoon and doesn't come home that night. In my opinion there is a woman behind this story, that much is clear to me. The Yard surely has better things to do than to take care of domestic quarrels."

"And how about the theft, Inspector?"

"Solved. I arrested the servants. They'll confess. O'Brady is a horse returning to the stable. And as for the girl . . . the girl . . ."

"Anny Forster?" suggests Wiggins.

"That's it. I don't even know where she comes from."

"You are sure then that she is guilty?" insists Wiggins.

"See here young man," says Lestrade in a stern tone. "I've known Holmes as long as you have. He occasionally comes up with one or two somewhat interesting ideas, and I know when to apply them if necessary." He takes a deep breath before declaring, carefully enunciating each word, "When you have eliminated the possible, whatever remains, however probable, must be the truth."

We watch him trying to grasp the depth of this profound aphorism.

"And," says Lestrade who is beginning to lose his patience, "you should not forget Dresde, eighteen-thirty-four."

"Dresde, eighteen-thirty-four?" asks Wiggins.

"Yes, Dresde eighteen-thirty-four . . . or thirty-five. The date doesn't matter. He's the coach driver who . . . but stop making me waste my time. I have a report to write."

"Could you at least tell us what you know about this theft, if you please, Inspector?" asks Wiggins politely.

"I have already given you all the pertinent facts. If you want to know more about the theft you'll have to go talk to the policeman who took the first statements."

He turns back to reading the sheet of paper placed before him and murmurs to himself, "What's all this fuss about the theft of some silly birds. First Lord Holdhurst this morning and now this . . ."

"Pardon me, Inspector, but you were saying?"

"Are you still here? I thought I told you to leave me to get back to my work. If you're so good at this, I have to ask myself why you always come to Scotland Yard to get your information. You might do better to occupy yourself with the corpse found at the Bloody Tower."

## CLUE 105

"Miss Hortense Beaupre? Of course, I remember her well," declares the stage manager who greets us. "She was quite a celebrity a few years ago, and then she abandoned the theatre about two years ago. I wouldn't be able to tell you where she is now, or what she does."

"Which theatre company did she belong to before she retired?" asks Francois le Villard.

"I should be able to find that out for you. Wait here while I check."

He leaves us for a few minutes while he consults the large bound volumes of back issues of the *Theatre Gazette* which are arranged by year on the shelves along the wall behind the office.

"Here. That didn't take long. Miss Beaupre belonged to the Jacques Lefranc theatre company."

"Does this company still perform in Paris?"

"Yes, they are currently performing 'Mother in Law' at the Gymnasium Theatre."

"Merci beaucoup. Au revoir, monsieur," says Wiggins whose progress in French is astonishing.

## CLUE 106

We approach the young man at the front desk. "Excuse me," says Wiggins, "we understand that Mr. Henry Thacker is a frequent patron and chess player. Would you be so kind as to point out his usual chess partner?"

"You must mean Mr. Amos Kindle." The young man leads us to a nearby table with a chess board on it. The pieces are arranged on the board as if a game were in full course, but the man sitting at the table seems to be playing by himself. He appears to be in his mid-fifties, with salt and pepper hair and a well-groomed white beard. A pair of gold-rimmed spectacles are carefully balanced on the bridge of his nose. He is soberly dressed in a black suit, a white shirt and a dark tie. He does not move as we approach; his eyes intent upon the sixty-four squares of the board, he seems to be completely absorbed in thought.

"Excuse me, Mr. Kindle," says the young man accompanying us, "but these gentlemen would like to have a word with you, if possible."

Mr. Kindle slowly raises his eyes towards us and acquiesces with a nod.

"We are terribly sorry to disturb you," says Wiggins, "but we would like to ask you a few questions about Mr. Henry Thacker. We understand that you regularly play chess together."

"Yes, indeed," answers the man in a surprisingly soft voice. "But, may I ask why you are enquiring?"

"Mr. Thacker mysteriously left his home yesterday and has not returned. We are trying to discover his whereabouts, and to that end, we are trying to get a sense of his personality, to know what kind of man he is."

"It's very simple," says the man, focussing once again on the chess board. "We played every Monday. It was last week—for he didn't come yesterday, which surprised me for it was his turn to start, so he would have played white. You probably know enough about the game to know that."

We nod, not quite understanding his point.

"Well, he took the king's knight and placed it in front of the king's bishop. Somewhat blocked, I advanced the queen's pawn two squares, a natural move. Immediately, he advanced the queen's bishop two squares. I took his pawn with mine, which seemed to be the best and most natural way to proceed."

While he is talking, Amos Kindle moves the pieces about the board to demonstrate the moves.

"So what do you think his next move was? He took the queen's knight and placed it in front of the rook."

"Excuse me, Mr. Kindle," says Wiggins, "but we don't quite understand your point."

"Neither do I, I don't quite understand myself. I have the feeling that that particular move was a mistake, but in fact he won the game. How, why, I do not know, but it will take at least half a century to understand the implications of that opening."

"We would like to know more details about Mr. Thacker's life."

"But chess, that's life," continues Kindle, who has suddenly become more animated. "The essence of Thacker's personality is contained in these few moves. Original, brilliant, the winner. Possessing the art of analysis as well as synthesis. Capable of combining tactic and strategy, he is a man who leaves nothing to chance. The analysis that he made at the opening of our last game, the idea that he then developed, that it was more important to control the centre than to occupy it, plunges me, I must confess, into an abyss of perplexity."

"Do you know of anything else that might shed some light on his disappearance?" asks Wiggins.

"Unfortunately not. He is my regular partner, and he's also a

charming man. But our relationship is limited to playing chess. I sincerely hope that nothing has happened to him."

We thank Mr. Kindle and depart, leaving him to reposition the pieces on the board and plunge back into his solitary meditation.

## CLUE 107

Criminal Records .....	CLUE 75
Land Records .....	CLUE 52

## CLUE 108

Mrs. Rylott receives us in her luxuriously furnished salon overlooking Hanover square.

"I don't see how I can be of any help," she says as we explain the object of our visit. "My brother has always had a rather . . . let me say, independent nature. His intellectual qualities are undeniable. But I have to admit that his marriage to that French woman three years ago brought our relationship to an end. I'm not making a value judgement on the quality of his spouse, but it was hardly the marriage my father wished for him."

While she is talking to us, Mrs. Rylott caresses the green satin material that covers the sofa on which she sits.

"So you have no idea where your brother might have gone yesterday?"

"No, as I said, we no longer maintain any relations."

We thank Mrs. Rylott for having received us and admire the superb painting hanging on the left wall of the drawing room on our way out.

"Do you think that was a real Turner?" Wiggins asks us when we are outside.

"It sure looked like it," answers Simpson. "That's certainly worth a few guineas."

## CLUE 109

A small sign on the counter indicates the desk clerk speaks English, so it is Wiggins who speaks to him.

"We'd like to know if a certain Monsieur Attard stayed here recently?" he asks.

"Monsieur Attard . . . Monsieur Attard . . . wait a minute . . ."

The clerk rapidly pages through his register. "Here it is. Monsieur Charles Attard. Unfortunately you arrived too late. He left yesterday afternoon."

