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A STUDY IN SCARLET.

By A. Conan Doyle

[1]

Original Transcriber’s Note: This etext is prepared directly

from an 1887 edition, and care has been taken to duplicate the

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Additions to the text include adding the underscore character to

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the Latin-1 file and this html file, present standards are

followed and the several French and Spanish words have been

given their proper accents.

Part II, The Country of the Saints, deals much with the Mormon Church.

A STUDY IN SCARLET.

PART I.

(\_Being a reprint from the reminiscences of\_ JOHN H. WATSON, M.D., \_late

of the Army Medical Department.\_) [2]

CHAPTER I. MR. SHERLOCK HOLMES.

IN the year 1878 I took my degree of Doctor of Medicine of the

University of London, and proceeded to Netley to go through the course

prescribed for surgeons in the army. Having completed my studies there,

I was duly attached to the Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers as Assistant

Surgeon. The regiment was stationed in India at the time, and before

I could join it, the second Afghan war had broken out. On landing at

Bombay, I learned that my corps had advanced through the passes, and

was already deep in the enemy’s country. I followed, however, with many

other officers who were in the same situation as myself, and succeeded

in reaching Candahar in safety, where I found my regiment, and at once

entered upon my new duties.

The campaign brought honours and promotion to many, but for me it had

nothing but misfortune and disaster. I was removed from my brigade and

attached to the Berkshires, with whom I served at the fatal battle of

Maiwand. There I was struck on the shoulder by a Jezail bullet, which

shattered the bone and grazed the subclavian artery. I should have

fallen into the hands of the murderous Ghazis had it not been for the

devotion and courage shown by Murray, my orderly, who threw me across a

pack-horse, and succeeded in bringing me safely to the British lines.

Worn with pain, and weak from the prolonged hardships which I had

undergone, I was removed, with a great train of wounded sufferers, to

the base hospital at Peshawar. Here I rallied, and had already improved

so far as to be able to walk about the wards, and even to bask a little

upon the verandah, when I was struck down by enteric fever, that curse

of our Indian possessions. For months my life was despaired of, and

when at last I came to myself and became convalescent, I was so weak and

emaciated that a medical board determined that not a day should be lost

in sending me back to England. I was dispatched, accordingly, in the

troopship “Orontes,” and landed a month later on Portsmouth jetty, with

my health irretrievably ruined, but with permission from a paternal

government to spend the next nine months in attempting to improve it.

I had neither kith nor kin in England, and was therefore as free as

air--or as free as an income of eleven shillings and sixpence a day will

permit a man to be. Under such circumstances, I naturally gravitated to

London, that great cesspool into which all the loungers and idlers of

the Empire are irresistibly drained. There I stayed for some time at

a private hotel in the Strand, leading a comfortless, meaningless

existence, and spending such money as I had, considerably more freely

than I ought. So alarming did the state of my finances become, that

I soon realized that I must either leave the metropolis and rusticate

somewhere in the country, or that I must make a complete alteration in

my style of living. Choosing the latter alternative, I began by making

up my mind to leave the hotel, and to take up my quarters in some less

pretentious and less expensive domicile.

On the very day that I had come to this conclusion, I was standing at

the Criterion Bar, when some one tapped me on the shoulder, and turning

round I recognized young Stamford, who had been a dresser under me at

Barts. The sight of a friendly face in the great wilderness of London is

a pleasant thing indeed to a lonely man. In old days Stamford had never

been a particular crony of mine, but now I hailed him with enthusiasm,

and he, in his turn, appeared to be delighted to see me. In the

exuberance of my joy, I asked him to lunch with me at the Holborn, and

we started off together in a hansom.

“Whatever have you been doing with yourself, Watson?” he asked in

undisguised wonder, as we rattled through the crowded London streets.

“You are as thin as a lath and as brown as a nut.”

I gave him a short sketch of my adventures, and had hardly concluded it

by the time that we reached our destination.

“Poor devil!” he said, commiseratingly, after he had listened to my

misfortunes. “What are you up to now?”

“Looking for lodgings.” [3] I answered. “Trying to solve the problem

as to whether it is possible to get comfortable rooms at a reasonable

price.”

“That’s a strange thing,” remarked my companion; “you are the second man

to-day that has used that expression to me.”

“And who was the first?” I asked.

“A fellow who is working at the chemical laboratory up at the hospital.

He was bemoaning himself this morning because he could not get someone

to go halves with him in some nice rooms which he had found, and which

were too much for his purse.”

“By Jove!” I cried, “if he really wants someone to share the rooms and

the expense, I am the very man for him. I should prefer having a partner

to being alone.”

Young Stamford looked rather strangely at me over his wine-glass. “You

don’t know Sherlock Holmes yet,” he said; “perhaps you would not care

for him as a constant companion.”

“Why, what is there against him?”

“Oh, I didn’t say there was anything against him. He is a little queer

in his ideas--an enthusiast in some branches of science. As far as I

know he is a decent fellow enough.”

“A medical student, I suppose?” said I.

“No--I have no idea what he intends to go in for. I believe he is well

up in anatomy, and he is a first-class chemist; but, as far as I know,

he has never taken out any systematic medical classes. His studies are

very desultory and eccentric, but he has amassed a lot of out-of-the way

knowledge which would astonish his professors.”

“Did you never ask him what he was going in for?” I asked.

“No; he is not a man that it is easy to draw out, though he can be

communicative enough when the fancy seizes him.”

“I should like to meet him,” I said. “If I am to lodge with anyone, I

should prefer a man of studious and quiet habits. I am not strong

enough yet to stand much noise or excitement. I had enough of both in

Afghanistan to last me for the remainder of my natural existence. How

could I meet this friend of yours?”

“He is sure to be at the laboratory,” returned my companion. “He either

avoids the place for weeks, or else he works there from morning to

night. If you like, we shall drive round together after luncheon.”

“Certainly,” I answered, and the conversation drifted away into other

channels.

As we made our way to the hospital after leaving the Holborn, Stamford

gave me a few more particulars about the gentleman whom I proposed to

take as a fellow-lodger.

“You mustn’t blame me if you don’t get on with him,” he said; “I know

nothing more of him than I have learned from meeting him occasionally in

the laboratory. You proposed this arrangement, so you must not hold me

responsible.”

“If we don’t get on it will be easy to part company,” I answered. “It

seems to me, Stamford,” I added, looking hard at my companion, “that you

have some reason for washing your hands of the matter. Is this fellow’s

temper so formidable, or what is it? Don’t be mealy-mouthed about it.”

“It is not easy to express the inexpressible,” he answered with a laugh.

“Holmes is a little too scientific for my tastes--it approaches to

cold-bloodedness. I could imagine his giving a friend a little pinch of

the latest vegetable alkaloid, not out of malevolence, you understand,

but simply out of a spirit of inquiry in order to have an accurate idea

of the effects. To do him justice, I think that he would take it himself

with the same readiness. He appears to have a passion for definite and

exact knowledge.”

“Very right too.”

“Yes, but it may be pushed to excess. When it comes to beating the

subjects in the dissecting-rooms with a stick, it is certainly taking

rather a bizarre shape.”

“Beating the subjects!”

“Yes, to verify how far bruises may be produced after death. I saw him

at it with my own eyes.”

“And yet you say he is not a medical student?”

“No. Heaven knows what the objects of his studies are. But here we

are, and you must form your own impressions about him.” As he spoke, we

turned down a narrow lane and passed through a small side-door, which

opened into a wing of the great hospital. It was familiar ground to me,

and I needed no guiding as we ascended the bleak stone staircase and

made our way down the long corridor with its vista of whitewashed

wall and dun-coloured doors. Near the further end a low arched passage

branched away from it and led to the chemical laboratory.

This was a lofty chamber, lined and littered with countless bottles.

Broad, low tables were scattered about, which bristled with retorts,

test-tubes, and little Bunsen lamps, with their blue flickering flames.

There was only one student in the room, who was bending over a distant

table absorbed in his work. At the sound of our steps he glanced round

and sprang to his feet with a cry of pleasure. “I’ve found it! I’ve

found it,” he shouted to my companion, running towards us with a

test-tube in his hand. “I have found a re-agent which is precipitated

by hoemoglobin, [4] and by nothing else.” Had he discovered a gold mine,

greater delight could not have shone upon his features.

“Dr. Watson, Mr. Sherlock Holmes,” said Stamford, introducing us.

“How are you?” he said cordially, gripping my hand with a strength

for which I should hardly have given him credit. “You have been in

Afghanistan, I perceive.”

“How on earth did you know that?” I asked in astonishment.

“Never mind,” said he, chuckling to himself. “The question now is about

hoemoglobin. No doubt you see the significance of this discovery of

mine?”

“It is interesting, chemically, no doubt,” I answered, “but

practically----”

“Why, man, it is the most practical medico-legal discovery for years.

Don’t you see that it gives us an infallible test for blood stains. Come

over here now!” He seized me by the coat-sleeve in his eagerness, and

drew me over to the table at which he had been working. “Let us have

some fresh blood,” he said, digging a long bodkin into his finger, and

drawing off the resulting drop of blood in a chemical pipette. “Now, I

add this small quantity of blood to a litre of water. You perceive that

the resulting mixture has the appearance of pure water. The proportion

of blood cannot be more than one in a million. I have no doubt, however,

that we shall be able to obtain the characteristic reaction.” As he

spoke, he threw into the vessel a few white crystals, and then added

some drops of a transparent fluid. In an instant the contents assumed a

dull mahogany colour, and a brownish dust was precipitated to the bottom

of the glass jar.

“Ha! ha!” he cried, clapping his hands, and looking as delighted as a

child with a new toy. “What do you think of that?”

“It seems to be a very delicate test,” I remarked.

“Beautiful! beautiful! The old Guiacum test was very clumsy and

uncertain. So is the microscopic examination for blood corpuscles. The

latter is valueless if the stains are a few hours old. Now, this appears

to act as well whether the blood is old or new. Had this test been

invented, there are hundreds of men now walking the earth who would long

ago have paid the penalty of their crimes.”

“Indeed!” I murmured.

“Criminal cases are continually hinging upon that one point. A man is

suspected of a crime months perhaps after it has been committed. His

linen or clothes are examined, and brownish stains discovered upon them.

Are they blood stains, or mud stains, or rust stains, or fruit stains,

or what are they? That is a question which has puzzled many an expert,

and why? Because there was no reliable test. Now we have the Sherlock

Holmes’ test, and there will no longer be any difficulty.”

His eyes fairly glittered as he spoke, and he put his hand over his

heart and bowed as if to some applauding crowd conjured up by his

imagination.

“You are to be congratulated,” I remarked, considerably surprised at his

enthusiasm.

“There was the case of Von Bischoff at Frankfort last year. He would

certainly have been hung had this test been in existence. Then there was

Mason of Bradford, and the notorious Muller, and Lefevre of Montpellier,

and Samson of New Orleans. I could name a score of cases in which it

would have been decisive.”

“You seem to be a walking calendar of crime,” said Stamford with a

laugh. “You might start a paper on those lines. Call it the ‘Police News

of the Past.’”

“Very interesting reading it might be made, too,” remarked Sherlock

Holmes, sticking a small piece of plaster over the prick on his finger.

“I have to be careful,” he continued, turning to me with a smile, “for I

dabble with poisons a good deal.” He held out his hand as he spoke, and

I noticed that it was all mottled over with similar pieces of plaster,

and discoloured with strong acids.

“We came here on business,” said Stamford, sitting down on a high

three-legged stool, and pushing another one in my direction with

his foot. “My friend here wants to take diggings, and as you were

complaining that you could get no one to go halves with you, I thought

that I had better bring you together.”

Sherlock Holmes seemed delighted at the idea of sharing his rooms with

me. “I have my eye on a suite in Baker Street,” he said, “which would

suit us down to the ground. You don’t mind the smell of strong tobacco,

I hope?”

“I always smoke ‘ship’s’ myself,” I answered.

“That’s good enough. I generally have chemicals about, and occasionally

do experiments. Would that annoy you?”

“By no means.”

“Let me see--what are my other shortcomings. I get in the dumps at

times, and don’t open my mouth for days on end. You must not think I am

sulky when I do that. Just let me alone, and I’ll soon be right. What

have you to confess now? It’s just as well for two fellows to know the

worst of one another before they begin to live together.”

I laughed at this cross-examination. “I keep a bull pup,” I said, “and

I object to rows because my nerves are shaken, and I get up at all sorts

of ungodly hours, and I am extremely lazy. I have another set of vices

when I’m well, but those are the principal ones at present.”

“Do you include violin-playing in your category of rows?” he asked,

anxiously.

“It depends on the player,” I answered. “A well-played violin is a treat

for the gods--a badly-played one----”

“Oh, that’s all right,” he cried, with a merry laugh. “I think we may

consider the thing as settled--that is, if the rooms are agreeable to

you.”

“When shall we see them?”

“Call for me here at noon to-morrow, and we’ll go together and settle

everything,” he answered.

“All right--noon exactly,” said I, shaking his hand.

We left him working among his chemicals, and we walked together towards

my hotel.

“By the way,” I asked suddenly, stopping and turning upon Stamford, “how

the deuce did he know that I had come from Afghanistan?”

My companion smiled an enigmatical smile. “That’s just his little

peculiarity,” he said. “A good many people have wanted to know how he

finds things out.”

“Oh! a mystery is it?” I cried, rubbing my hands. “This is very piquant.

I am much obliged to you for bringing us together. ‘The proper study of

mankind is man,’ you know.”

“You must study him, then,” Stamford said, as he bade me good-bye.

“You’ll find him a knotty problem, though. I’ll wager he learns more

about you than you about him. Good-bye.”

“Good-bye,” I answered, and strolled on to my hotel, considerably

interested in my new acquaintance.

CHAPTER II. THE SCIENCE OF DEDUCTION.

WE met next day as he had arranged, and inspected the rooms at No. 221B,

[5] Baker Street, of which he had spoken at our meeting. They

consisted of a couple of comfortable bed-rooms and a single large

airy sitting-room, cheerfully furnished, and illuminated by two broad

windows. So desirable in every way were the apartments, and so moderate

did the terms seem when divided between us, that the bargain was

concluded upon the spot, and we at once entered into possession.