Wiggins pretends to look extremely disappointed. "You say he has left already? But I'm absolutely positive I was to meet him today. Could you tell me how long he was in Paris?"

"I wouldn't be able to tell you how long his stay was, but my register indicates he arrived here Tuesday. He arrived late in the afternoon, if I remember correctly, although I'm not absolutely positive. We have the pleasure of welcoming so many foreigners at the moment due to the World Fair that it is difficult to keep track of our guests."

"Did he receive any unexpected messages, any telephone calls?" asks Wiggins, confident he is gaining the clerk's trust.

"I don't believe so. If you will excuse me, guests are arriving and must be taken care of. Good day, gentlemen."

We leave the hotel as the receptionist turns away and engages himself in an animated discussion with a group of Germans, demonstrating a good grasp of that language as well.

## CLUE 110

Sam Parsons waits until his store is empty before turning his attention to us. As soon as we are alone, he hands us a

folded newspaper and postal card.

"From you know who," he says in a low voice.

### CLUE 111

We enter the austere building which houses the Salvation Army and find two men engrossed in an animated conversation. One of them wears the uniform we know so well. The other is a young man about thirty years old whose face reflects both energy and intelligence.

"When General Booth chose blood and fire as the emblem of your Army," says this young man, "perhaps the choice was even more divinely inspired than he suspected. The Army is an army that marches to the sound of the drum, not wrapped up in the music of the organs. You must actually fight the devil instead of merely praying at him."

"To fight the devil we need money, and many of our fellow countrymen maintain that money is the fruit of evil."

"It's true," answers the young man, "and this problem gnaws at our consciousness, but the answer is simple. It matters little where the money comes from; it has no odour. The first battle against evil is the battle against poverty, which is one of the greatest crimes of the world. 'Poor but honest,' is a phrase that is often heard. Such phrases are as intolerable, as immoral, as 'fraudulent but a good afterdinner speaker,' 'drunken but amiable,' or 'splendidly criminal.' Security, the chief pretense of our society, cannot exist where the worst of dangers, the danger of poverty, hangs over everyone's head, and where the alleged protection of our persons from violence is only an accidental result of the existence of a police force whose real business is to force the poor man to see his children starve whilst the wealthy overfeed their pet dogs with the money that might feed and clothe the children."

This discussion is interesting, but while we do not know quite where it is going to lead, it is certain that it is not going to be of any help to our investigation. Wiggins takes advantage of a pause in the conversation to address himself to the man in uniform. "Pardon me, sir, but we would like to speak to Major Barbara about an urgent matter."

"Saving souls and sometimes saving men, those are the only urgent matters at hand," replies the salvationist.

"Pardon me for insisting," says Wiggins, "but we really must meet Major Barbara. Is she here?"

"No, I think you will find her at the shelter, where she is accomplishing an endeavour of great value."

We thank him, apologizing once again for having interrupted their conversation, and quickly leave.

### CLUE 112

"You understand I cannot reveal the contents of our clients' files," answers the director of the Cox Bank. "However, in view of the service you rendered us last March, I will do all in my power to help you."

"Thank you, sir. We are very grateful for any help you can provide us," says Wiggins smoothly.

"Mr. Henry Thacker has had an account with us for many years. His father was also one of our customers. Furthermore, when his father died a few years ago, we organized the sale of the estate at the request of his heirs. Consequently each of the children was left a handsome sum of money, which guarantees Mr. Thacker, like his sister, Mrs. Rylott, a healthy yearly income. I can also tell you that Mr. Thacker has additional private sources of income which are perfectly legal."

"What can you tell us about his expenditures?" asks Wiggins.

"His expenditures are perfectly normal for a man of his means. I cannot think of anything else to tell you. I hope that you will find this information of some value. Good day."

Having understood the interview to be over we thank the director and leave the Cox Bank.

### CLUE 113

Nobody here has ever heard of Clarisse Brizaille.

### CLUE 114

The Machinery exhibit is housed in a huge building giving out onto a tree-lined square. The trams overflowing with passengers arrive in front of the building where the people disembark.

Once we are inside we are immediately struck by the architecture of the building. Enormous iron girders curve and join each other to form an arch supporting the glass above us.

We wander around viewing all manner of motors, machines, cables, pulleys and driving belts for awhile until we find ourselves drawn to a large crowd. A sign above us reads "EDISON'S PHONOGRAPH."

We manage to make our way between the men in top hats and the women in elegant dresses to the front of the crowd. A young man is seated alone behind a table on which is sitting a machine consisting of a sort of wooden rectangular box supporting a rotating cylinder. A small mechanism moves in a parallel fashion to the axis of the cylinder.

Four tubes project from the table. Each tube is divided in two and those are in turn divided once again forming a forked shape. Three women and a man wearing a scarlet fez are leaning over the copper barrier separating them from Mr. Edison. Each holds an end of the tube and presses it firmly over his or her ear.

"This is the most popular exhibit at the Exposition," says le Villard. "They can hear music or recorded voices on the cylinder that you see there."

We watch the demonstration for a few moments, but we are still too far away to attract the attention of the American inventor.

"In any case," says Wiggins finally, "I don't think Mr. Edison would have been able to give us any information on Henry Thacker. We would do better to pursue our investigation elsewhere."

### CLUE 115

Doctor Agar's servant informs us that he is at his office.

### CLUE 116

We arrive at the ceramics factory of J. Small & Co. and ask to see the owner. A worker directs us towards a small tense woman who speaks to us with authority.

"What can I do for you, gentlemen?" she asks us.

"We would like to see Mr. Small, the proprietor of this establishment," says Wiggins.

"Follow me, please," says the woman in a brusque tone. She leads us into a small office decorated with numerous statuettes, reproductions of masterpieces from around the world.

"I am Aggie Small," says the woman closing the door behind us. "If you want to see my husband, this is not the place to come. You have a much better chance of finding him across the street at the Red Boar with his entourage of lazy friends. You see, I am the one who runs this factory, and I can't count on that good-for-nothing for anything. What can I do for you?"

Although surprised by the tenor of the relationship between Aggie Small and her husband, Wiggins explains the purpose of our visit taking all possible precautions to avoid any misunderstanding.

"What has happened, Mrs. Small, is that a collection of porcelain objects has been stolen. These porcelain pieces are representations of birds of all kinds, about four inches high, handpainted,

and sitting on little porcelain stands. These objects are worth quite a bit of money, and we were wondering if, by any chance, you make such objects."

"No, we don't make anything like that. This is a ceramics factory, not a porcelain factory. In addition, we specialize in reproductions of famous masterpieces. As a matter of fact you can see one of our creations behind you, the Venus de Milo, which my husband unfortunately refuses to sell."

She sighs with exasperation and anger.

"Have you, by any chance, seen such objects as I have described, Mrs. Small?"

"I've seen them before in certain stores, of course, but not here, I can assure you."

"Would you happen to remember precisely where you saw them?"

"No, not really. But you may be able to find some by looking in art galleries or in antique stores."

We are about to thank Mrs. Small for her help when she adds, "Now that I think about it, I remember seeing something like that at the Snelgroves' store. They might have what you're looking for."

"Where is their store located?" asked Wiggins.

"I don't quite remember the exact address, but I know it's on the corner of Crawford Street and Gloucester Place."

"Thank you. You have been most helpful."

"You are welcome. Good day, gentlemen."

## CLUE 117

The body was found Monday morning, lying at the foot of the Bloody Tower. The victim had apparently been killed by an arrow from a crossbow which passed through his heart. Scotland Yard was immediately notified, and the body was transported to Bart's Hospital to be examined.

The young policeman who came to give us the details and the circumstances of the macabre discovery still seems emotional over the incident.

"Do you think Inspector Lestrade himself will come to this briefing?" he asks in a voice full of admiration. "This is my first murder case."

"You can always hope," answers Wiggins, "his behaviour is sometimes quite unpredictable."

## CLUE 118

"Have you noticed anything unusual in the Thackers' mail?" asks Wiggins.

"No, nothing. I don't have time to pay much attention to what I deliver."

"How unfortunate," says Wiggins. "It could have furnished us with a clue."

We are on our way out when the postman calls us back. "Wait, there is one thing which comes to mind. It's probably of little importance, though. My kid collects stamps, especially foreign stamps. So I always asked Mrs. Thacker to save them for me. She is so nice, and she still receives quite a few letters from France. The other day, there was a stamp that had a new colour, which I'd never seen before. I was already getting excited for my kid. But she couldn't give me the stamp, because the letter wasn't for her. It was for the man-servant. And he is not in the least friendly. He's the proudest one in the house. I didn't even bother asking. But I was surprised that he had connections with anyone on the Continent."

"Thanks," says Wiggins, "that might help."

"Say," calls out the postman, "if you receive any foreign mail, don't forget my kid, if you please."

## CLUE 119

We find Inspector Tobias Gregson standing next to the window

in his office. He is a large, pale man with flaxen hair. His eyes are fixed on the notebook in his hand.

"Hello, Inspector," says Wiggins as we enter the office. "We have come to talk to you about the Thacker affair."

"If it concerns the theft, Lestrade is handling that. I'm just trying to find Thacker."

"What have you learned?" asks Wiggins.

"Nothing. His wife doesn't know anything. His sister either. And the servants are playing dumb. I don't quite know why Lestrade asked me to take on the case. Of course, the victim of the Tower immediately came to mind, but the description doesn't match at all."

"What do you plan to do next, if you don't mind us asking?"

"I plan to wait, Wiggins, to wait. He'll eventually reappear. Dead or alive."

## CLUE 120

The heavy wooden door closes behind us with a sinister sound. To our left, in the obscurity, we distinguish a staircase leading to the basement, but we decide it is wiser to go into the saloon instead.

As soon as we enter, the conversation ceases and all eyes converge on us. A few men with the look of the gallows about them are hunched over the counter. Other silhouettes begin to appear around the tables. The atmosphere is somber and somewhat anxious and the stale odour of flat beer permeating the air only adds to our discomfort.

Wiggins approaches the counter, which the bartender is wiping absentmindedly while eyeing us.

"A round of beer," says Wiggins.

As soon our glasses are set in front of us, Wiggins asks the bartender, "I believe you know Nigel O'Brady. He's a friend of ours, and we thought we'd find him here."

"I don't know nobody. 'Ere, nobody knows anybody."

"He's a regular," insists Wiggins.

"I tell ye, I don't know 'im. Nobody 'ere 'as ever 'eard of 'im. Ain't that right, guys?"

A few massive forms start to move towards us from the shadows.

"But . . ." resumes Wiggins.

"Listen," says the bartender. "I've already told ye twice, I don't know anybody. Ye 'ave your beers. So pay me what ye owe me and it's good bye. Understand?"

We finish our beers in one gulp and quickly head for the exit.

## CLUE 121

We learn that Madame Pizarre no longer lives here. She has moved to Lyon.

## CLUE 122

We arrive at Covent Garden after having crossed a labyrinth of small miserable streets lined with sordid little buildings. Suddenly the large market hall looms before us, covered by a dome like a pointed hat.

The inside court is packed with carts and wicker baskets filled with fruits and vegetables, in between which the dense crowd cries out and barters.

"It won't be easy to find someone who can help us," says Wiggins.

We enter the main building, and the first stand we come to is covered with clean white geese. Overhead a sign proclaims, in large letters, the name of the proprietor: BRECKINRIDGE.

"I think we'd better make enquiries," says Wiggins, approaching the poultry merchant, a man with a pointed face framed by well-

groomed side whiskers. He looks to be about fifty years old. He is bald and he wears a large white apron tied around his waist. He is absorbed in reading a newspaper and doesn't notice us at first.

"Excuse me . . ." begins Wiggins.

"Sir? Would you like to buy a goose now, would you? They are the best of the market."

Wiggins suddenly looks at the goose merchant intently, thoughtfully, and says to him, "Didn't I see you in the company of Mr. Thacker the other day?"

"I've never heard that name!"

"I must have confused you with someone else. Please forgive me. Could you tell us where to find the nearest flower merchant, please?"

"That's not difficult. You go to the end of the alley, you turn right and then . . . Oh, but wait, here comes someone who can take you there." He waves his arm and calls out, "Miss Doolittle, Miss Doolittle!"

A charming young woman holding in her hand a wicker basket full of red roses, approaches us.

"Yeah, wot you want?"

"Could you accompany these gentlemen to the flower stand?"

"Yeah, I didn't think ye wanted to buy me April showers. Why don't ye ever buy none from me, Mr. Breckinridge?"

She turns to Wiggins and continues with hardly a pause. "Maybe ye'd like to buy me flowers. I'd 'ate to make the trip fer nothin'."

We don't know whether it is her charm or her Cockney accent which goes straight to Wiggins' heart, but in any case he buys the entire contents of the girl's basket.

"Thank ye, sir. Good, let's be off. I can't be late goin' 'ome, and I 'ave to buy more showers fer tonight."

Miss Doolittle escorts us through the maze of baskets and stalls. "How are you, Eliza?" cries out a vegetable merchant lurking behind a mountain of potatoes.

"Yeah, these here gents bought me all out, and I'm goin' to refill me casket fer tonight. Ah, 'ere ye go," she says to us.

We find ourselves surrounded by an ocean of flowers of every conceivable colour—yellow, red, white, pink, violet, and all the shades in between—waiting in buckets of water before being whisked away to decorate the most elegant tables and drawing rooms of the London upper classes.

"You seem to know this area well," says Wiggins.

"Aye, sir. I know everybody. I've been coming 'ere three times a week fer a long time."

"Why three times a week?" asks Wiggins.

"Why? Because the market is only open on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Where'd ye go to school if ye don't know that?"

"Do you know a Mike Collier?"

"Mike? Yeah, of course. 'E's also 'ere when the market's open. 'E works for Mayall. Why do ye ask me about Mike?"

Wiggins decides it would be useless to try to explain the situation to her. "Can you tell us about him?" he asks. "Well, there's not much to say. 'E's nice with everyone. And ye can tell 'e's an 'onest chap, not just pretendin' like some people."

We thank the flower girl for her help and soon leave the market. "There's one thing I don't quite understand," says Simpson. "Why did you ask the goose merchant about Henry Thacker?"