That very evening I moved my things round from the hotel, and on the

following morning Sherlock Holmes followed me with several boxes and

portmanteaus. For a day or two we were busily employed in unpacking and

laying out our property to the best advantage. That done, we

gradually began to settle down and to accommodate ourselves to our new

surroundings.

Holmes was certainly not a difficult man to live with. He was quiet

in his ways, and his habits were regular. It was rare for him to be

up after ten at night, and he had invariably breakfasted and gone out

before I rose in the morning. Sometimes he spent his day at the chemical

laboratory, sometimes in the dissecting-rooms, and occasionally in long

walks, which appeared to take him into the lowest portions of the City.

Nothing could exceed his energy when the working fit was upon him; but

now and again a reaction would seize him, and for days on end he would

lie upon the sofa in the sitting-room, hardly uttering a word or moving

a muscle from morning to night. On these occasions I have noticed such

a dreamy, vacant expression in his eyes, that I might have suspected him

of being addicted to the use of some narcotic, had not the temperance

and cleanliness of his whole life forbidden such a notion.

As the weeks went by, my interest in him and my curiosity as to his

aims in life, gradually deepened and increased. His very person and

appearance were such as to strike the attention of the most casual

observer. In height he was rather over six feet, and so excessively

lean that he seemed to be considerably taller. His eyes were sharp and

piercing, save during those intervals of torpor to which I have alluded;

and his thin, hawk-like nose gave his whole expression an air of

alertness and decision. His chin, too, had the prominence and squareness

which mark the man of determination. His hands were invariably

blotted with ink and stained with chemicals, yet he was possessed of

extraordinary delicacy of touch, as I frequently had occasion to observe

when I watched him manipulating his fragile philosophical instruments.

The reader may set me down as a hopeless busybody, when I confess how

much this man stimulated my curiosity, and how often I endeavoured

to break through the reticence which he showed on all that concerned

himself. Before pronouncing judgment, however, be it remembered, how

objectless was my life, and how little there was to engage my attention.

My health forbade me from venturing out unless the weather was

exceptionally genial, and I had no friends who would call upon me and

break the monotony of my daily existence. Under these circumstances, I

eagerly hailed the little mystery which hung around my companion, and

spent much of my time in endeavouring to unravel it.

He was not studying medicine. He had himself, in reply to a question,

confirmed Stamford’s opinion upon that point. Neither did he appear to

have pursued any course of reading which might fit him for a degree in

science or any other recognized portal which would give him an entrance

into the learned world. Yet his zeal for certain studies was remarkable,

and within eccentric limits his knowledge was so extraordinarily ample

and minute that his observations have fairly astounded me. Surely no man

would work so hard or attain such precise information unless he had some

definite end in view. Desultory readers are seldom remarkable for the

exactness of their learning. No man burdens his mind with small matters

unless he has some very good reason for doing so.

His ignorance was as remarkable as his knowledge. Of contemporary

literature, philosophy and politics he appeared to know next to nothing.

Upon my quoting Thomas Carlyle, he inquired in the naivest way who he

might be and what he had done. My surprise reached a climax, however,

when I found incidentally that he was ignorant of the Copernican Theory

and of the composition of the Solar System. That any civilized human

being in this nineteenth century should not be aware that the earth

travelled round the sun appeared to be to me such an extraordinary fact

that I could hardly realize it.

“You appear to be astonished,” he said, smiling at my expression of

surprise. “Now that I do know it I shall do my best to forget it.”

“To forget it!”

“You see,” he explained, “I consider that a man’s brain originally is

like a little empty attic, and you have to stock it with such furniture

as you choose. A fool takes in all the lumber of every sort that he

comes across, so that the knowledge which might be useful to him gets

crowded out, or at best is jumbled up with a lot of other things so that

he has a difficulty in laying his hands upon it. Now the skilful workman

is very careful indeed as to what he takes into his brain-attic. He will

have nothing but the tools which may help him in doing his work, but of

these he has a large assortment, and all in the most perfect order. It

is a mistake to think that that little room has elastic walls and can

distend to any extent. Depend upon it there comes a time when for every

addition of knowledge you forget something that you knew before. It is

of the highest importance, therefore, not to have useless facts elbowing

out the useful ones.”

“But the Solar System!” I protested.

“What the deuce is it to me?” he interrupted impatiently; “you say

that we go round the sun. If we went round the moon it would not make a

pennyworth of difference to me or to my work.”

I was on the point of asking him what that work might be, but something

in his manner showed me that the question would be an unwelcome one. I

pondered over our short conversation, however, and endeavoured to draw

my deductions from it. He said that he would acquire no knowledge which

did not bear upon his object. Therefore all the knowledge which he

possessed was such as would be useful to him. I enumerated in my own

mind all the various points upon which he had shown me that he was

exceptionally well-informed. I even took a pencil and jotted them down.

I could not help smiling at the document when I had completed it. It ran

in this way--

SHERLOCK HOLMES--his limits.

1. Knowledge of Literature.--Nil.

2. Philosophy.--Nil.

3. Astronomy.--Nil.

4. Politics.--Feeble.

5. Botany.--Variable. Well up in belladonna,

opium, and poisons generally.

Knows nothing of practical gardening.

6. Geology.--Practical, but limited.

Tells at a glance different soils

from each other. After walks has

shown me splashes upon his trousers,

and told me by their colour and

consistence in what part of London

he had received them.

7. Chemistry.--Profound.

8. Anatomy.--Accurate, but unsystematic.

9. Sensational Literature.--Immense. He appears

to know every detail of every horror

perpetrated in the century.

10. Plays the violin well.

11. Is an expert singlestick player, boxer, and swordsman.

12. Has a good practical knowledge of British law.

When I had got so far in my list I threw it into the fire in despair.

“If I can only find what the fellow is driving at by reconciling all

these accomplishments, and discovering a calling which needs them all,”

I said to myself, “I may as well give up the attempt at once.”

I see that I have alluded above to his powers upon the violin. These

were very remarkable, but as eccentric as all his other accomplishments.

That he could play pieces, and difficult pieces, I knew well, because

at my request he has played me some of Mendelssohn’s Lieder, and other

favourites. When left to himself, however, he would seldom produce any

music or attempt any recognized air. Leaning back in his arm-chair of

an evening, he would close his eyes and scrape carelessly at the fiddle

which was thrown across his knee. Sometimes the chords were sonorous and

melancholy. Occasionally they were fantastic and cheerful. Clearly they

reflected the thoughts which possessed him, but whether the music aided

those thoughts, or whether the playing was simply the result of a whim

or fancy was more than I could determine. I might have rebelled against

these exasperating solos had it not been that he usually terminated them

by playing in quick succession a whole series of my favourite airs as a

slight compensation for the trial upon my patience.

During the first week or so we had no callers, and I had begun to think

that my companion was as friendless a man as I was myself. Presently,

however, I found that he had many acquaintances, and those in the most

different classes of society. There was one little sallow rat-faced,

dark-eyed fellow who was introduced to me as Mr. Lestrade, and who came

three or four times in a single week. One morning a young girl called,

fashionably dressed, and stayed for half an hour or more. The same

afternoon brought a grey-headed, seedy visitor, looking like a Jew

pedlar, who appeared to me to be much excited, and who was closely

followed by a slip-shod elderly woman. On another occasion an old

white-haired gentleman had an interview with my companion; and on

another a railway porter in his velveteen uniform. When any of these

nondescript individuals put in an appearance, Sherlock Holmes used to

beg for the use of the sitting-room, and I would retire to my bed-room.

He always apologized to me for putting me to this inconvenience. “I have

to use this room as a place of business,” he said, “and these people

are my clients.” Again I had an opportunity of asking him a point blank

question, and again my delicacy prevented me from forcing another man to

confide in me. I imagined at the time that he had some strong reason for

not alluding to it, but he soon dispelled the idea by coming round to

the subject of his own accord.

It was upon the 4th of March, as I have good reason to remember, that I

rose somewhat earlier than usual, and found that Sherlock Holmes had not

yet finished his breakfast. The landlady had become so accustomed to my

late habits that my place had not been laid nor my coffee prepared. With

the unreasonable petulance of mankind I rang the bell and gave a curt

intimation that I was ready. Then I picked up a magazine from the table

and attempted to while away the time with it, while my companion munched

silently at his toast. One of the articles had a pencil mark at the

heading, and I naturally began to run my eye through it.

Its somewhat ambitious title was “The Book of Life,” and it attempted to

show how much an observant man might learn by an accurate and systematic

examination of all that came in his way. It struck me as being a

remarkable mixture of shrewdness and of absurdity. The reasoning was

close and intense, but the deductions appeared to me to be far-fetched

and exaggerated. The writer claimed by a momentary expression, a twitch

of a muscle or a glance of an eye, to fathom a man’s inmost thoughts.

Deceit, according to him, was an impossibility in the case of one

trained to observation and analysis. His conclusions were as infallible

as so many propositions of Euclid. So startling would his results appear

to the uninitiated that until they learned the processes by which he had

arrived at them they might well consider him as a necromancer.

“From a drop of water,” said the writer, “a logician could infer the

possibility of an Atlantic or a Niagara without having seen or heard of

one or the other. So all life is a great chain, the nature of which is

known whenever we are shown a single link of it. Like all other arts,

the Science of Deduction and Analysis is one which can only be acquired

by long and patient study nor is life long enough to allow any mortal

to attain the highest possible perfection in it. Before turning to

those moral and mental aspects of the matter which present the greatest

difficulties, let the enquirer begin by mastering more elementary

problems. Let him, on meeting a fellow-mortal, learn at a glance to

distinguish the history of the man, and the trade or profession to

which he belongs. Puerile as such an exercise may seem, it sharpens the

faculties of observation, and teaches one where to look and what to look

for. By a man’s finger nails, by his coat-sleeve, by his boot, by his

trouser knees, by the callosities of his forefinger and thumb, by his

expression, by his shirt cuffs--by each of these things a man’s calling

is plainly revealed. That all united should fail to enlighten the

competent enquirer in any case is almost inconceivable.”

“What ineffable twaddle!” I cried, slapping the magazine down on the

table, “I never read such rubbish in my life.”

“What is it?” asked Sherlock Holmes.

“Why, this article,” I said, pointing at it with my egg spoon as I sat

down to my breakfast. “I see that you have read it since you have marked

it. I don’t deny that it is smartly written. It irritates me though. It

is evidently the theory of some arm-chair lounger who evolves all these

neat little paradoxes in the seclusion of his own study. It is not

practical. I should like to see him clapped down in a third class

carriage on the Underground, and asked to give the trades of all his

fellow-travellers. I would lay a thousand to one against him.”

“You would lose your money,” Sherlock Holmes remarked calmly. “As for

the article I wrote it myself.”

“You!”

“Yes, I have a turn both for observation and for deduction. The

theories which I have expressed there, and which appear to you to be so

chimerical are really extremely practical--so practical that I depend

upon them for my bread and cheese.”

“And how?” I asked involuntarily.

“Well, I have a trade of my own. I suppose I am the only one in the

world. I’m a consulting detective, if you can understand what that is.

Here in London we have lots of Government detectives and lots of private

ones. When these fellows are at fault they come to me, and I manage to

put them on the right scent. They lay all the evidence before me, and I

am generally able, by the help of my knowledge of the history of

crime, to set them straight. There is a strong family resemblance about

misdeeds, and if you have all the details of a thousand at your finger

ends, it is odd if you can’t unravel the thousand and first. Lestrade

is a well-known detective. He got himself into a fog recently over a

forgery case, and that was what brought him here.”

“And these other people?”

“They are mostly sent on by private inquiry agencies. They are

all people who are in trouble about something, and want a little

enlightening. I listen to their story, they listen to my comments, and

then I pocket my fee.”

“But do you mean to say,” I said, “that without leaving your room you

can unravel some knot which other men can make nothing of, although they

have seen every detail for themselves?”

“Quite so. I have a kind of intuition that way. Now and again a case

turns up which is a little more complex. Then I have to bustle about and

see things with my own eyes. You see I have a lot of special knowledge

which I apply to the problem, and which facilitates matters wonderfully.

Those rules of deduction laid down in that article which aroused your

scorn, are invaluable to me in practical work. Observation with me is

second nature. You appeared to be surprised when I told you, on our

first meeting, that you had come from Afghanistan.”

“You were told, no doubt.”

“Nothing of the sort. I \_knew\_ you came from Afghanistan. From long

habit the train of thoughts ran so swiftly through my mind, that I

arrived at the conclusion without being conscious of intermediate steps.

There were such steps, however. The train of reasoning ran, ‘Here is a

gentleman of a medical type, but with the air of a military man. Clearly

an army doctor, then. He has just come from the tropics, for his face is

dark, and that is not the natural tint of his skin, for his wrists are

fair. He has undergone hardship and sickness, as his haggard face says

clearly. His left arm has been injured. He holds it in a stiff and

unnatural manner. Where in the tropics could an English army doctor have

seen much hardship and got his arm wounded? Clearly in Afghanistan.’ The

whole train of thought did not occupy a second. I then remarked that you

came from Afghanistan, and you were astonished.”

“It is simple enough as you explain it,” I said, smiling. “You remind

me of Edgar Allen Poe’s Dupin. I had no idea that such individuals did

exist outside of stories.”

Sherlock Holmes rose and lit his pipe. “No doubt you think that you are

complimenting me in comparing me to Dupin,” he observed. “Now, in my

opinion, Dupin was a very inferior fellow. That trick of his of breaking

in on his friends’ thoughts with an apropos remark after a quarter of

an hour’s silence is really very showy and superficial. He had some

analytical genius, no doubt; but he was by no means such a phenomenon as

Poe appeared to imagine.”

“Have you read Gaboriau’s works?” I asked. “Does Lecoq come up to your

idea of a detective?”

Sherlock Holmes sniffed sardonically. “Lecoq was a miserable bungler,”

he said, in an angry voice; “he had only one thing to recommend him, and

that was his energy. That book made me positively ill. The question was

how to identify an unknown prisoner. I could have done it in twenty-four

hours. Lecoq took six months or so. It might be made a text-book for

detectives to teach them what to avoid.”

I felt rather indignant at having two characters whom I had admired

treated in this cavalier style. I walked over to the window, and stood

looking out into the busy street. “This fellow may be very clever,” I

said to myself, “but he is certainly very conceited.”