Wiggins turns to look at him, a smile on his face, still holding in his hand his bouquet of roses, "When you see a man with side-whiskers trimmed in that fashion reading the racing forms, it's not difficult to conclude that he is interested in horse racing."

## CLUE 123

We sit down at an empty table on the terrace, to Wiggins' great satisfaction, and each order a beer.

"How unfortunate you serve the beer so cold," says Wiggins putting down his glass. "I like your coffee, but I prefer our stout to

your beer. And why do you leave so much foam when you serve it?"

We continue to chat in this fashion, taking advantage of these few moments of reprieve to watch the spectacle of the street.

We suddenly notice a young man carrying a bowler hat.

"Say!" exclaims Wiggins, "He looks rather like me, don't you agree?"

We nod our heads, watching the man as he enters a bookstore. He emerges a moment later with *The Times* in his hand.

"It might be worth our while to follow him," says Wiggins.

We finish our beers and leave the cafe terrace to begin a discreet pursuit.

We cross Place de la Madeline and turn right at rue de l'Arcade. All of a sudden we see our man enter the building marked number '6.' We slow our pace and then pretend to be in deep contemplation of a bakery window.

A few minutes later, our patience is rewarded by the reappearance of our man, still holding the paper under his arm.

We follow him up rue de l'Arcade, where he turns left onto rue de Rome.

"We are now at the Saint-Lazare train station," says le Villard.

The man enters into the train station. We hurry forward, but as we arrive at the entrance, we lose him in the crowd.

We wander around in the station in vain for a few minutes, but we don't find a trace of the man with the bowler who looks so much like Wiggins.

## CLUE 124

"Of course I know Henry Thacker," says Sir Godfrey Campbell to us as he receives us in his office. The walls are covered with enormous books bound in tobacco-coloured Moroccan leather.

Sir Godfrey is a corpulent, slightly balding man, who gesticulates wildly as he speaks.

"Henry Thacker is a brilliant man. He has often spoken to me about his personal research in mathematics. He has also often talked to me about his interest in horse racing, but I must admit that I didn't quite follow him in that area."

"What did he tell you about racing?" asks Wiggins.

"He was persuaded that chance does not exist—a point of view I absolutely agree with—and that if we integrate mathematical parameters with the statistics of the individual horses and the racetrack conditions we could predict, with a reasonable chance of success, the results of the race."

"Had he obtained convincing results in this area?" asks Wiggins.

"Yes, so he told me, but I didn't verify them myself."

"Did Mr. Thacker talk to you about the project he is currently working on?"

"Yes, but without entering into too much detail. He simply said that he was consolidating and synthesizing available research on heavier-than-air flying machines. I understood the project to be quite confidential."

"Can you explain to us precisely what the problems of this project are?" asks Wiggins.

"Unfortunately not. Physics and engineering are not my specialty. If you wish, I can take you to the library, where you could look up the history of this problem which has haunted the minds of men for hundreds of years."

"Yes, please do," replies Wiggins.

We leave Sir Godfrey Campbell's office and enter a large lecture hall with rows of desks arranged in the shape of a star. We are impressed by the silence which dominates the room.

"Please sit down here," says Sir Godfrey in a low voice, "I'll be back in a moment."

A few minutes later, we hold a large volume bound in red leather in which we read the following:

From the beginning of time, Man has always dreamed of flying, of imitating birds, as witnessed by the books of the saints of all religions. The first written texts contained descriptions of ingenious machines capable of carrying man through the air. Aristotle and Galien studied this problem, while Aulu-Gelle described Archytas' famous plane, and while the poets wrote of Icarus, the mathematicians, on their part, were more interested in his father Daedalus, the inventor.

Tied to geese, those condemned to death were thrown from the tops of cliffs. Others jumped off of towers, buildings, or mountains with wings tied to their backs. History books have no records of all these unfortunate victims, many of whom lost their lives to their interest in flying. In 1500, Leonard de Vinci was the first to approach the problem scientifically, as shown by over 400 drawings he left behind.

During the 16th century, an Englishman named Bates introduced a kite, borrowed from an idea the ancient Chinese had developed. Guidotti, Burattini and Allard were the heroes of ill-fated attempts to fly.

In 1673, a certain Besnier, a French locksmith, was successful in his try at flying thanks to an apparatus covered with valves. In 1742 the Marquis of Bacqueville claims to have flown more than 300 meters over the Seine.

In 1783, the invention of the hot air balloon by the Montgolfier brothers suscitated such an infatuation that the research on machines heavier than air was interrupted and new developments delayed. The Frenchmen Blanchard and Resnier de Goue, the Swiss Degen and the German Berlinger proposed a few solutions and even made some trials in the air, but it was not until the end of the 18th century that the Englishman Sir George Cayley invented a true "airplane," although the name had been given to flying apparatuses since 1786. He constructed a machine in 1796 based on the ideas of the Frenchmen Launoy and Bienvenu. In 1809, he built a passengerless glider; then he built another glider in 1849 which he most likely tried himself.

The Englishmen Henson and Stringfellow followed in the footsteps of Cayley. Then in 1856 the Frenchman Jean Marie Le Bris succeeded in flying his glider with a passenger.

Then came the works of the Englishman Wenham, who built a tunnel in which he tested his theories with the help of models.

More recently in France, Felix du Temple succeeded in sending an airplane with a steam engine down an inclined plane with a young sailor aboard the machine. The current research seems to indicate that the first real flight for man in a machine propelled by a motor is soon to come.

"Perhaps the next paragraph in future editions will be consecrated to Henry Thacker," says Wiggins to us as he closes the book.

## CLUE 125

Clarisse Brizaille is a young woman about thirty years old, who corresponds exactly to the idea the rest of the world has about your typical Parisian woman. Lively, pretty, charming and occasionally humourous, we find her in the perfume section where she works. When Francois le Villard presents her to us she answers us in English, a language she speaks perfectly, the manner in which she speaks to us is even casual.

"I don't understand why you have come from London to speak to me about Amelie," she says to us, surprise evident in her voice.

"As we have told you, a burglary was committed at Mrs. Thacker's house, and the key to the mystery might be found in Paris. We don't want to overlook any possible clues, that is why we are here."

"And you think I can help you find this thief?" asks the young woman to whom the idea seems delightful. "You see, now I have a rather calm life. My husband, my children, my work . . . Of course, now with the World Fair, Paris is fairly lively, but otherwise my life is quite predictable."

"You would be of great help simply by answering a few questions," says Wiggins who likes to maintain control over the direction of the conversation.

"Certainly, I'll try to answer your questions as best as I can."

"You receive letters from Mrs. Thacker, I believe. And you even see her once a year."

"Oh yes, we write to each other every month. She tells me about her life in London, what she has done lately, the people she has seen. I tell her about the latest events in Paris, what to see, the fashion and what two good friends normally talk about. And she also tells me the latest news about Anny. She told me she was engaged to get married and . . ."

"Anny?"

"Yes, Anny Forster."

"You are acquainted with Miss Forster?"

"Yes, of course! Didn't you know?"

"How long have you known Miss Forster?" asks Wiggins.