“There are no crimes and no criminals in these days,” he said,

querulously. “What is the use of having brains in our profession. I know

well that I have it in me to make my name famous. No man lives or has

ever lived who has brought the same amount of study and of natural

talent to the detection of crime which I have done. And what is the

result? There is no crime to detect, or, at most, some bungling villainy

with a motive so transparent that even a Scotland Yard official can see

through it.”

I was still annoyed at his bumptious style of conversation. I thought it

best to change the topic.

“I wonder what that fellow is looking for?” I asked, pointing to a

stalwart, plainly-dressed individual who was walking slowly down the

other side of the street, looking anxiously at the numbers. He had

a large blue envelope in his hand, and was evidently the bearer of a

message.

“You mean the retired sergeant of Marines,” said Sherlock Holmes.

“Brag and bounce!” thought I to myself. “He knows that I cannot verify

his guess.”

The thought had hardly passed through my mind when the man whom we were

watching caught sight of the number on our door, and ran rapidly across

the roadway. We heard a loud knock, a deep voice below, and heavy steps

ascending the stair.

“For Mr. Sherlock Holmes,” he said, stepping into the room and handing

my friend the letter.

Here was an opportunity of taking the conceit out of him. He little

thought of this when he made that random shot. “May I ask, my lad,” I

said, in the blandest voice, “what your trade may be?”

“Commissionaire, sir,” he said, gruffly. “Uniform away for repairs.”

“And you were?” I asked, with a slightly malicious glance at my

companion.

“A sergeant, sir, Royal Marine Light Infantry, sir. No answer? Right,

sir.”

He clicked his heels together, raised his hand in a salute, and was

gone.

CHAPTER III. THE LAURISTON GARDEN MYSTERY [6]

I CONFESS that I was considerably startled by this fresh proof of the

practical nature of my companion’s theories. My respect for his powers

of analysis increased wondrously. There still remained some lurking

suspicion in my mind, however, that the whole thing was a pre-arranged

episode, intended to dazzle me, though what earthly object he could have

in taking me in was past my comprehension. When I looked at him he

had finished reading the note, and his eyes had assumed the vacant,

lack-lustre expression which showed mental abstraction.

“How in the world did you deduce that?” I asked.

“Deduce what?” said he, petulantly.

“Why, that he was a retired sergeant of Marines.”

“I have no time for trifles,” he answered, brusquely; then with a smile,

“Excuse my rudeness. You broke the thread of my thoughts; but perhaps

it is as well. So you actually were not able to see that that man was a

sergeant of Marines?”

“No, indeed.”

“It was easier to know it than to explain why I knew it. If you

were asked to prove that two and two made four, you might find some

difficulty, and yet you are quite sure of the fact. Even across the

street I could see a great blue anchor tattooed on the back of the

fellow’s hand. That smacked of the sea. He had a military carriage,

however, and regulation side whiskers. There we have the marine. He was

a man with some amount of self-importance and a certain air of command.

You must have observed the way in which he held his head and swung

his cane. A steady, respectable, middle-aged man, too, on the face of

him--all facts which led me to believe that he had been a sergeant.”

“Wonderful!” I ejaculated.

“Commonplace,” said Holmes, though I thought from his expression that he

was pleased at my evident surprise and admiration. “I said just now that

there were no criminals. It appears that I am wrong--look at this!” He

threw me over the note which the commissionaire had brought. [7]

“Why,” I cried, as I cast my eye over it, “this is terrible!”

“It does seem to be a little out of the common,” he remarked, calmly.

“Would you mind reading it to me aloud?”

This is the letter which I read to him----

“MY DEAR MR. SHERLOCK HOLMES,--

“There has been a bad business during the night at 3, Lauriston Gardens,

off the Brixton Road. Our man on the beat saw a light there about two in

the morning, and as the house was an empty one, suspected that something

was amiss. He found the door open, and in the front room, which is bare

of furniture, discovered the body of a gentleman, well dressed, and

having cards in his pocket bearing the name of ‘Enoch J. Drebber,

Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A.’ There had been no robbery, nor is there any

evidence as to how the man met his death. There are marks of blood in

the room, but there is no wound upon his person. We are at a loss as to

how he came into the empty house; indeed, the whole affair is a puzzler.

If you can come round to the house any time before twelve, you will find

me there. I have left everything \_in statu quo\_ until I hear from you.

If you are unable to come I shall give you fuller details, and would

esteem it a great kindness if you would favour me with your opinion.

Yours faithfully,

“TOBIAS GREGSON.”

“Gregson is the smartest of the Scotland Yarders,” my friend remarked;

“he and Lestrade are the pick of a bad lot. They are both quick and

energetic, but conventional--shockingly so. They have their knives

into one another, too. They are as jealous as a pair of professional

beauties. There will be some fun over this case if they are both put

upon the scent.”

I was amazed at the calm way in which he rippled on. “Surely there is

not a moment to be lost,” I cried, “shall I go and order you a cab?”

“I’m not sure about whether I shall go. I am the most incurably lazy

devil that ever stood in shoe leather--that is, when the fit is on me,

for I can be spry enough at times.”

“Why, it is just such a chance as you have been longing for.”

“My dear fellow, what does it matter to me. Supposing I unravel the

whole matter, you may be sure that Gregson, Lestrade, and Co. will

pocket all the credit. That comes of being an unofficial personage.”

“But he begs you to help him.”

“Yes. He knows that I am his superior, and acknowledges it to me; but

he would cut his tongue out before he would own it to any third person.

However, we may as well go and have a look. I shall work it out on my

own hook. I may have a laugh at them if I have nothing else. Come on!”

He hustled on his overcoat, and bustled about in a way that showed that

an energetic fit had superseded the apathetic one.

“Get your hat,” he said.

“You wish me to come?”

“Yes, if you have nothing better to do.” A minute later we were both in

a hansom, driving furiously for the Brixton Road.

It was a foggy, cloudy morning, and a dun-coloured veil hung over the

house-tops, looking like the reflection of the mud-coloured streets

beneath. My companion was in the best of spirits, and prattled away

about Cremona fiddles, and the difference between a Stradivarius and

an Amati. As for myself, I was silent, for the dull weather and the

melancholy business upon which we were engaged, depressed my spirits.

“You don’t seem to give much thought to the matter in hand,” I said at

last, interrupting Holmes’ musical disquisition.

“No data yet,” he answered. “It is a capital mistake to theorize before

you have all the evidence. It biases the judgment.”

“You will have your data soon,” I remarked, pointing with my finger;

“this is the Brixton Road, and that is the house, if I am not very much

mistaken.”

“So it is. Stop, driver, stop!” We were still a hundred yards or so from

it, but he insisted upon our alighting, and we finished our journey upon

foot.

Number 3, Lauriston Gardens wore an ill-omened and minatory look. It was

one of four which stood back some little way from the street, two being

occupied and two empty. The latter looked out with three tiers of vacant

melancholy windows, which were blank and dreary, save that here and

there a “To Let” card had developed like a cataract upon the bleared

panes. A small garden sprinkled over with a scattered eruption of sickly

plants separated each of these houses from the street, and was traversed

by a narrow pathway, yellowish in colour, and consisting apparently of a

mixture of clay and of gravel. The whole place was very sloppy from the

rain which had fallen through the night. The garden was bounded by a

three-foot brick wall with a fringe of wood rails upon the top, and

against this wall was leaning a stalwart police constable, surrounded by

a small knot of loafers, who craned their necks and strained their eyes

in the vain hope of catching some glimpse of the proceedings within.

I had imagined that Sherlock Holmes would at once have hurried into the

house and plunged into a study of the mystery. Nothing appeared to be

further from his intention. With an air of nonchalance which, under the

circumstances, seemed to me to border upon affectation, he lounged up

and down the pavement, and gazed vacantly at the ground, the sky, the

opposite houses and the line of railings. Having finished his scrutiny,

he proceeded slowly down the path, or rather down the fringe of grass

which flanked the path, keeping his eyes riveted upon the ground. Twice

he stopped, and once I saw him smile, and heard him utter an exclamation

of satisfaction. There were many marks of footsteps upon the wet clayey

soil, but since the police had been coming and going over it, I was

unable to see how my companion could hope to learn anything from it.

Still I had had such extraordinary evidence of the quickness of his

perceptive faculties, that I had no doubt that he could see a great deal

which was hidden from me.

At the door of the house we were met by a tall, white-faced,

flaxen-haired man, with a notebook in his hand, who rushed forward and

wrung my companion’s hand with effusion. “It is indeed kind of you to

come,” he said, “I have had everything left untouched.”

“Except that!” my friend answered, pointing at the pathway. “If a herd

of buffaloes had passed along there could not be a greater mess. No

doubt, however, you had drawn your own conclusions, Gregson, before you

permitted this.”

“I have had so much to do inside the house,” the detective said

evasively. “My colleague, Mr. Lestrade, is here. I had relied upon him

to look after this.”

Holmes glanced at me and raised his eyebrows sardonically. “With two

such men as yourself and Lestrade upon the ground, there will not be

much for a third party to find out,” he said.

Gregson rubbed his hands in a self-satisfied way. “I think we have done

all that can be done,” he answered; “it’s a queer case though, and I

knew your taste for such things.”

“You did not come here in a cab?” asked Sherlock Holmes.

“No, sir.”

“Nor Lestrade?”

“No, sir.”

“Then let us go and look at the room.” With which inconsequent remark he

strode on into the house, followed by Gregson, whose features expressed

his astonishment.

A short passage, bare planked and dusty, led to the kitchen and offices.

Two doors opened out of it to the left and to the right. One of these

had obviously been closed for many weeks. The other belonged to the

dining-room, which was the apartment in which the mysterious affair had

occurred. Holmes walked in, and I followed him with that subdued feeling

at my heart which the presence of death inspires.

It was a large square room, looking all the larger from the absence

of all furniture. A vulgar flaring paper adorned the walls, but it was

blotched in places with mildew, and here and there great strips had

become detached and hung down, exposing the yellow plaster beneath.

Opposite the door was a showy fireplace, surmounted by a mantelpiece of

imitation white marble. On one corner of this was stuck the stump of a

red wax candle. The solitary window was so dirty that the light was

hazy and uncertain, giving a dull grey tinge to everything, which was

intensified by the thick layer of dust which coated the whole apartment.

All these details I observed afterwards. At present my attention was

centred upon the single grim motionless figure which lay stretched upon

the boards, with vacant sightless eyes staring up at the discoloured

ceiling. It was that of a man about forty-three or forty-four years of

age, middle-sized, broad shouldered, with crisp curling black hair, and

a short stubbly beard. He was dressed in a heavy broadcloth frock coat

and waistcoat, with light-coloured trousers, and immaculate collar

and cuffs. A top hat, well brushed and trim, was placed upon the floor

beside him. His hands were clenched and his arms thrown abroad, while

his lower limbs were interlocked as though his death struggle had been a

grievous one. On his rigid face there stood an expression of horror,

and as it seemed to me, of hatred, such as I have never seen upon human

features. This malignant and terrible contortion, combined with the low

forehead, blunt nose, and prognathous jaw gave the dead man a singularly

simious and ape-like appearance, which was increased by his writhing,

unnatural posture. I have seen death in many forms, but never has

it appeared to me in a more fearsome aspect than in that dark grimy

apartment, which looked out upon one of the main arteries of suburban

London.

Lestrade, lean and ferret-like as ever, was standing by the doorway, and

greeted my companion and myself.

“This case will make a stir, sir,” he remarked. “It beats anything I

have seen, and I am no chicken.”

“There is no clue?” said Gregson.

“None at all,” chimed in Lestrade.

Sherlock Holmes approached the body, and, kneeling down, examined it

intently. “You are sure that there is no wound?” he asked, pointing to

numerous gouts and splashes of blood which lay all round.

“Positive!” cried both detectives.

“Then, of course, this blood belongs to a second individual--[8]

presumably the murderer, if murder has been committed. It reminds me of

the circumstances attendant on the death of Van Jansen, in Utrecht, in

the year ‘34. Do you remember the case, Gregson?”

“No, sir.”

“Read it up--you really should. There is nothing new under the sun. It

has all been done before.”

As he spoke, his nimble fingers were flying here, there, and everywhere,

feeling, pressing, unbuttoning, examining, while his eyes wore the same

far-away expression which I have already remarked upon. So swiftly was

the examination made, that one would hardly have guessed the minuteness

with which it was conducted. Finally, he sniffed the dead man’s lips,

and then glanced at the soles of his patent leather boots.

“He has not been moved at all?” he asked.

“No more than was necessary for the purposes of our examination.”

“You can take him to the mortuary now,” he said. “There is nothing more

to be learned.”

Gregson had a stretcher and four men at hand. At his call they entered

the room, and the stranger was lifted and carried out. As they raised

him, a ring tinkled down and rolled across the floor. Lestrade grabbed

it up and stared at it with mystified eyes.

“There’s been a woman here,” he cried. “It’s a woman’s wedding-ring.”

He held it out, as he spoke, upon the palm of his hand. We all gathered

round him and gazed at it. There could be no doubt that that circlet of

plain gold had once adorned the finger of a bride.

“This complicates matters,” said Gregson. “Heaven knows, they were

complicated enough before.”

“You’re sure it doesn’t simplify them?” observed Holmes. “There’s

nothing to be learned by staring at it. What did you find in his

pockets?”

“We have it all here,” said Gregson, pointing to a litter of objects

upon one of the bottom steps of the stairs. “A gold watch, No. 97163, by

Barraud, of London. Gold Albert chain, very heavy and solid. Gold ring,

with masonic device. Gold pin--bull-dog’s head, with rubies as eyes.

Russian leather card-case, with cards of Enoch J. Drebber of Cleveland,

corresponding with the E. J. D. upon the linen. No purse, but loose

money to the extent of seven pounds thirteen. Pocket edition of

Boccaccio’s ‘Decameron,’ with name of Joseph Stangerson upon the

fly-leaf. Two letters--one addressed to E. J. Drebber and one to Joseph

Stangerson.”

“At what address?”

“American Exchange, Strand--to be left till called for. They are both

from the Guion Steamship Company, and refer to the sailing of their

boats from Liverpool. It is clear that this unfortunate man was about to

return to New York.”

“Have you made any inquiries as to this man, Stangerson?”

“I did it at once, sir,” said Gregson. “I have had advertisements

sent to all the newspapers, and one of my men has gone to the American

Exchange, but he has not returned yet.”

“Have you sent to Cleveland?”

“We telegraphed this morning.”

“How did you word your inquiries?”

“We simply detailed the circumstances, and said that we should be glad

of any information which could help us.”

“You did not ask for particulars on any point which appeared to you to

be crucial?”

“I asked about Stangerson.”

“Nothing else? Is there no circumstance on which this whole case appears

to hinge? Will you not telegraph again?”

“I have said all I have to say,” said Gregson, in an offended voice.

Sherlock Holmes chuckled to himself, and appeared to be about to make

some remark, when Lestrade, who had been in the front room while we

were holding this conversation in the hall, reappeared upon the scene,

rubbing his hands in a pompous and self-satisfied manner.

“Mr. Gregson,” he said, “I have just made a discovery of the highest

importance, and one which would have been overlooked had I not made a

careful examination of the walls.”

The little man’s eyes sparkled as he spoke, and he was evidently in

a state of suppressed exultation at having scored a point against his

colleague.

“Come here,” he said, bustling back into the room, the atmosphere of

which felt clearer since the removal of its ghastly inmate. “Now, stand

there!”

He struck a match on his boot and held it up against the wall.

“Look at that!” he said, triumphantly.

I have remarked that the paper had fallen away in parts. In this

particular corner of the room a large piece had peeled off, leaving a

yellow square of coarse plastering. Across this bare space there was

scrawled in blood-red letters a single word--

RACHE.

“What do you think of that?” cried the detective, with the air of a

showman exhibiting his show. “This was overlooked because it was in the

darkest corner of the room, and no one thought of looking there. The

murderer has written it with his or her own blood. See this smear where

it has trickled down the wall! That disposes of the idea of suicide

anyhow. Why was that corner chosen to write it on? I will tell you. See

that candle on the mantelpiece. It was lit at the time, and if it was

lit this corner would be the brightest instead of the darkest portion of

the wall.”

“And what does it mean now that you \_have\_ found it?” asked Gregson in a

depreciatory voice.

“Mean? Why, it means that the writer was going to put the female name

Rachel, but was disturbed before he or she had time to finish. You mark

my words, when this case comes to be cleared up you will find that a

woman named Rachel has something to do with it. It’s all very well for

you to laugh, Mr. Sherlock Holmes. You may be very smart and clever, but

the old hound is the best, when all is said and done.”

“I really beg your pardon!” said my companion, who had ruffled the

little man’s temper by bursting into an explosion of laughter. “You

certainly have the credit of being the first of us to find this out,

and, as you say, it bears every mark of having been written by the other

participant in last night’s mystery. I have not had time to examine this

room yet, but with your permission I shall do so now.”

As he spoke, he whipped a tape measure and a large round magnifying

glass from his pocket. With these two implements he trotted noiselessly

about the room, sometimes stopping, occasionally kneeling, and once

lying flat upon his face. So engrossed was he with his occupation that

he appeared to have forgotten our presence, for he chattered away to

himself under his breath the whole time, keeping up a running fire

of exclamations, groans, whistles, and little cries suggestive of

encouragement and of hope. As I watched him I was irresistibly reminded

of a pure-blooded well-trained foxhound as it dashes backwards and

forwards through the covert, whining in its eagerness, until it comes

across the lost scent. For twenty minutes or more he continued his

researches, measuring with the most exact care the distance between

marks which were entirely invisible to me, and occasionally applying his

tape to the walls in an equally incomprehensible manner. In one place

he gathered up very carefully a little pile of grey dust from the floor,

and packed it away in an envelope. Finally, he examined with his glass

the word upon the wall, going over every letter of it with the most

minute exactness. This done, he appeared to be satisfied, for he

replaced his tape and his glass in his pocket.

“They say that genius is an infinite capacity for taking pains,” he

remarked with a smile. “It’s a very bad definition, but it does apply to

detective work.”

Gregson and Lestrade had watched the manoeuvres [9] of their amateur

companion with considerable curiosity and some contempt. They evidently

failed to appreciate the fact, which I had begun to realize, that

Sherlock Holmes’ smallest actions were all directed towards some

definite and practical end.

“What do you think of it, sir?” they both asked.

“It would be robbing you of the credit of the case if I was to presume

to help you,” remarked my friend. “You are doing so well now that it

would be a pity for anyone to interfere.” There was a world of

sarcasm in his voice as he spoke. “If you will let me know how your

investigations go,” he continued, “I shall be happy to give you any help

I can. In the meantime I should like to speak to the constable who found

the body. Can you give me his name and address?”

Lestrade glanced at his note-book. “John Rance,” he said. “He is off

duty now. You will find him at 46, Audley Court, Kennington Park Gate.”

Holmes took a note of the address.

“Come along, Doctor,” he said; “we shall go and look him up. I’ll tell

you one thing which may help you in the case,” he continued, turning to

the two detectives. “There has been murder done, and the murderer was a

man. He was more than six feet high, was in the prime of life, had

small feet for his height, wore coarse, square-toed boots and smoked a

Trichinopoly cigar. He came here with his victim in a four-wheeled cab,

which was drawn by a horse with three old shoes and one new one on his

off fore leg. In all probability the murderer had a florid face, and the

finger-nails of his right hand were remarkably long. These are only a

few indications, but they may assist you.”

Lestrade and Gregson glanced at each other with an incredulous smile.

“If this man was murdered, how was it done?” asked the former.

“Poison,” said Sherlock Holmes curtly, and strode off. “One other thing,

Lestrade,” he added, turning round at the door: “‘Rache,’ is the German

for ‘revenge;’ so don’t lose your time looking for Miss Rachel.”

With which Parthian shot he walked away, leaving the two rivals

open-mouthed behind him.

CHAPTER IV. WHAT JOHN RANCE HAD TO TELL.

IT was one o’clock when we left No. 3, Lauriston Gardens. Sherlock

Holmes led me to the nearest telegraph office, whence he dispatched a

long telegram. He then hailed a cab, and ordered the driver to take us

to the address given us by Lestrade.

“There is nothing like first hand evidence,” he remarked; “as a matter

of fact, my mind is entirely made up upon the case, but still we may as

well learn all that is to be learned.”

“You amaze me, Holmes,” said I. “Surely you are not as sure as you

pretend to be of all those particulars which you gave.”

“There’s no room for a mistake,” he answered. “The very first thing

which I observed on arriving there was that a cab had made two ruts with

its wheels close to the curb. Now, up to last night, we have had no rain

for a week, so that those wheels which left such a deep impression must

have been there during the night. There were the marks of the horse’s

hoofs, too, the outline of one of which was far more clearly cut than

that of the other three, showing that that was a new shoe. Since the cab

was there after the rain began, and was not there at any time during the

morning--I have Gregson’s word for that--it follows that it must have

been there during the night, and, therefore, that it brought those two

individuals to the house.”

“That seems simple enough,” said I; “but how about the other man’s

height?”

“Why, the height of a man, in nine cases out of ten, can be told from

the length of his stride. It is a simple calculation enough, though

there is no use my boring you with figures. I had this fellow’s stride

both on the clay outside and on the dust within. Then I had a way of

checking my calculation. When a man writes on a wall, his instinct leads

him to write about the level of his own eyes. Now that writing was just

over six feet from the ground. It was child’s play.”

“And his age?” I asked.

“Well, if a man can stride four and a-half feet without the smallest

effort, he can’t be quite in the sere and yellow. That was the breadth

of a puddle on the garden walk which he had evidently walked across.

Patent-leather boots had gone round, and Square-toes had hopped over.

There is no mystery about it at all. I am simply applying to ordinary

life a few of those precepts of observation and deduction which I

advocated in that article. Is there anything else that puzzles you?”

“The finger nails and the Trichinopoly,” I suggested.

“The writing on the wall was done with a man’s forefinger dipped in

blood. My glass allowed me to observe that the plaster was slightly

scratched in doing it, which would not have been the case if the man’s

nail had been trimmed. I gathered up some scattered ash from the floor.

It was dark in colour and flakey--such an ash as is only made by a

Trichinopoly. I have made a special study of cigar ashes--in fact, I

have written a monograph upon the subject. I flatter myself that I can

distinguish at a glance the ash of any known brand, either of cigar

or of tobacco. It is just in such details that the skilled detective

differs from the Gregson and Lestrade type.”

“And the florid face?” I asked.

“Ah, that was a more daring shot, though I have no doubt that I was

right. You must not ask me that at the present state of the affair.”

I passed my hand over my brow. “My head is in a whirl,” I remarked; “the

more one thinks of it the more mysterious it grows. How came these two

men--if there were two men--into an empty house? What has become of the

cabman who drove them? How could one man compel another to take poison?

Where did the blood come from? What was the object of the murderer,

since robbery had no part in it? How came the woman’s ring there? Above

all, why should the second man write up the German word RACHE before

decamping? I confess that I cannot see any possible way of reconciling

all these facts.”

My companion smiled approvingly.

“You sum up the difficulties of the situation succinctly and well,” he

said. “There is much that is still obscure, though I have quite made up

my mind on the main facts. As to poor Lestrade’s discovery it was simply

a blind intended to put the police upon a wrong track, by suggesting

Socialism and secret societies. It was not done by a German. The A, if

you noticed, was printed somewhat after the German fashion. Now, a real

German invariably prints in the Latin character, so that we may safely

say that this was not written by one, but by a clumsy imitator who

overdid his part. It was simply a ruse to divert inquiry into a wrong

channel. I’m not going to tell you much more of the case, Doctor. You

know a conjuror gets no credit when once he has explained his trick,

and if I show you too much of my method of working, you will come to the

conclusion that I am a very ordinary individual after all.”

“I shall never do that,” I answered; “you have brought detection as near

an exact science as it ever will be brought in this world.”

My companion flushed up with pleasure at my words, and the earnest way

in which I uttered them. I had already observed that he was as sensitive

to flattery on the score of his art as any girl could be of her beauty.

“I’ll tell you one other thing,” he said. “Patent leathers [10] and

Square-toes came in the same cab, and they walked down the pathway

together as friendly as possible--arm-in-arm, in all probability.

When they got inside they walked up and down the room--or rather,

Patent-leathers stood still while Square-toes walked up and down. I

could read all that in the dust; and I could read that as he walked he

grew more and more excited. That is shown by the increased length of his

strides. He was talking all the while, and working himself up, no doubt,

into a fury. Then the tragedy occurred. I’ve told you all I know myself

now, for the rest is mere surmise and conjecture. We have a good working

basis, however, on which to start. We must hurry up, for I want to go to

Halle’s concert to hear Norman Neruda this afternoon.”

This conversation had occurred while our cab had been threading its way

through a long succession of dingy streets and dreary by-ways. In the

dingiest and dreariest of them our driver suddenly came to a stand.

“That’s Audley Court in there,” he said, pointing to a narrow slit in

the line of dead-coloured brick. “You’ll find me here when you come

back.”

Audley Court was not an attractive locality. The narrow passage led us

into a quadrangle paved with flags and lined by sordid dwellings. We

picked our way among groups of dirty children, and through lines of

discoloured linen, until we came to Number 46, the door of which

was decorated with a small slip of brass on which the name Rance was

engraved. On enquiry we found that the constable was in bed, and we were

shown into a little front parlour to await his coming.

He appeared presently, looking a little irritable at being disturbed in

his slumbers. “I made my report at the office,” he said.

Holmes took a half-sovereign from his pocket and played with it

pensively. “We thought that we should like to hear it all from your own

lips,” he said.

“I shall be most happy to tell you anything I can,” the constable

answered with his eyes upon the little golden disk.

“Just let us hear it all in your own way as it occurred.”

Rance sat down on the horsehair sofa, and knitted his brows as though

determined not to omit anything in his narrative.

“I’ll tell it ye from the beginning,” he said. “My time is from ten at

night to six in the morning. At eleven there was a fight at the ‘White

Hart’; but bar that all was quiet enough on the beat. At one o’clock it

began to rain, and I met Harry Murcher--him who has the Holland Grove

beat--and we stood together at the corner of Henrietta Street a-talkin’.

Presently--maybe about two or a little after--I thought I would take

a look round and see that all was right down the Brixton Road. It was

precious dirty and lonely. Not a soul did I meet all the way down,

though a cab or two went past me. I was a strollin’ down, thinkin’

between ourselves how uncommon handy a four of gin hot would be, when

suddenly the glint of a light caught my eye in the window of that same

house. Now, I knew that them two houses in Lauriston Gardens was empty

on account of him that owns them who won’t have the drains seen to,

though the very last tenant what lived in one of them died o’ typhoid

fever. I was knocked all in a heap therefore at seeing a light in

the window, and I suspected as something was wrong. When I got to the

door----”

“You stopped, and then walked back to the garden gate,” my companion

interrupted. “What did you do that for?”

Rance gave a violent jump, and stared at Sherlock Holmes with the utmost

amazement upon his features.

“Why, that’s true, sir,” he said; “though how you come to know it,

Heaven only knows. Ye see, when I got up to the door it was so still and

so lonesome, that I thought I’d be none the worse for some one with me.

I ain’t afeared of anything on this side o’ the grave; but I thought

that maybe it was him that died o’ the typhoid inspecting the drains

what killed him. The thought gave me a kind o’ turn, and I walked back

to the gate to see if I could see Murcher’s lantern, but there wasn’t no

sign of him nor of anyone else.”

“There was no one in the street?”

“Not a livin’ soul, sir, nor as much as a dog. Then I pulled myself

together and went back and pushed the door open. All was quiet inside,

so I went into the room where the light was a-burnin’. There was a

candle flickerin’ on the mantelpiece--a red wax one--and by its light I

saw----”

“Yes, I know all that you saw. You walked round the room several times,

and you knelt down by the body, and then you walked through and tried

the kitchen door, and then----”

John Rance sprang to his feet with a frightened face and suspicion in

his eyes. “Where was you hid to see all that?” he cried. “It seems to me

that you knows a deal more than you should.”

Holmes laughed and threw his card across the table to the constable.

“Don’t get arresting me for the murder,” he said. “I am one of the

hounds and not the wolf; Mr. Gregson or Mr. Lestrade will answer for

that. Go on, though. What did you do next?”

Rance resumed his seat, without however losing his mystified expression.

“I went back to the gate and sounded my whistle. That brought Murcher

and two more to the spot.”

“Was the street empty then?”