For the first time since we arrived, Clarisse Brizaille seems to stop and think before saying anything and her smile has disappeared.

"Well," she says after several seconds of silence, "perhaps I shouldn't have said anything, but it's too late now. Can you promise me that what I tell you will not go any further than this room?"

"Yes, of course," answers Wiggins, "provided it doesn't obstruct the course of justice."

"I don't have much faith in justice, you know. The police haven't . . ."

"I used the word justice, not police, that's another matter."

"Well, I have confidence in you. And all this happened a long time ago anyway . . ."

Again, Clarisse Brizaille pauses for a few seconds, to give herself the time to put her thoughts in order. "You may know that Amelie and I wanted to travel around the world?"

We all nod our heads in agreement.

"Well, we finally ended up going one day. It was in seventy-five. We were young at the time. We went to America, but we didn't stay long. Just long enough to cross the country. That in itself almost took a year. We didn't have any money, but we managed. We tried a little of everything, jobwise. Amelie and I knew how to dance a little, and to sing, and we took anything we could get in order to continue our trip. In any case, we didn't have much choice.

"And then late in seventy-six, we went to Australia. The great crossing of the Pacific. We ended up in Adelaide, in the south. There, life was very difficult. I don't need to tell you everything, but it was terribly difficult—you know, thirty-six jobs and thirty-six miseries.

"That's where we met Anny. She was working in a cabaret. The three of us immediately became friends. Anny helped us get jobs. It was hardly the way to quick riches, far from that, but it enabled us to survive.

"And then in eighty-one, Anny got into trouble. She was living with a man, a so-called sailor, although he spent more of his time in the tavern than on ships. Anyway, one day, he came in completely drunk. He had a revolver in his hand and he was threatening Anny. She tried to fight him off, and as she tried to get hold of the gun, it went off, killing the man. It was an accident, I'm sure, but the police refused to believe her. Anny came to find us. She didn't know what to do. She needed help. Amelie knew the local police chief. Let's say he was attracted to her. He came to see her every night at the cabaret. Amelie went to see him. When she came back she told us Anny had one day to get out of the country. That was all the reprieve she could obtain. The three of us decided to leave. Anny had a little money. She said we could all share it, that she owed us at least that. Amelie and I began to be afraid. Too much violence and misery was occurring around us. We wanted to return to Europe, but we didn't have enough money for the voyage. Nor the courage for that matter, to go back the same way we had come.

"The three of us together took the first boat we could find. Anny wanted to go to London. She had always dreamed of going to England. Amelie and I went home to Paris. Amelie began to act in the theatre, and she was immediately successful. I also tried to break into the theatre, but I didn't have as much luck. I preferred something steady and then I got married. Now, it's all history. We never

talk about it. When Amelie moved to London, she hired Anny to work in her service. That's all I can tell you."

"Who else knows this story?" asks Wiggins.

"Here in Europe, no one. I have never spoken of it. Amelie and Anny haven't either, I imagine. Back in Adelaide, I suppose it has all been forgotten. But I imagine that at the time, we were blamed for the murder of that man, all three of us were undoubtedly thought guilty. But I tell you it was an accident. I'm sure it was just an accident."

Clarisse Brizaille now seems overwhelmed, exhausted by the story she has just finished.

"You won't repeat anything I have told you, will you?" she says to Wiggins in a beseeching tone. "It all happened so long ago."

"Rest assured," says Wiggins, "we will not mention it to anyone."

## CLUE 126

"You are lucky to find me here at home!" says Franklin Kearney, who seems happy to see us again. "I'm usually at the *Sporting Gazette* at this hour, when I'm not out in the field, of course. To what do I owe the pleasure of this visit?"

"Quintin Hogg advised us to seek you out. We are working on a case which could involve the world of horse racing, and Quin thought you would be the best man to help us."

"Please tell me how I can," says Kearney, seating himself comfortably in his armchair.

Wiggins gives him a quick synopsis of our investigation.

"Life is strange," says the reporter. "Your Mr. Thacker lives very close to me, from what I understand. But I have to tell you right off that I don't know him, nor am I acquainted with his wife, who from what I've heard is quite charming. It is true that in a city such as London you can live here for years without ever meeting your neighbours. I am familiar with their house, I pass in front of their little garden on Harrison street every day."

"And you have never met Mr. Thacker at the racetrack?"

"No, alas. But you know, I am not a specialist on horse racing. I am interested in greyhound racing—and cricket matches," he adds with a smile.

We cannot hide our disappointment in this lead which had seemed so promising at first and had turned out to give us no clues.

"However, I think I know someone who might be able to give you some information," says Frank Kearney. "I have a friend who is a sports reporter like me, but who specializes in horse racing. His name is Arthur Stoners and he knows just about everything, on or about, the hippic sport."

"Where can we find him?" asks Wiggins.

"The simplest thing to do, is to go to see him at home. He lives on Stratton Street, directly across the street from the Piccadilly Hotel."

We thank Frank Kearney for the help he was able to give us.

"Do you think this case has anything to do with . . ." He doesn't finish his question.

"It's hard to tell," answers Wiggins, "but we will keep you up to date on any new developments."

## CLUE 127

Francois le Villard is a young man, tall and slim, who greets us with a large smile.

"How is Mr. Holmes?" he asks us.

"Very well thank you."

"Excellent. He sent me a telegram asking me to be your guide in Paris. What would you like to see, the Exposition?"

"Actually, no," answers Wiggins, who endeavours to tell him about our investigation from the beginning.

"I see that you have already gathered some very interesting facts," says le Villard, "and it would be my pleasure to help you."

"As you are familiar with Paris," says Wiggins, "could you give us some advice?"

"You have caught me unprepared. But I think it might be useful for you to meet with one of my friends, Alphonse Bertillon. He works at police headquarters. He is a dynamic individual, full of ideas. He will certainly have some information to give you."

"Mr. Holmes has mentioned him," says Wiggins. "Do you by any chance know where we could find the birds, if they are in Paris?"

"I am not a specialist in art objects, you know, but I think I remember seeing a small ad in the paper about porcelain miniatures."

"In which paper?"

"In this morning's *Le Figaro*."

"Well, here is something to start our investigation with," says Wiggins.

"Let's go!"

## CLUE 128

The butler has us enter the library at the Smedley residence. We wait patiently, admiring the numerous porcelain statuettes sitting on various pieces of furniture. We notice, in particular, the reproductions of Greek and Roman statues, admiring the exquisite rendition of the one of Doryphore and Polyclete.

After a few moments, Dame Agnes enters the room with a majestic air. "You asked to speak to me, gentlemen?" she asks as she invites us to be seated with a sweep of her hand.

"Yes," answers Wiggins in his most suave voice, "and we thank you for having been so kind to receive us on such short notice. We are investigating a theft committed last night at the residence of Henry Thacker, and we were told you might know his wife."

"But of course," explains Dame Agnes, "we are not quite in the same social circle and we do not socialize on a regular basis, but I do know that Amelie Thacker is a charming young woman."

"Where did you meet her?" asks Wiggins.

"At the Bonham Gallery. It's a place where one finds delicious and delightful things. I go there regularly."

"Ah, perfect," interrupts Wiggins. "Do you remember a sale that took place not long ago which Mrs. Thacker attended as well as the proprietor of the Evenson gallery?"