“Well, it was, as far as anybody that could be of any good goes.”

“What do you mean?”

The constable’s features broadened into a grin. “I’ve seen many a drunk

chap in my time,” he said, “but never anyone so cryin’ drunk as

that cove. He was at the gate when I came out, a-leanin’ up agin the

railings, and a-singin’ at the pitch o’ his lungs about Columbine’s

New-fangled Banner, or some such stuff. He couldn’t stand, far less

help.”

“What sort of a man was he?” asked Sherlock Holmes.

John Rance appeared to be somewhat irritated at this digression. “He was

an uncommon drunk sort o’ man,” he said. “He’d ha’ found hisself in the

station if we hadn’t been so took up.”

“His face--his dress--didn’t you notice them?” Holmes broke in

impatiently.

“I should think I did notice them, seeing that I had to prop him up--me

and Murcher between us. He was a long chap, with a red face, the lower

part muffled round----”

“That will do,” cried Holmes. “What became of him?”

“We’d enough to do without lookin’ after him,” the policeman said, in an

aggrieved voice. “I’ll wager he found his way home all right.”

“How was he dressed?”

“A brown overcoat.”

“Had he a whip in his hand?”

“A whip--no.”

“He must have left it behind,” muttered my companion. “You didn’t happen

to see or hear a cab after that?”

“No.”

“There’s a half-sovereign for you,” my companion said, standing up and

taking his hat. “I am afraid, Rance, that you will never rise in the

force. That head of yours should be for use as well as ornament. You

might have gained your sergeant’s stripes last night. The man whom you

held in your hands is the man who holds the clue of this mystery, and

whom we are seeking. There is no use of arguing about it now; I tell you

that it is so. Come along, Doctor.”

We started off for the cab together, leaving our informant incredulous,

but obviously uncomfortable.

“The blundering fool,” Holmes said, bitterly, as we drove back to our

lodgings. “Just to think of his having such an incomparable bit of good

luck, and not taking advantage of it.”

“I am rather in the dark still. It is true that the description of this

man tallies with your idea of the second party in this mystery. But why

should he come back to the house after leaving it? That is not the way

of criminals.”

“The ring, man, the ring: that was what he came back for. If we have no

other way of catching him, we can always bait our line with the ring. I

shall have him, Doctor--I’ll lay you two to one that I have him. I must

thank you for it all. I might not have gone but for you, and so have

missed the finest study I ever came across: a study in scarlet, eh?

Why shouldn’t we use a little art jargon. There’s the scarlet thread of

murder running through the colourless skein of life, and our duty is

to unravel it, and isolate it, and expose every inch of it. And now

for lunch, and then for Norman Neruda. Her attack and her bowing

are splendid. What’s that little thing of Chopin’s she plays so

magnificently: Tra-la-la-lira-lira-lay.”

Leaning back in the cab, this amateur bloodhound carolled away like a

lark while I meditated upon the many-sidedness of the human mind.

CHAPTER V. OUR ADVERTISEMENT BRINGS A VISITOR.

OUR morning’s exertions had been too much for my weak health, and I was

tired out in the afternoon. After Holmes’ departure for the concert, I

lay down upon the sofa and endeavoured to get a couple of hours’ sleep.

It was a useless attempt. My mind had been too much excited by all that

had occurred, and the strangest fancies and surmises crowded into

it. Every time that I closed my eyes I saw before me the distorted

baboon-like countenance of the murdered man. So sinister was the

impression which that face had produced upon me that I found it

difficult to feel anything but gratitude for him who had removed its

owner from the world. If ever human features bespoke vice of the most

malignant type, they were certainly those of Enoch J. Drebber, of

Cleveland. Still I recognized that justice must be done, and that the

depravity of the victim was no condonment [11] in the eyes of the law.

The more I thought of it the more extraordinary did my companion’s

hypothesis, that the man had been poisoned, appear. I remembered how he

had sniffed his lips, and had no doubt that he had detected something

which had given rise to the idea. Then, again, if not poison, what

had caused the man’s death, since there was neither wound nor marks of

strangulation? But, on the other hand, whose blood was that which lay so

thickly upon the floor? There were no signs of a struggle, nor had the

victim any weapon with which he might have wounded an antagonist. As

long as all these questions were unsolved, I felt that sleep would be

no easy matter, either for Holmes or myself. His quiet self-confident

manner convinced me that he had already formed a theory which explained

all the facts, though what it was I could not for an instant conjecture.

He was very late in returning--so late, that I knew that the concert

could not have detained him all the time. Dinner was on the table before

he appeared.

“It was magnificent,” he said, as he took his seat. “Do you remember

what Darwin says about music? He claims that the power of producing and

appreciating it existed among the human race long before the power of

speech was arrived at. Perhaps that is why we are so subtly influenced

by it. There are vague memories in our souls of those misty centuries

when the world was in its childhood.”

“That’s rather a broad idea,” I remarked.

“One’s ideas must be as broad as Nature if they are to interpret

Nature,” he answered. “What’s the matter? You’re not looking quite

yourself. This Brixton Road affair has upset you.”

“To tell the truth, it has,” I said. “I ought to be more case-hardened

after my Afghan experiences. I saw my own comrades hacked to pieces at

Maiwand without losing my nerve.”

“I can understand. There is a mystery about this which stimulates the

imagination; where there is no imagination there is no horror. Have you

seen the evening paper?”

“No.”

“It gives a fairly good account of the affair. It does not mention the

fact that when the man was raised up, a woman’s wedding ring fell upon

the floor. It is just as well it does not.”

“Why?”

“Look at this advertisement,” he answered. “I had one sent to every

paper this morning immediately after the affair.”

He threw the paper across to me and I glanced at the place indicated. It

was the first announcement in the “Found” column. “In Brixton Road,

this morning,” it ran, “a plain gold wedding ring, found in the roadway

between the ‘White Hart’ Tavern and Holland Grove. Apply Dr. Watson,

221B, Baker Street, between eight and nine this evening.”

“Excuse my using your name,” he said. “If I used my own some of these

dunderheads would recognize it, and want to meddle in the affair.”

“That is all right,” I answered. “But supposing anyone applies, I have

no ring.”

“Oh yes, you have,” said he, handing me one. “This will do very well. It

is almost a facsimile.”

“And who do you expect will answer this advertisement.”

“Why, the man in the brown coat--our florid friend with the square toes.

If he does not come himself he will send an accomplice.”

“Would he not consider it as too dangerous?”

“Not at all. If my view of the case is correct, and I have every reason

to believe that it is, this man would rather risk anything than lose the

ring. According to my notion he dropped it while stooping over Drebber’s

body, and did not miss it at the time. After leaving the house he

discovered his loss and hurried back, but found the police already in

possession, owing to his own folly in leaving the candle burning. He had

to pretend to be drunk in order to allay the suspicions which might have

been aroused by his appearance at the gate. Now put yourself in that

man’s place. On thinking the matter over, it must have occurred to him

that it was possible that he had lost the ring in the road after leaving

the house. What would he do, then? He would eagerly look out for the

evening papers in the hope of seeing it among the articles found. His

eye, of course, would light upon this. He would be overjoyed. Why should

he fear a trap? There would be no reason in his eyes why the finding

of the ring should be connected with the murder. He would come. He will

come. You shall see him within an hour?”

“And then?” I asked.

“Oh, you can leave me to deal with him then. Have you any arms?”

“I have my old service revolver and a few cartridges.”

“You had better clean it and load it. He will be a desperate man,

and though I shall take him unawares, it is as well to be ready for

anything.”

I went to my bedroom and followed his advice. When I returned with

the pistol the table had been cleared, and Holmes was engaged in his

favourite occupation of scraping upon his violin.

“The plot thickens,” he said, as I entered; “I have just had an answer

to my American telegram. My view of the case is the correct one.”

“And that is?” I asked eagerly.

“My fiddle would be the better for new strings,” he remarked. “Put your

pistol in your pocket. When the fellow comes speak to him in an ordinary

way. Leave the rest to me. Don’t frighten him by looking at him too

hard.”

“It is eight o’clock now,” I said, glancing at my watch.

“Yes. He will probably be here in a few minutes. Open the door slightly.

That will do. Now put the key on the inside. Thank you! This is a

queer old book I picked up at a stall yesterday--‘De Jure inter

Gentes’--published in Latin at Liege in the Lowlands, in 1642. Charles’

head was still firm on his shoulders when this little brown-backed

volume was struck off.”

“Who is the printer?”

“Philippe de Croy, whoever he may have been. On the fly-leaf, in very

faded ink, is written ‘Ex libris Guliolmi Whyte.’ I wonder who William

Whyte was. Some pragmatical seventeenth century lawyer, I suppose. His

writing has a legal twist about it. Here comes our man, I think.”

As he spoke there was a sharp ring at the bell. Sherlock Holmes rose

softly and moved his chair in the direction of the door. We heard the

servant pass along the hall, and the sharp click of the latch as she

opened it.

“Does Dr. Watson live here?” asked a clear but rather harsh voice. We

could not hear the servant’s reply, but the door closed, and some one

began to ascend the stairs. The footfall was an uncertain and shuffling

one. A look of surprise passed over the face of my companion as he

listened to it. It came slowly along the passage, and there was a feeble

tap at the door.

“Come in,” I cried.

At my summons, instead of the man of violence whom we expected, a very

old and wrinkled woman hobbled into the apartment. She appeared to be

dazzled by the sudden blaze of light, and after dropping a curtsey, she

stood blinking at us with her bleared eyes and fumbling in her pocket

with nervous, shaky fingers. I glanced at my companion, and his face

had assumed such a disconsolate expression that it was all I could do to

keep my countenance.

The old crone drew out an evening paper, and pointed at our

advertisement. “It’s this as has brought me, good gentlemen,” she said,

dropping another curtsey; “a gold wedding ring in the Brixton Road. It

belongs to my girl Sally, as was married only this time twelvemonth,

which her husband is steward aboard a Union boat, and what he’d say if

he come ‘ome and found her without her ring is more than I can think, he

being short enough at the best o’ times, but more especially when he

has the drink. If it please you, she went to the circus last night along

with----”

“Is that her ring?” I asked.

“The Lord be thanked!” cried the old woman; “Sally will be a glad woman

this night. That’s the ring.”

“And what may your address be?” I inquired, taking up a pencil.

“13, Duncan Street, Houndsditch. A weary way from here.”

“The Brixton Road does not lie between any circus and Houndsditch,” said

Sherlock Holmes sharply.

The old woman faced round and looked keenly at him from her little

red-rimmed eyes. “The gentleman asked me for \_my\_ address,” she said.

“Sally lives in lodgings at 3, Mayfield Place, Peckham.”

“And your name is----?”

“My name is Sawyer--her’s is Dennis, which Tom Dennis married her--and

a smart, clean lad, too, as long as he’s at sea, and no steward in the

company more thought of; but when on shore, what with the women and what

with liquor shops----”

“Here is your ring, Mrs. Sawyer,” I interrupted, in obedience to a sign

from my companion; “it clearly belongs to your daughter, and I am glad

to be able to restore it to the rightful owner.”

With many mumbled blessings and protestations of gratitude the old crone

packed it away in her pocket, and shuffled off down the stairs. Sherlock

Holmes sprang to his feet the moment that she was gone and rushed into

his room. He returned in a few seconds enveloped in an ulster and

a cravat. “I’ll follow her,” he said, hurriedly; “she must be an

accomplice, and will lead me to him. Wait up for me.” The hall door had

hardly slammed behind our visitor before Holmes had descended the stair.

Looking through the window I could see her walking feebly along the

other side, while her pursuer dogged her some little distance behind.

“Either his whole theory is incorrect,” I thought to myself, “or else he

will be led now to the heart of the mystery.” There was no need for him

to ask me to wait up for him, for I felt that sleep was impossible until

I heard the result of his adventure.

It was close upon nine when he set out. I had no idea how long he might

be, but I sat stolidly puffing at my pipe and skipping over the pages

of Henri Murger’s “Vie de Bohème.” Ten o’clock passed, and I heard the

footsteps of the maid as they pattered off to bed. Eleven, and the

more stately tread of the landlady passed my door, bound for the same

destination. It was close upon twelve before I heard the sharp sound of

his latch-key. The instant he entered I saw by his face that he had not

been successful. Amusement and chagrin seemed to be struggling for the

mastery, until the former suddenly carried the day, and he burst into a

hearty laugh.

“I wouldn’t have the Scotland Yarders know it for the world,” he cried,

dropping into his chair; “I have chaffed them so much that they would

never have let me hear the end of it. I can afford to laugh, because I

know that I will be even with them in the long run.”

“What is it then?” I asked.

“Oh, I don’t mind telling a story against myself. That creature had

gone a little way when she began to limp and show every sign of being

foot-sore. Presently she came to a halt, and hailed a four-wheeler which

was passing. I managed to be close to her so as to hear the address, but

I need not have been so anxious, for she sang it out loud enough to

be heard at the other side of the street, ‘Drive to 13, Duncan Street,

Houndsditch,’ she cried. This begins to look genuine, I thought, and

having seen her safely inside, I perched myself behind. That’s an art

which every detective should be an expert at. Well, away we rattled, and

never drew rein until we reached the street in question. I hopped off

before we came to the door, and strolled down the street in an easy,

lounging way. I saw the cab pull up. The driver jumped down, and I saw

him open the door and stand expectantly. Nothing came out though. When

I reached him he was groping about frantically in the empty cab, and

giving vent to the finest assorted collection of oaths that ever I

listened to. There was no sign or trace of his passenger, and I fear it

will be some time before he gets his fare. On inquiring at Number 13

we found that the house belonged to a respectable paperhanger, named

Keswick, and that no one of the name either of Sawyer or Dennis had ever

been heard of there.”

“You don’t mean to say,” I cried, in amazement, “that that tottering,

feeble old woman was able to get out of the cab while it was in motion,

without either you or the driver seeing her?”

“Old woman be damned!” said Sherlock Holmes, sharply. “We were the old

women to be so taken in. It must have been a young man, and an

active one, too, besides being an incomparable actor. The get-up was

inimitable. He saw that he was followed, no doubt, and used this means

of giving me the slip. It shows that the man we are after is not as

lonely as I imagined he was, but has friends who are ready to risk

something for him. Now, Doctor, you are looking done-up. Take my advice

and turn in.”

I was certainly feeling very weary, so I obeyed his injunction. I

left Holmes seated in front of the smouldering fire, and long into the

watches of the night I heard the low, melancholy wailings of his violin,

and knew that he was still pondering over the strange problem which he

had set himself to unravel.

CHAPTER VI. TOBIAS GREGSON SHOWS WHAT HE CAN DO.

THE papers next day were full of the “Brixton Mystery,” as they termed

it. Each had a long account of the affair, and some had leaders upon it

in addition. There was some information in them which was new to me. I

still retain in my scrap-book numerous clippings and extracts bearing

upon the case. Here is a condensation of a few of them:--

The \_Daily Telegraph\_ remarked that in the history of crime there had

seldom been a tragedy which presented stranger features. The German

name of the victim, the absence of all other motive, and the sinister

inscription on the wall, all pointed to its perpetration by political

refugees and revolutionists. The Socialists had many branches in

America, and the deceased had, no doubt, infringed their unwritten laws,

and been tracked down by them. After alluding airily to the Vehmgericht,

aqua tofana, Carbonari, the Marchioness de Brinvilliers, the Darwinian

theory, the principles of Malthus, and the Ratcliff Highway murders, the

article concluded by admonishing the Government and advocating a closer

watch over foreigners in England.

The \_Standard\_ commented upon the fact that lawless outrages of the sort

usually occurred under a Liberal Administration. They arose from the

unsettling of the minds of the masses, and the consequent weakening

of all authority. The deceased was an American gentleman who had

been residing for some weeks in the Metropolis. He had stayed at the

boarding-house of Madame Charpentier, in Torquay Terrace, Camberwell.

He was accompanied in his travels by his private secretary, Mr. Joseph

Stangerson. The two bade adieu to their landlady upon Tuesday, the

4th inst., and departed to Euston Station with the avowed intention of

catching the Liverpool express. They were afterwards seen together upon

the platform. Nothing more is known of them until Mr. Drebber’s body

was, as recorded, discovered in an empty house in the Brixton Road,

many miles from Euston. How he came there, or how he met his fate, are

questions which are still involved in mystery. Nothing is known of the

whereabouts of Stangerson. We are glad to learn that Mr. Lestrade and

Mr. Gregson, of Scotland Yard, are both engaged upon the case, and it

is confidently anticipated that these well-known officers will speedily

throw light upon the matter.

The \_Daily News\_ observed that there was no doubt as to the crime being

a political one. The despotism and hatred of Liberalism which animated

the Continental Governments had had the effect of driving to our shores

a number of men who might have made excellent citizens were they not

soured by the recollection of all that they had undergone. Among these

men there was a stringent code of honour, any infringement of which was

punished by death. Every effort should be made to find the secretary,

Stangerson, and to ascertain some particulars of the habits of the

deceased. A great step had been gained by the discovery of the address

of the house at which he had boarded--a result which was entirely due to

the acuteness and energy of Mr. Gregson of Scotland Yard.

Sherlock Holmes and I read these notices over together at breakfast, and

they appeared to afford him considerable amusement.

“I told you that, whatever happened, Lestrade and Gregson would be sure

to score.”

“That depends on how it turns out.”

“Oh, bless you, it doesn’t matter in the least. If the man is caught, it

will be \_on account\_ of their exertions; if he escapes, it will be \_in

spite\_ of their exertions. It’s heads I win and tails you lose. Whatever

they do, they will have followers. ‘Un sot trouve toujours un plus sot

qui l’admire.’”

“What on earth is this?” I cried, for at this moment there came the

pattering of many steps in the hall and on the stairs, accompanied by

audible expressions of disgust upon the part of our landlady.

“It’s the Baker Street division of the detective police force,” said my

companion, gravely; and as he spoke there rushed into the room half a

dozen of the dirtiest and most ragged street Arabs that ever I clapped

eyes on.

“‘Tention!” cried Holmes, in a sharp tone, and the six dirty little

scoundrels stood in a line like so many disreputable statuettes. “In

future you shall send up Wiggins alone to report, and the rest of you

must wait in the street. Have you found it, Wiggins?”

“No, sir, we hain’t,” said one of the youths.

“I hardly expected you would. You must keep on until you do. Here are

your wages.” [13] He handed each of them a shilling.

“Now, off you go, and come back with a better report next time.”

He waved his hand, and they scampered away downstairs like so many rats,

and we heard their shrill voices next moment in the street.

“There’s more work to be got out of one of those little beggars than

out of a dozen of the force,” Holmes remarked. “The mere sight of an

official-looking person seals men’s lips. These youngsters, however, go

everywhere and hear everything. They are as sharp as needles, too; all

they want is organisation.”

“Is it on this Brixton case that you are employing them?” I asked.

“Yes; there is a point which I wish to ascertain. It is merely a matter

of time. Hullo! we are going to hear some news now with a vengeance!

Here is Gregson coming down the road with beatitude written upon every

feature of his face. Bound for us, I know. Yes, he is stopping. There he

is!”

There was a violent peal at the bell, and in a few seconds the

fair-haired detective came up the stairs, three steps at a time, and

burst into our sitting-room.

“My dear fellow,” he cried, wringing Holmes’ unresponsive hand,

“congratulate me! I have made the whole thing as clear as day.”

A shade of anxiety seemed to me to cross my companion’s expressive face.

“Do you mean that you are on the right track?” he asked.

“The right track! Why, sir, we have the man under lock and key.”

“And his name is?”

“Arthur Charpentier, sub-lieutenant in Her Majesty’s navy,” cried

Gregson, pompously, rubbing his fat hands and inflating his chest.

Sherlock Holmes gave a sigh of relief, and relaxed into a smile.

“Take a seat, and try one of these cigars,” he said. “We are anxious to

know how you managed it. Will you have some whiskey and water?”

“I don’t mind if I do,” the detective answered. “The tremendous

exertions which I have gone through during the last day or two have worn

me out. Not so much bodily exertion, you understand, as the strain upon

the mind. You will appreciate that, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, for we are both

brain-workers.”

“You do me too much honour,” said Holmes, gravely. “Let us hear how you

arrived at this most gratifying result.”

The detective seated himself in the arm-chair, and puffed complacently

at his cigar. Then suddenly he slapped his thigh in a paroxysm of

amusement.

“The fun of it is,” he cried, “that that fool Lestrade, who thinks

himself so smart, has gone off upon the wrong track altogether. He is

after the secretary Stangerson, who had no more to do with the crime

than the babe unborn. I have no doubt that he has caught him by this

time.”

The idea tickled Gregson so much that he laughed until he choked.

“And how did you get your clue?”

“Ah, I’ll tell you all about it. Of course, Doctor Watson, this is

strictly between ourselves. The first difficulty which we had to contend

with was the finding of this American’s antecedents. Some people would

have waited until their advertisements were answered, or until parties

came forward and volunteered information. That is not Tobias Gregson’s

way of going to work. You remember the hat beside the dead man?”

“Yes,” said Holmes; “by John Underwood and Sons, 129, Camberwell Road.”

Gregson looked quite crest-fallen.

“I had no idea that you noticed that,” he said. “Have you been there?”

“No.”

“Ha!” cried Gregson, in a relieved voice; “you should never neglect a

chance, however small it may seem.”

“To a great mind, nothing is little,” remarked Holmes, sententiously.

“Well, I went to Underwood, and asked him if he had sold a hat of that

size and description. He looked over his books, and came on it at once.

He had sent the hat to a Mr. Drebber, residing at Charpentier’s Boarding

Establishment, Torquay Terrace. Thus I got at his address.”

“Smart--very smart!” murmured Sherlock Holmes.

“I next called upon Madame Charpentier,” continued the detective.

“I found her very pale and distressed. Her daughter was in the room,

too--an uncommonly fine girl she is, too; she was looking red about

the eyes and her lips trembled as I spoke to her. That didn’t escape

my notice. I began to smell a rat. You know the feeling, Mr. Sherlock

Holmes, when you come upon the right scent--a kind of thrill in your

nerves. ‘Have you heard of the mysterious death of your late boarder Mr.

Enoch J. Drebber, of Cleveland?’ I asked.

“The mother nodded. She didn’t seem able to get out a word. The daughter

burst into tears. I felt more than ever that these people knew something

of the matter.

“‘At what o’clock did Mr. Drebber leave your house for the train?’ I

asked.

“‘At eight o’clock,’ she said, gulping in her throat to keep down her

agitation. ‘His secretary, Mr. Stangerson, said that there were two

trains--one at 9.15 and one at 11. He was to catch the first. [14]

“‘And was that the last which you saw of him?’

“A terrible change came over the woman’s face as I asked the question.

Her features turned perfectly livid. It was some seconds before she

could get out the single word ‘Yes’--and when it did come it was in a

husky unnatural tone.

“There was silence for a moment, and then the daughter spoke in a calm

clear voice.

“‘No good can ever come of falsehood, mother,’ she said. ‘Let us be

frank with this gentleman. We \_did\_ see Mr. Drebber again.’

“‘God forgive you!’ cried Madame Charpentier, throwing up her hands and

sinking back in her chair. ‘You have murdered your brother.’

“‘Arthur would rather that we spoke the truth,’ the girl answered

firmly.

“‘You had best tell me all about it now,’ I said. ‘Half-confidences are

worse than none. Besides, you do not know how much we know of it.’

“‘On your head be it, Alice!’ cried her mother; and then, turning to me,

‘I will tell you all, sir. Do not imagine that my agitation on behalf

of my son arises from any fear lest he should have had a hand in this

terrible affair. He is utterly innocent of it. My dread is, however,

that in your eyes and in the eyes of others he may appear to be

compromised. That however is surely impossible. His high character, his

profession, his antecedents would all forbid it.’

“‘Your best way is to make a clean breast of the facts,’ I answered.

‘Depend upon it, if your son is innocent he will be none the worse.’

“‘Perhaps, Alice, you had better leave us together,’ she said, and her

daughter withdrew. ‘Now, sir,’ she continued, ‘I had no intention of

telling you all this, but since my poor daughter has disclosed it I

have no alternative. Having once decided to speak, I will tell you all

without omitting any particular.’

“‘It is your wisest course,’ said I.

“‘Mr. Drebber has been with us nearly three weeks. He and his secretary,

Mr. Stangerson, had been travelling on the Continent. I noticed a

“Copenhagen” label upon each of their trunks, showing that that had been

their last stopping place. Stangerson was a quiet reserved man, but his

employer, I am sorry to say, was far otherwise. He was coarse in his

habits and brutish in his ways. The very night of his arrival he became

very much the worse for drink, and, indeed, after twelve o’clock in the

day he could hardly ever be said to be sober. His manners towards the

maid-servants were disgustingly free and familiar. Worst of all, he

speedily assumed the same attitude towards my daughter, Alice, and spoke

to her more than once in a way which, fortunately, she is too innocent

to understand. On one occasion he actually seized her in his arms and

embraced her--an outrage which caused his own secretary to reproach him

for his unmanly conduct.’

“‘But why did you stand all this,’ I asked. ‘I suppose that you can get

rid of your boarders when you wish.’

“Mrs. Charpentier blushed at my pertinent question. ‘Would to God that

I had given him notice on the very day that he came,’ she said. ‘But

it was a sore temptation. They were paying a pound a day each--fourteen

pounds a week, and this is the slack season. I am a widow, and my boy in

the Navy has cost me much. I grudged to lose the money. I acted for the

best. This last was too much, however, and I gave him notice to leave on

account of it. That was the reason of his going.’

“‘Well?’

“‘My heart grew light when I saw him drive away. My son is on leave

just now, but I did not tell him anything of all this, for his temper

is violent, and he is passionately fond of his sister. When I closed the

door behind them a load seemed to be lifted from my mind. Alas, in

less than an hour there was a ring at the bell, and I learned that Mr.

Drebber had returned. He was much excited, and evidently the worse for

drink. He forced his way into the room, where I was sitting with my

daughter, and made some incoherent remark about having missed his train.

He then turned to Alice, and before my very face, proposed to her that

she should fly with him. “You are of age,” he said, “and there is no law

to stop you. I have money enough and to spare. Never mind the old girl

here, but come along with me now straight away. You shall live like a

princess.” Poor Alice was so frightened that she shrunk away from him,

but he caught her by the wrist and endeavoured to draw her towards the

door. I screamed, and at that moment my son Arthur came into the room.

What happened then I do not know. I heard oaths and the confused sounds

of a scuffle. I was too terrified to raise my head. When I did look up

I saw Arthur standing in the doorway laughing, with a stick in his hand.

“I don’t think that fine fellow will trouble us again,” he said. “I will

just go after him and see what he does with himself.” With those words

he took his hat and started off down the street. The next morning we

heard of Mr. Drebber’s mysterious death.’

“This statement came from Mrs. Charpentier’s lips with many gasps and

pauses. At times she spoke so low that I could hardly catch the words. I

made shorthand notes of all that she said, however, so that there should

be no possibility of a mistake.”

“It’s quite exciting,” said Sherlock Holmes, with a yawn. “What happened

next?”

“When Mrs. Charpentier paused,” the detective continued, “I saw that the

whole case hung upon one point. Fixing her with my eye in a way which

I always found effective with women, I asked her at what hour her son

returned.

“‘I do not know,’ she answered.

“‘Not know?’

“‘No; he has a latch-key, and he let himself in.’

“‘After you went to bed?’

“‘Yes.’

“‘When did you go to bed?’

“‘About eleven.’

“‘So your son was gone at least two hours?’

“‘Yes.’

“‘Possibly four or five?’

“‘Yes.’

“‘What was he doing during that time?’

“‘I do not know,’ she answered, turning white to her very lips.

“Of course after that there was nothing more to be done. I found

out where Lieutenant Charpentier was, took two officers with me, and

arrested him. When I touched him on the shoulder and warned him to come

quietly with us, he answered us as bold as brass, ‘I suppose you

are arresting me for being concerned in the death of that scoundrel

Drebber,’ he said. We had said nothing to him about it, so that his

alluding to it had a most suspicious aspect.”

“Very,” said Holmes.

“He still carried the heavy stick which the mother described him as

having with him when he followed Drebber. It was a stout oak cudgel.”

“What is your theory, then?”

“Well, my theory is that he followed Drebber as far as the Brixton Road.