"Yes, I remember it quite well," says Dame Agnes. "All three of us were interested in a small porcelain bird, a robin, I believe."

"Can you describe how the sale of this bird went?" asks Wiggins.

"Yes, certainly. We all bid several times, at first. I must say the starting bid was reasonable. Then the price began to rise and I dropped out. You see, it wasn't the type of object I usually collect. As you can see for yourselves I prefer the reproductions of well-known statues."

"Did the bidding continue?" asks Wiggins.

"Mr. Evenson made a few more offers, then also dropped out of the bidding. I think he was slightly taken in by Mrs. Thacker's charm and let her win out of a sense of gallantry."

"Did you notice anything out of the ordinary that caught your attention that day?"

"No. The sale seemed to go like all the others."

We thank Dame Agnes for having answered our questions and we take our leave.

## CLUE 129

The concierge is a very young woman with a swarm of children clinging to her apron.

"I've been working here for over a year, and I've never heard

of your man . . . what's his name again?"

"Thacker, Henry Thacker."

"Yes, well, I've never heard of him."

"Could we possibly talk to some of the people in the building?" suggests le Villard.

"Absolutely not! Don't count on me to let you bother people with your questions. I'm the one it all falls back on." We understand it is no use to insist.

### CLUE 130

We are surrounded by large armoires crowded together, old dismantled beds, worn out mattresses. Chandeliers are hung from the ceiling together in rows. The darkness which pervades the room prevents us from being able to distinguish objects in the back of the room. To our right are tables and armchairs covered with cobwebs.

We give a start as a small hunchbacked man about sixty years old dressed in a long smock appears out of the gloom.

"We would like to see John. We were sent by Peter," says Wiggins, a slight hesitation in his voice.

The old man looks at us for a moment and then asks if we are sure this is the address we want.

"Follow me," he says finally.

He leads us towards the back of the warehouse, behind a large canopy bed with its threadbare cover, to a small staircase leading to the basement.

A few steps down we come to a heavy wooden door. The hunchback takes a key out of the pocket of his smock and opens the huge iron lock.

We are astounded at the scene before our eyes. The floor is covered with luminously-coloured Oriental carpets. Crystal chandeliers illuminate the room with a soft light. Armchairs scattered about the room are covered in pastel-coloured silks. To our left, we notice a chest of drawers done in a French style, harmoniously proportioned, on which sits a finely carved clock. The back wall of the room is covered by an oak bookshelf filled with fawn-coloured leather-bound books.

Half a dozen men are occupying the room, some are leisurely perusing *The Times*, others are quietly talking among themselves. Two of them resemble beggars one sees in the streets of London. Others are wearing somber business suits of obviously high quality.

"Mr. John," says the man who has escorted us, "these gentlemen desire to speak to you. They say they are here on the part of Mr. Peter."

A large man in his thirties, with stylishly fashioned blond hair and a fine moustache advances towards us.

"Gentlemen?"

"My name is . . ." begins Wiggins.

"It doesn't matter who you are. Here, names are of no importance. Simply give me your first, if you insist."

"Henry," says Wiggins.

"What can I do for you?"

"You were at the corner of Grey's Inn Road and Ampton Street yesterday, I believe?"

"Yes."

"Did you happen to notice anything unusual that might have caught your attention?"

"That corner is quite lively, and all sorts of people pass back and forth. There is a coach stop nearby which adds to the traffic."

"You were stationed across from number four. Did you notice the comings and goings of the occupants of that house, by any chance?"

"I saw a man leave at about noon. He was well dressed and was carrying a black briefcase. Shortly afterwards another man came out. He was in his forties. He had a rather arrogant air about him, although he seemed quite common. I saw him in the neighbourhood several times that afternoon."

"Anything else?"

"Yes. At about four o'clock a young woman, loaded down with a large wicker basket, came out of the house and climbed into a hansom. The common-looking man I just mentioned also took a hansom a few moments later."

"Can you describe the young woman?" we ask.

"She must have been about thirty, a brunette, and she was wearing a dark coloured dress. She came back shortly after five-thirty."

"Is that all?" asks Wiggins, feverishly writing down John's account.

"I did witness a rather strange incident. At about five o'clock a young woman arrived carrying a large box. She rang the doorbell, but nobody came to open the door."

"Perhaps no one was home at that hour," says Wiggins.

"Precisely. There was someone home. A young blonde woman was reading by the window. When she heard the doorbell she quickly withdrew."

"Can you describe the visitor?"

"I have to admit, I wasn't paying much attention at that moment. The box she held in her arms had the address of the famous tailor on Arundel street. And now, gentlemen, if you'll excuse me, I must go and get dressed."

"One last question, if you please," says Wiggins.

"Yes?"

"Did you see the young blonde woman after that?"

"She left around seven-thirty and took a hansom. I can even tell you the name of the driver."

"How do you know him?" asks Wiggins surprised.

"One of his friends called out to him to ask him if it was his last trip of the day. He called him by his name, and I thought it was a funny name for a hansom driver."

"And what did he call him?"

"Marmaduke Overstreet. Good day, gentlemen," says John, indicating that our interview has concluded.

### CLUE 131

We arrive at the second story landing out of breath.

"Imagine what it was like to climb all the way to the top for the inauguration," says Francois le Villard. "One thousand six hundred and fifty two steps! Fortunately, the elevators will be installed in a few days."

We gaze out in wonderment at the city of Paris spread out beneath us. From where we stand we can see the World Fair at a glance. At our feet, we see the gardens of the Palais des Beaux-Arts and the Palais of the Arts Liberaux. Further on, occupying the length of the Champ de Mars, we see the roofs and the glass windows of the industrial section of the fair, and the machinery pavilion which forms a large rectangle flanked by three red chimneys spitting out black smoke. On the other side of Motte-Piquet avenue, le Villard points out the military school. "That's where Napoleon Bonaparte was admitted in 1784," he tells us. "He was only fifteen at the time."

We walk over to the other side of the tower to admire the view of the Trocadero, the Iena Bridge over the Seine, and the maritime and the fluvio-marine exhibits.

"We haven't learned much to help in our investigation," says Wiggins as we prepare ourselves for the descent, "but the view was certainly worth the climb."

## CLUE 132

We arrive at the corner of Stamford Street and Cornwall Road, and we finally find a small door with peeling green paint. The number '46' has been scratched onto the door by a shaky hand.

We knock several times before a woman with grey hair, whose personal hygiene is a bit dubious, opens the door.

"Mrs. Maguire?" asks Wiggins.

"Yes. Wot you be wantin'?"

"You are the mother of Nigel O'Brady?"

"Yes, why do you ask?"

"You know perhaps that your son was arrested by Scotland Yard. We are investigating the affair, and we would like to ask you a few questions."

"You've arrested me boy Nigel? Wot you be after him for this time?"

Molly Maguire's conversation seems to consist of a series of questions, indicating our task will not be easy.

"May we come in?" says Wiggins, deciding to overcome the obvious resistance on Mrs. Maguire's part.

"I guess I don't have no choice," she sighs, apparently resigned to letting us in.