When there, a fresh altercation arose between them, in the course of

which Drebber received a blow from the stick, in the pit of the stomach,

perhaps, which killed him without leaving any mark. The night was so

wet that no one was about, so Charpentier dragged the body of his victim

into the empty house. As to the candle, and the blood, and the writing

on the wall, and the ring, they may all be so many tricks to throw the

police on to the wrong scent.”

“Well done!” said Holmes in an encouraging voice. “Really, Gregson, you

are getting along. We shall make something of you yet.”

“I flatter myself that I have managed it rather neatly,” the detective

answered proudly. “The young man volunteered a statement, in which he

said that after following Drebber some time, the latter perceived him,

and took a cab in order to get away from him. On his way home he met an

old shipmate, and took a long walk with him. On being asked where this

old shipmate lived, he was unable to give any satisfactory reply. I

think the whole case fits together uncommonly well. What amuses me is to

think of Lestrade, who had started off upon the wrong scent. I am afraid

he won’t make much of [15] Why, by Jove, here’s the very man himself!”

It was indeed Lestrade, who had ascended the stairs while we were

talking, and who now entered the room. The assurance and jauntiness

which generally marked his demeanour and dress were, however, wanting.

His face was disturbed and troubled, while his clothes were disarranged

and untidy. He had evidently come with the intention of consulting

with Sherlock Holmes, for on perceiving his colleague he appeared to be

embarrassed and put out. He stood in the centre of the room, fumbling

nervously with his hat and uncertain what to do. “This is a most

extraordinary case,” he said at last--“a most incomprehensible affair.”

“Ah, you find it so, Mr. Lestrade!” cried Gregson, triumphantly. “I

thought you would come to that conclusion. Have you managed to find the

Secretary, Mr. Joseph Stangerson?”

“The Secretary, Mr. Joseph Stangerson,” said Lestrade gravely, “was

murdered at Halliday’s Private Hotel about six o’clock this morning.”

CHAPTER VII. LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS.

THE intelligence with which Lestrade greeted us was so momentous and so

unexpected, that we were all three fairly dumfoundered. Gregson sprang

out of his chair and upset the remainder of his whiskey and water. I

stared in silence at Sherlock Holmes, whose lips were compressed and his

brows drawn down over his eyes.

“Stangerson too!” he muttered. “The plot thickens.”

“It was quite thick enough before,” grumbled Lestrade, taking a chair.

“I seem to have dropped into a sort of council of war.”

“Are you--are you sure of this piece of intelligence?” stammered

Gregson.

“I have just come from his room,” said Lestrade. “I was the first to

discover what had occurred.”

“We have been hearing Gregson’s view of the matter,” Holmes observed.

“Would you mind letting us know what you have seen and done?”

“I have no objection,” Lestrade answered, seating himself. “I freely

confess that I was of the opinion that Stangerson was concerned in

the death of Drebber. This fresh development has shown me that I was

completely mistaken. Full of the one idea, I set myself to find out

what had become of the Secretary. They had been seen together at Euston

Station about half-past eight on the evening of the third. At two in the

morning Drebber had been found in the Brixton Road. The question which

confronted me was to find out how Stangerson had been employed between

8.30 and the time of the crime, and what had become of him afterwards.

I telegraphed to Liverpool, giving a description of the man, and warning

them to keep a watch upon the American boats. I then set to work calling

upon all the hotels and lodging-houses in the vicinity of Euston. You

see, I argued that if Drebber and his companion had become separated,

the natural course for the latter would be to put up somewhere in the

vicinity for the night, and then to hang about the station again next

morning.”

“They would be likely to agree on some meeting-place beforehand,”

remarked Holmes.

“So it proved. I spent the whole of yesterday evening in making

enquiries entirely without avail. This morning I began very early, and

at eight o’clock I reached Halliday’s Private Hotel, in Little George

Street. On my enquiry as to whether a Mr. Stangerson was living there,

they at once answered me in the affirmative.

“‘No doubt you are the gentleman whom he was expecting,’ they said. ‘He

has been waiting for a gentleman for two days.’

“‘Where is he now?’ I asked.

“‘He is upstairs in bed. He wished to be called at nine.’

“‘I will go up and see him at once,’ I said.

“It seemed to me that my sudden appearance might shake his nerves and

lead him to say something unguarded. The Boots volunteered to show me

the room: it was on the second floor, and there was a small corridor

leading up to it. The Boots pointed out the door to me, and was about to

go downstairs again when I saw something that made me feel sickish, in

spite of my twenty years’ experience. From under the door there curled

a little red ribbon of blood, which had meandered across the passage and

formed a little pool along the skirting at the other side. I gave a cry,

which brought the Boots back. He nearly fainted when he saw it. The door

was locked on the inside, but we put our shoulders to it, and knocked it

in. The window of the room was open, and beside the window, all huddled

up, lay the body of a man in his nightdress. He was quite dead, and had

been for some time, for his limbs were rigid and cold. When we turned

him over, the Boots recognized him at once as being the same gentleman

who had engaged the room under the name of Joseph Stangerson. The cause

of death was a deep stab in the left side, which must have penetrated

the heart. And now comes the strangest part of the affair. What do you

suppose was above the murdered man?”

I felt a creeping of the flesh, and a presentiment of coming horror,

even before Sherlock Holmes answered.

“The word RACHE, written in letters of blood,” he said.

“That was it,” said Lestrade, in an awe-struck voice; and we were all

silent for a while.

There was something so methodical and so incomprehensible about the

deeds of this unknown assassin, that it imparted a fresh ghastliness to

his crimes. My nerves, which were steady enough on the field of battle

tingled as I thought of it.

“The man was seen,” continued Lestrade. “A milk boy, passing on his way

to the dairy, happened to walk down the lane which leads from the mews

at the back of the hotel. He noticed that a ladder, which usually lay

there, was raised against one of the windows of the second floor, which

was wide open. After passing, he looked back and saw a man descend the

ladder. He came down so quietly and openly that the boy imagined him to

be some carpenter or joiner at work in the hotel. He took no particular

notice of him, beyond thinking in his own mind that it was early for him

to be at work. He has an impression that the man was tall, had a reddish

face, and was dressed in a long, brownish coat. He must have stayed in

the room some little time after the murder, for we found blood-stained

water in the basin, where he had washed his hands, and marks on the

sheets where he had deliberately wiped his knife.”

I glanced at Holmes on hearing the description of the murderer, which

tallied so exactly with his own. There was, however, no trace of

exultation or satisfaction upon his face.

“Did you find nothing in the room which could furnish a clue to the

murderer?” he asked.

“Nothing. Stangerson had Drebber’s purse in his pocket, but it seems

that this was usual, as he did all the paying. There was eighty odd

pounds in it, but nothing had been taken. Whatever the motives of these

extraordinary crimes, robbery is certainly not one of them. There were

no papers or memoranda in the murdered man’s pocket, except a single

telegram, dated from Cleveland about a month ago, and containing

the words, ‘J. H. is in Europe.’ There was no name appended to this

message.”

“And there was nothing else?” Holmes asked.

“Nothing of any importance. The man’s novel, with which he had read

himself to sleep was lying upon the bed, and his pipe was on a chair

beside him. There was a glass of water on the table, and on the

window-sill a small chip ointment box containing a couple of pills.”

Sherlock Holmes sprang from his chair with an exclamation of delight.

“The last link,” he cried, exultantly. “My case is complete.”

The two detectives stared at him in amazement.

“I have now in my hands,” my companion said, confidently, “all the

threads which have formed such a tangle. There are, of course, details

to be filled in, but I am as certain of all the main facts, from the

time that Drebber parted from Stangerson at the station, up to the

discovery of the body of the latter, as if I had seen them with my own

eyes. I will give you a proof of my knowledge. Could you lay your hand

upon those pills?”

“I have them,” said Lestrade, producing a small white box; “I took them

and the purse and the telegram, intending to have them put in a place of

safety at the Police Station. It was the merest chance my taking these

pills, for I am bound to say that I do not attach any importance to

them.”

“Give them here,” said Holmes. “Now, Doctor,” turning to me, “are those

ordinary pills?”

They certainly were not. They were of a pearly grey colour, small,

round, and almost transparent against the light. “From their lightness

and transparency, I should imagine that they are soluble in water,” I

remarked.

“Precisely so,” answered Holmes. “Now would you mind going down and

fetching that poor little devil of a terrier which has been bad so long,

and which the landlady wanted you to put out of its pain yesterday.”

I went downstairs and carried the dog upstair in my arms. It’s laboured

breathing and glazing eye showed that it was not far from its end.

Indeed, its snow-white muzzle proclaimed that it had already exceeded

the usual term of canine existence. I placed it upon a cushion on the

rug.

“I will now cut one of these pills in two,” said Holmes, and drawing his

penknife he suited the action to the word. “One half we return into the

box for future purposes. The other half I will place in this wine glass,

in which is a teaspoonful of water. You perceive that our friend, the

Doctor, is right, and that it readily dissolves.”

“This may be very interesting,” said Lestrade, in the injured tone of

one who suspects that he is being laughed at, “I cannot see, however,

what it has to do with the death of Mr. Joseph Stangerson.”

“Patience, my friend, patience! You will find in time that it has

everything to do with it. I shall now add a little milk to make the

mixture palatable, and on presenting it to the dog we find that he laps

it up readily enough.”

As he spoke he turned the contents of the wine glass into a saucer and

placed it in front of the terrier, who speedily licked it dry. Sherlock

Holmes’ earnest demeanour had so far convinced us that we all sat in

silence, watching the animal intently, and expecting some startling

effect. None such appeared, however. The dog continued to lie stretched

upon tho [16] cushion, breathing in a laboured way, but apparently

neither the better nor the worse for its draught.

Holmes had taken out his watch, and as minute followed minute without

result, an expression of the utmost chagrin and disappointment appeared

upon his features. He gnawed his lip, drummed his fingers upon the

table, and showed every other symptom of acute impatience. So great

was his emotion, that I felt sincerely sorry for him, while the two

detectives smiled derisively, by no means displeased at this check which

he had met.

“It can’t be a coincidence,” he cried, at last springing from his chair

and pacing wildly up and down the room; “it is impossible that it should

be a mere coincidence. The very pills which I suspected in the case of

Drebber are actually found after the death of Stangerson. And yet they

are inert. What can it mean? Surely my whole chain of reasoning cannot

have been false. It is impossible! And yet this wretched dog is none the

worse. Ah, I have it! I have it!” With a perfect shriek of delight he

rushed to the box, cut the other pill in two, dissolved it, added milk,

and presented it to the terrier. The unfortunate creature’s tongue

seemed hardly to have been moistened in it before it gave a convulsive

shiver in every limb, and lay as rigid and lifeless as if it had been

struck by lightning.

Sherlock Holmes drew a long breath, and wiped the perspiration from his

forehead. “I should have more faith,” he said; “I ought to know by

this time that when a fact appears to be opposed to a long train of

deductions, it invariably proves to be capable of bearing some other

interpretation. Of the two pills in that box one was of the most deadly

poison, and the other was entirely harmless. I ought to have known that

before ever I saw the box at all.”

This last statement appeared to me to be so startling, that I could

hardly believe that he was in his sober senses. There was the dead dog,

however, to prove that his conjecture had been correct. It seemed to me

that the mists in my own mind were gradually clearing away, and I began

to have a dim, vague perception of the truth.

“All this seems strange to you,” continued Holmes, “because you failed

at the beginning of the inquiry to grasp the importance of the single

real clue which was presented to you. I had the good fortune to seize

upon that, and everything which has occurred since then has served to

confirm my original supposition, and, indeed, was the logical sequence

of it. Hence things which have perplexed you and made the case more

obscure, have served to enlighten me and to strengthen my conclusions.

It is a mistake to confound strangeness with mystery. The most

commonplace crime is often the most mysterious because it presents no

new or special features from which deductions may be drawn. This murder

would have been infinitely more difficult to unravel had the body of

the victim been simply found lying in the roadway without any of

those \_outré\_ and sensational accompaniments which have rendered

it remarkable. These strange details, far from making the case more

difficult, have really had the effect of making it less so.”

Mr. Gregson, who had listened to this address with considerable

impatience, could contain himself no longer. “Look here, Mr. Sherlock

Holmes,” he said, “we are all ready to acknowledge that you are a smart

man, and that you have your own methods of working. We want something

more than mere theory and preaching now, though. It is a case of taking

the man. I have made my case out, and it seems I was wrong. Young

Charpentier could not have been engaged in this second affair. Lestrade

went after his man, Stangerson, and it appears that he was wrong too.

You have thrown out hints here, and hints there, and seem to know more

than we do, but the time has come when we feel that we have a right to

ask you straight how much you do know of the business. Can you name the

man who did it?”

“I cannot help feeling that Gregson is right, sir,” remarked Lestrade.

“We have both tried, and we have both failed. You have remarked more

than once since I have been in the room that you had all the evidence

which you require. Surely you will not withhold it any longer.”

“Any delay in arresting the assassin,” I observed, “might give him time

to perpetrate some fresh atrocity.”

Thus pressed by us all, Holmes showed signs of irresolution. He

continued to walk up and down the room with his head sunk on his chest

and his brows drawn down, as was his habit when lost in thought.

“There will be no more murders,” he said at last, stopping abruptly and

facing us. “You can put that consideration out of the question. You have

asked me if I know the name of the assassin. I do. The mere knowing of

his name is a small thing, however, compared with the power of laying

our hands upon him. This I expect very shortly to do. I have good hopes

of managing it through my own arrangements; but it is a thing which

needs delicate handling, for we have a shrewd and desperate man to deal

with, who is supported, as I have had occasion to prove, by another who

is as clever as himself. As long as this man has no idea that anyone

can have a clue there is some chance of securing him; but if he had the

slightest suspicion, he would change his name, and vanish in an instant

among the four million inhabitants of this great city. Without meaning

to hurt either of your feelings, I am bound to say that I consider these

men to be more than a match for the official force, and that is why I

have not asked your assistance. If I fail I shall, of course, incur all

the blame due to this omission; but that I am prepared for. At present

I am ready to promise that the instant that I can communicate with you

without endangering my own combinations, I shall do so.”

Gregson and Lestrade seemed to be far from satisfied by this assurance,

or by the depreciating allusion to the detective police. The former had

flushed up to the roots of his flaxen hair, while the other’s beady eyes

glistened with curiosity and resentment. Neither of them had time to

speak, however, before there was a tap at the door, and the spokesman

of the street Arabs, young Wiggins, introduced his insignificant and

unsavoury person.