We enter Molly Maguire's tiny apartment. The small windows let through a tinged grey light. The paper covering the walls is yellowish and mouldy and worn off around the frame of the door. At the centre of the room is a rough wooden table, surrounded by wooden benches. The shelves are encumbered with eclectic objects, among them a chipped clay Virgin Mary, an old banged-up metal tobacco bowl, and a pair of brass scissors. A mangy cat is sleeping in the corner, stretched out on top of an enormous pile of old copies of *The Times*. Above the cupboard hangs an engraving of St. Patrick, under which is pinned a photograph of a young man holding a bowler hat.

"Look, that young man in the picture resembles me," whispers Wiggins to us with a sigh. Addressing Mrs. Maguire he says, "Can you tell us the last time you saw Nigel?"

"You still haven't told me what you have against him?"

"He is suspected of being involved in a theft that took place last night in the home of his employers, Mr. and Mrs. Thacker," answers Wiggins.

"Suspected, suspected. You mean you have no proof against him, is that it? It's always the same story with people like you. You need a guilty party so you accuse anybody. And it's always my Nigel who is the victim, just because he made a few mistakes when he was a boy. There's no justice with you, that's for sure, there's no justice."

"That is precisely why we are here, to insure that justice will be handed out," answers Wiggins. "And believe me, if we can prove the innocence of your son, he will be a free man regardless of his past."

Mrs. Maguire looks at us for several moments. She doesn't seem very convinced. "Well, wot you want to know?"

"When was the last time you saw your son?"

"I don't remember."

"Does he come and see you often?" asks Wiggins, unperturbed.

"Yes, on Thursdays."

"Did you see him last Thursday?"

"Yes, I think so."

"Have you seen him since yesterday, for example?"

Mrs. Maguire hesitates, seeming to look for the answer to Wiggins' question in the air above his head.

Wiggins presses her. "Mrs. Maguire, when was your son last here?"

"Uh . . . well, he was here just fer a minute yesterday, hunched over those newspapers like he always is, scribblin' notes to hisself. But why do you ask me all this?"

Wiggins ignores her question. "You don't have anything else to tell us?" he asks.

"No. I have nothing to tell you. I've told you too much

already."

We are glad to take our leave, so as to escape the odour of rancid grease and old cabbage which permeates the apartment.

## CLUE 133

"So, you are interested in Giraud," says Adolphe Saulnier, a man of about fifty years, round in shape, whose totally bald head reflects the light of the lamp which illuminates his office.

"Deputy Eugene de Lestang, as you know, warned us of the suspect conduct of this man. Although French interests are not threatened in this case, men such as Giraud are, in general, capable of anything, capable of selling their services to the highest bidder. We are very wary of them and prefer to keep an eye on them. I might add that we don't have anything on Giraud at the moment that could be held against him, in strict accordance with the law."

"Yet you are very suspicious of him," says Wiggins.

"I wouldn't say quite that. I would say that we are prudent, vigilant, as we are when we are confronted with anything which resembles a case involving espionage."

"Can you give us the details of this affair?" asks Francois le Villard.

"Unfortunately, and I'm sure you'll understand, I must remain discreet. But espionage often goes hand in hand with military secrets, that much is obvious."

"Are there many foreign spies working in the capital at the moment?" asks Wiggins.

"As you know, the object of espionage is to remain hidden. However, we have managed to obtain the names of a few individuals. The list is unfortunately most incomplete. With the Exposition going on, there are so many foreigners coming and going that it is difficult to have a precise idea of the situation."

"Could you possibly give us this list?" asks Wiggins.

M. Saulnier does not respond immediately. He joins the tips of his fingers together and looks at us one by one.

"After all, why not?" he finally says in a soft voice. "But if you find anything interesting, please let me know."

He takes a pen, dips it into an inkwell and starts writing rapidly. Then he hands over the paper and says, "I must emphasize again that these cases are confidential, and you must remain discreet."

We quickly read over the list, and take our leave of Adolphe Saulnier, thanking him enthusiastically.

*Mario Ferrari  
Adriano Gardelli  
Gunter Hoffbeck  
Frederico Suarez  
Igor Tchalenko  
Warner Holtz  
Carlos Garcia  
Luigi Marcelli*

## CLUE 134

We find Murray sitting in front of tables covered with chemical instruments and reports, his hair ruffled and his glasses perched on the end of his nose. He is holding a small flask containing a brownish liquid from which he pours several drops into a test tube filled with steaming water.

"Greetings, young detectives," he exclaims, noticing us suddenly. "Sleuthing again for Sherlock Holmes, I imagine."

"And you, Doctor, are you still absorbed in some intricate research?"

"No, no, my friends. I am merely making some tea. What you see here is an extract that I have created to perfection. A few more drops in the steaming water and *voila*. No need to wait. Practical, don't you think?"

He holds out the test tube now filled with an amber liquid. "Would you like to taste?"

"No, no thank you. We did not come to have tea but to ask you a few questions."

"Ah, Wiggins, I'm willing to bet I know what brings you here. It is surely the corpse at the foot of the Bloody Tower."

He takes a taste of his concoction from the test tube and murmurs, "Excellent, Darjeeling tea! I'll have to try Earl Grey next."

"Exactly," answers Wiggins.

"Ah, you are in agreement with me, Wakins. You think I should try to make Earl Grey next?"

"No, Doctor. I was telling you we have indeed come in regard to the corpse found at the foot of the Bloody Tower."

"Very good, Wilkins," says Murray putting the test tube back into its wooden stand.

"It's Wiggins, sir. Do you have something interesting for us?"

"Well, Wagins, not very much, to tell you the truth, unless you're interested in the weapon used to commit the crime." He takes out a large arrow. "What a well-made crossbow quarrel, an iron with four blades, no less. A magnificent specimen!" He pretends to take aim at each of us in turn with his imaginary weapon. "An authentic piece, I am certain, and particularly efficient, as you can see."

"And the clothes?" asks Wiggins.

Murray puts the quarrel down next to his test tube and goes to the back of his laboratory. He returns a few moments later, carrying a cardboard box.

"Here it is," he says to us. "Number nine-eighty-six."

He takes a pair of pants out of the box and a dark brown vest, a plaid shirt and a pair of brown high-topped shoes. "I also have socks and undergarments," he adds, "but I don't think you will learn much from this assortment."

We spend a few minutes examining the clothes Murray has lain on the table.

"They are quite worn as you can see. In addition, you will notice they are not very clean. The shirt has a hole in it where the quarrel entered." Bloodstains are visible around the hole. "As for the shoes," continues Murray, "judging by the wear and tear on the soles, our man had been wearing them for a long time."

"Were any papers or money found in his possession?" asks Wiggins.

"No, Wigs, no money. He had an old Roman coin in his pocket. As for papers, he didn't have any on him. I also found this package of cigarettes in his pocket."

"Confound it!" exclaims Wiggins. "Our victim was a man of means. These are French cigarettes," he says, closely examining the half-full pack.

"Look!" says Wiggins, showing us a few words scribbled on the inside of the cigarette box.

Rec'd doc Geo. & Vul.  
transum CA  
Cl. J.M.

"How bizarre," says Wiggins putting the box back down.

"Yes, bizarre," repeats Murray pensively.

"Thank you, Doctor Murray," says Wiggins once again examining the personal belongings of the dead man as we leave.

"You are welcome, Wilkins. Say, do you think I should try it with coffee next?"

## CLUE 135

We knock on a door with the name of Nicolai Gorstoff written in an unsteady hand.

"Who is it?" cries someone with a loud voice.

"We are friends of McWyre," says Francois le Villard, who apparently uses similar subterfuges to our own when investigating a case.

"Well go tell Paddy I don't want to hear anything more about it."

"But why?" insists le Villard.

"I'm afraid. This case seems all twisted. He can do whatever he wants, but I don't want to double-cross nobody. I don't want to find myself with a knife planted in my back."

"Why don't you open the door? We simply wish to chat with you for a minute . . ."

"No. Leave me alone. I tell you I want nothing to do with that mess. That's final."

We understand that it is useless to persist.

## CLUE 136

METROPOLITAN POLICE

Police Commissioner  
of Bow Street  
LONDON WC

On Monday May 20, 1889, I received a telephone call from Mrs. Amelie THACKER, resident of 4, Grey's Inn Road, who declared that a theft had been committed in her home.

I immediately went to the premises to take statements in the company of officer JONES.

We arrived at Mrs. THACKER's at 10 o'clock. She explained to us that she had gone to bed early and had immediately fallen asleep having taken a sleeping powder. She was later awakened by the sound of breaking glass. She stated she then got up and went down to see what was going on. She discovered that her collection of porcelain birds had disappeared. The window in the drawing room had been broken. Mrs. THACKER also said her husband's office had been disturbed. That room is also situated on the ground floor. I examined the garden under the broken window in the company of officer JONES, but we didn't find anything unusual. The small door at the back of the garden opening out onto Harrison street was locked which was normal, according to Mrs. THACKER.

We then systematically searched the house room by room. Mr. THACKER's office was in disorder. The drawers were overturned and the floor littered with papers. When asked about the contents of the safe in the room, Mrs. THACKER stated after opening it, that noth-

ing was missing. The safe only contained papers. Nothing appeared to be missing and the safe had not been forced open.

We didn't notice anything unusual in our search of the rest of the house. Mrs. THACKER's jewellery, in a small wooden chest in her room, was undisturbed.

At 11 p.m., Miss Anny FORSTER, Mrs. THACKER'S servant, came home. She stated that she had spent the evening at the Elephant and Castle Theatre in the company of her fiance Mike COLLIER. She stated the play was called the 'School for Scandal.'

Mr. Nigel O'BARDY, employed in the service of Mr. and Mrs. THACKER, came in at 11:15 and stated that he had spent the evening at the Bar of Gold.

When questioned, Mrs. THACKER stated the cook, Miss Mary FLANNIGAN, had been absent for several days, having gone to Chester for personal reasons.

Mrs. THACKER then expressed her concern for her husband who had disappeared. According to Mrs. THACKER, Mr. THACKER had left the house at noon, without giving any explanations and had not returned since.

We then informed Mrs. THACKER that such short absences were not considered grounds for any action on the part of the police.

I then came back to the Police Station on Bow Street in the company of officer JONES to write up and file this report, and I alerted Scotland Yard to the situation.

Filed in London the 21st of May 1889,  
at 12:30 a.m.

Richard Lane



### CLUE 137

We ring at the door of number 64. A few moments later, the landlady appears holding a broom in her hand. We have apparently interrupted her housecleaning duties.

"What do you want?" she asks in an unfriendly manner.

"We are looking for Mr. Arthur Stoners," says Wiggins, "Can you tell us if he lives here?"

"No, I've never heard of him. Good-bye."

She closes the door before we can ask her any additional questions.

### CLUE 138

We visit the "Centennial of paintings, sculptures and engravings," where we admire a fountain by M. de Saint-Vidal, entitled

"The night trying to stop the Genie of the light trying to unveil the truth." Then we discreetly ask a security guard if the name Hans Grossenberg brings anything to mind.

"I don't think he has anything on display. But, you know, I am not familiar with all the artists," he answers.

We leave the Palace of Beaux Arts without having really made any progress.

### CLUE 139

We enter the Red Boar where we are greeted by the proprietor. We order a round of beers and ask him if he knows Jonathan Small. Wiggins pays for our beers and leaves a generous tip to loosen the man's tongue.

"Johnny? Of course I know old Johnny. What a guy! Always game for a joke."

"Have you seen him lately?" asks Wiggins.

"Aye, that's for sure, but I don't remember exactly when. He likes to get away from his old lady."

You mean Mrs. Small?"

"That's her. What a woman, always after him, trying to get him to work in that darn factory. She wants him to be respectable, she says. Poor Johnny. She is going to kill the poor guy the way she treats him."

"Johnny is then not respectable, you say?"

"Ah, that, well gentlemen, I don't know about that. That's none of my affair. He's a customer, that's all. I have work to do, and I can't spend my time talking about things I don't know about."

He takes a cloth and begins to polish the counter. It is obvious that the conversation is over, so we hurriedly finish our beers and leave the pub.

### CLUE 140

We question a few passersby, two police officers and an organ grinder with a clever monkey but we learn nothing of help to our investigation.

### CLUE 141

We knock on the door and receive no answer. Wiggins looks around before removing his trusty wire from his pocket and inserting it into the lock. Before the door is opened, however, we notice a constable eyeing us suspiciously. Wiggins barely has time to hide the incriminating evidence before the bobby is at our side.

"What's your business here, lads?"

"We were looking for Mr. Henry Thacker. We understood he rented workspace here," answers Wiggins honestly.

"Aye, I don't know all the tenants, and it could be, but as there doesn't appear to be anyone in at the moment, you should run along and come back another time."

Wiggins considers dropping Lestrade's name, but decides that this might not be the time or place. We leave under the watchful eye of the constable.

### CLUE 142

Inspector Gregson..... CLUE 119  
Inspector Lestrade .. CLUE 104

### CLUE 143

The office is a busy place, one which we have visited before upon errands for Holmes. We approach a long, tall counter

where we are soon waited upon by a youthful clerk.

"Do you have an advertisement to place, sir?" he asks Wiggins politely.

"Actually, no," answers Wiggins. "I was hoping someone might remember the person who placed this item," he says, pointing to the cryptic message in today's agony column.

"I am sorry, sir, but it is our policy not to give out such information."

Wiggins is prepared for this answer but persists. "We understand and appreciate that, but we are working with Mister Sherlock Holmes and Scotland Yard on an investigation, and this is very important."

The young man is visibly impressed and unsure of the best course of action. "Well, I happen to have taken that order

myself. I suppose I can tell you what I know. Although I doubt that it will help you much."

"What can you tell us about the person?"

"He was a common sort, fortyish, greying hair — a bit surprised I was actually that it was *The Times* he was using. I'd have thought he'd choose the *Standard* or the *Daily Gazette*, if you know what I mean."

"Do you know his name?"

"Oh, no, sir. He paid his money and that was that."

"Thank you very much for your help."

"I do hope that it has been of use, but I would be obliged if you not tell anyone that I told you."

"Of course. We understand. Good day."