“Please, sir,” he said, touching his forelock, “I have the cab

downstairs.”

“Good boy,” said Holmes, blandly. “Why don’t you introduce this pattern

at Scotland Yard?” he continued, taking a pair of steel handcuffs from

a drawer. “See how beautifully the spring works. They fasten in an

instant.”

“The old pattern is good enough,” remarked Lestrade, “if we can only

find the man to put them on.”

“Very good, very good,” said Holmes, smiling. “The cabman may as well

help me with my boxes. Just ask him to step up, Wiggins.”

I was surprised to find my companion speaking as though he were about

to set out on a journey, since he had not said anything to me about it.

There was a small portmanteau in the room, and this he pulled out and

began to strap. He was busily engaged at it when the cabman entered the

room.

“Just give me a help with this buckle, cabman,” he said, kneeling over

his task, and never turning his head.

The fellow came forward with a somewhat sullen, defiant air, and put

down his hands to assist. At that instant there was a sharp click, the

jangling of metal, and Sherlock Holmes sprang to his feet again.

“Gentlemen,” he cried, with flashing eyes, “let me introduce you to Mr.

Jefferson Hope, the murderer of Enoch Drebber and of Joseph Stangerson.”

The whole thing occurred in a moment--so quickly that I had no time

to realize it. I have a vivid recollection of that instant, of Holmes’

triumphant expression and the ring of his voice, of the cabman’s

dazed, savage face, as he glared at the glittering handcuffs, which had

appeared as if by magic upon his wrists. For a second or two we might

have been a group of statues. Then, with an inarticulate roar of fury,

the prisoner wrenched himself free from Holmes’s grasp, and hurled

himself through the window. Woodwork and glass gave way before him; but

before he got quite through, Gregson, Lestrade, and Holmes sprang upon

him like so many staghounds. He was dragged back into the room, and then

commenced a terrific conflict. So powerful and so fierce was he, that

the four of us were shaken off again and again. He appeared to have the

convulsive strength of a man in an epileptic fit. His face and hands

were terribly mangled by his passage through the glass, but loss of

blood had no effect in diminishing his resistance. It was not until

Lestrade succeeded in getting his hand inside his neckcloth and

half-strangling him that we made him realize that his struggles were of

no avail; and even then we felt no security until we had pinioned his

feet as well as his hands. That done, we rose to our feet breathless and

panting.

“We have his cab,” said Sherlock Holmes. “It will serve to take him to

Scotland Yard. And now, gentlemen,” he continued, with a pleasant smile,

“we have reached the end of our little mystery. You are very welcome to

put any questions that you like to me now, and there is no danger that I

will refuse to answer them.”

PART II. \_The Country of the Saints.\_

CHAPTER I. ON THE GREAT ALKALI PLAIN.

IN the central portion of the great North American Continent there lies

an arid and repulsive desert, which for many a long year served as a

barrier against the advance of civilisation. From the Sierra Nevada to

Nebraska, and from the Yellowstone River in the north to the Colorado

upon the south, is a region of desolation and silence. Nor is Nature

always in one mood throughout this grim district. It comprises

snow-capped and lofty mountains, and dark and gloomy valleys. There are

swift-flowing rivers which dash through jagged cañons; and there are

enormous plains, which in winter are white with snow, and in summer are

grey with the saline alkali dust. They all preserve, however, the common

characteristics of barrenness, inhospitality, and misery.

There are no inhabitants of this land of despair. A band of Pawnees

or of Blackfeet may occasionally traverse it in order to reach other

hunting-grounds, but the hardiest of the braves are glad to lose sight

of those awesome plains, and to find themselves once more upon their

prairies. The coyote skulks among the scrub, the buzzard flaps heavily

through the air, and the clumsy grizzly bear lumbers through the dark

ravines, and picks up such sustenance as it can amongst the rocks. These

are the sole dwellers in the wilderness.

In the whole world there can be no more dreary view than that from

the northern slope of the Sierra Blanco. As far as the eye can reach

stretches the great flat plain-land, all dusted over with patches of

alkali, and intersected by clumps of the dwarfish chaparral bushes. On

the extreme verge of the horizon lie a long chain of mountain peaks,

with their rugged summits flecked with snow. In this great stretch of

country there is no sign of life, nor of anything appertaining to life.

There is no bird in the steel-blue heaven, no movement upon the dull,

grey earth--above all, there is absolute silence. Listen as one may,

there is no shadow of a sound in all that mighty wilderness; nothing but

silence--complete and heart-subduing silence.

It has been said there is nothing appertaining to life upon the broad

plain. That is hardly true. Looking down from the Sierra Blanco, one

sees a pathway traced out across the desert, which winds away and is

lost in the extreme distance. It is rutted with wheels and trodden down

by the feet of many adventurers. Here and there there are scattered

white objects which glisten in the sun, and stand out against the dull

deposit of alkali. Approach, and examine them! They are bones: some

large and coarse, others smaller and more delicate. The former have

belonged to oxen, and the latter to men. For fifteen hundred miles one

may trace this ghastly caravan route by these scattered remains of those

who had fallen by the wayside.

Looking down on this very scene, there stood upon the fourth of May,

eighteen hundred and forty-seven, a solitary traveller. His appearance

was such that he might have been the very genius or demon of the region.

An observer would have found it difficult to say whether he was nearer

to forty or to sixty. His face was lean and haggard, and the brown

parchment-like skin was drawn tightly over the projecting bones; his

long, brown hair and beard were all flecked and dashed with white; his

eyes were sunken in his head, and burned with an unnatural lustre; while

the hand which grasped his rifle was hardly more fleshy than that of a

skeleton. As he stood, he leaned upon his weapon for support, and yet

his tall figure and the massive framework of his bones suggested a wiry

and vigorous constitution. His gaunt face, however, and his clothes,

which hung so baggily over his shrivelled limbs, proclaimed what it

was that gave him that senile and decrepit appearance. The man was

dying--dying from hunger and from thirst.

He had toiled painfully down the ravine, and on to this little

elevation, in the vain hope of seeing some signs of water. Now the great

salt plain stretched before his eyes, and the distant belt of savage

mountains, without a sign anywhere of plant or tree, which might

indicate the presence of moisture. In all that broad landscape there

was no gleam of hope. North, and east, and west he looked with wild

questioning eyes, and then he realised that his wanderings had come to

an end, and that there, on that barren crag, he was about to die. “Why

not here, as well as in a feather bed, twenty years hence,” he muttered,

as he seated himself in the shelter of a boulder.

Before sitting down, he had deposited upon the ground his useless rifle,

and also a large bundle tied up in a grey shawl, which he had carried

slung over his right shoulder. It appeared to be somewhat too heavy for

his strength, for in lowering it, it came down on the ground with some

little violence. Instantly there broke from the grey parcel a little

moaning cry, and from it there protruded a small, scared face, with very

bright brown eyes, and two little speckled, dimpled fists.

“You’ve hurt me!” said a childish voice reproachfully.

“Have I though,” the man answered penitently, “I didn’t go for to do

it.” As he spoke he unwrapped the grey shawl and extricated a pretty

little girl of about five years of age, whose dainty shoes and smart

pink frock with its little linen apron all bespoke a mother’s care. The

child was pale and wan, but her healthy arms and legs showed that she

had suffered less than her companion.

“How is it now?” he answered anxiously, for she was still rubbing the

towsy golden curls which covered the back of her head.

“Kiss it and make it well,” she said, with perfect gravity, shoving

[19] the injured part up to him. “That’s what mother used to do. Where’s

mother?”

“Mother’s gone. I guess you’ll see her before long.”

“Gone, eh!” said the little girl. “Funny, she didn’t say good-bye; she

‘most always did if she was just goin’ over to Auntie’s for tea, and now

she’s been away three days. Say, it’s awful dry, ain’t it? Ain’t there

no water, nor nothing to eat?”

“No, there ain’t nothing, dearie. You’ll just need to be patient awhile,

and then you’ll be all right. Put your head up agin me like that, and

then you’ll feel bullier. It ain’t easy to talk when your lips is like

leather, but I guess I’d best let you know how the cards lie. What’s

that you’ve got?”

“Pretty things! fine things!” cried the little girl enthusiastically,

holding up two glittering fragments of mica. “When we goes back to home

I’ll give them to brother Bob.”

“You’ll see prettier things than them soon,” said the man confidently.

“You just wait a bit. I was going to tell you though--you remember when

we left the river?”

“Oh, yes.”

“Well, we reckoned we’d strike another river soon, d’ye see. But there

was somethin’ wrong; compasses, or map, or somethin’, and it didn’t

turn up. Water ran out. Just except a little drop for the likes of you

and--and----”

“And you couldn’t wash yourself,” interrupted his companion gravely,

staring up at his grimy visage.

“No, nor drink. And Mr. Bender, he was the fust to go, and then Indian

Pete, and then Mrs. McGregor, and then Johnny Hones, and then, dearie,

your mother.”

“Then mother’s a deader too,” cried the little girl dropping her face in

her pinafore and sobbing bitterly.

“Yes, they all went except you and me. Then I thought there was some

chance of water in this direction, so I heaved you over my shoulder and

we tramped it together. It don’t seem as though we’ve improved matters.

There’s an almighty small chance for us now!”

“Do you mean that we are going to die too?” asked the child, checking

her sobs, and raising her tear-stained face.

“I guess that’s about the size of it.”

“Why didn’t you say so before?” she said, laughing gleefully. “You gave

me such a fright. Why, of course, now as long as we die we’ll be with

mother again.”

“Yes, you will, dearie.”

“And you too. I’ll tell her how awful good you’ve been. I’ll bet she

meets us at the door of Heaven with a big pitcher of water, and a lot

of buckwheat cakes, hot, and toasted on both sides, like Bob and me was

fond of. How long will it be first?”

“I don’t know--not very long.” The man’s eyes were fixed upon the

northern horizon. In the blue vault of the heaven there had appeared

three little specks which increased in size every moment, so rapidly did

they approach. They speedily resolved themselves into three large brown

birds, which circled over the heads of the two wanderers, and then

settled upon some rocks which overlooked them. They were buzzards, the

vultures of the west, whose coming is the forerunner of death.

“Cocks and hens,” cried the little girl gleefully, pointing at their

ill-omened forms, and clapping her hands to make them rise. “Say, did

God make this country?”

“In course He did,” said her companion, rather startled by this

unexpected question.

“He made the country down in Illinois, and He made the Missouri,” the

little girl continued. “I guess somebody else made the country in these

parts. It’s not nearly so well done. They forgot the water and the

trees.”

“What would ye think of offering up prayer?” the man asked diffidently.

“It ain’t night yet,” she answered.

“It don’t matter. It ain’t quite regular, but He won’t mind that, you

bet. You say over them ones that you used to say every night in the

waggon when we was on the Plains.”

“Why don’t you say some yourself?” the child asked, with wondering eyes.

“I disremember them,” he answered. “I hain’t said none since I was half

the height o’ that gun. I guess it’s never too late. You say them out,

and I’ll stand by and come in on the choruses.”

“Then you’ll need to kneel down, and me too,” she said, laying the shawl

out for that purpose. “You’ve got to put your hands up like this. It

makes you feel kind o’ good.”

It was a strange sight had there been anything but the buzzards to see

it. Side by side on the narrow shawl knelt the two wanderers, the little

prattling child and the reckless, hardened adventurer. Her chubby face,

and his haggard, angular visage were both turned up to the cloudless

heaven in heartfelt entreaty to that dread being with whom they were

face to face, while the two voices--the one thin and clear, the other

deep and harsh--united in the entreaty for mercy and forgiveness. The

prayer finished, they resumed their seat in the shadow of the boulder

until the child fell asleep, nestling upon the broad breast of her

protector. He watched over her slumber for some time, but Nature proved

to be too strong for him. For three days and three nights he had allowed

himself neither rest nor repose. Slowly the eyelids drooped over the

tired eyes, and the head sunk lower and lower upon the breast, until the

man’s grizzled beard was mixed with the gold tresses of his companion,

and both slept the same deep and dreamless slumber.

Had the wanderer remained awake for another half hour a strange sight

would have met his eyes. Far away on the extreme verge of the alkali

plain there rose up a little spray of dust, very slight at first, and

hardly to be distinguished from the mists of the distance, but gradually

growing higher and broader until it formed a solid, well-defined cloud.

This cloud continued to increase in size until it became evident that it

could only be raised by a great multitude of moving creatures. In more

fertile spots the observer would have come to the conclusion that one

of those great herds of bisons which graze upon the prairie land was

approaching him. This was obviously impossible in these arid wilds. As

the whirl of dust drew nearer to the solitary bluff upon which the two

castaways were reposing, the canvas-covered tilts of waggons and the

figures of armed horsemen began to show up through the haze, and the

apparition revealed itself as being a great caravan upon its journey for

the West. But what a caravan! When the head of it had reached the base

of the mountains, the rear was not yet visible on the horizon. Right

across the enormous plain stretched the straggling array, waggons

and carts, men on horseback, and men on foot. Innumerable women who

staggered along under burdens, and children who toddled beside the

waggons or peeped out from under the white coverings. This was evidently

no ordinary party of immigrants, but rather some nomad people who had

been compelled from stress of circumstances to seek themselves a new

country. There rose through the clear air a confused clattering and

rumbling from this great mass of humanity, with the creaking of wheels

and the neighing of horses. Loud as it was, it was not sufficient to

rouse the two tired wayfarers above them.

At the head of the column there rode a score or more of grave ironfaced

men, clad in sombre homespun garments and armed with rifles. On reaching

the base of the bluff they halted, and held a short council among

themselves.

“The wells are to the right, my brothers,” said one, a hard-lipped,

clean-shaven man with grizzly hair.

“To the right of the Sierra Blanco--so we shall reach the Rio Grande,”

said another.

“Fear not for water,” cried a third. “He who could draw it from the

rocks will not now abandon His own chosen people.”

“Amen! Amen!” responded the whole party.

They were about to resume their journey when one of the youngest and

keenest-eyed uttered an exclamation and pointed up at the rugged crag

above them. From its summit there fluttered a little wisp of pink,

showing up hard and bright against the grey rocks behind. At the sight

there was a general reining up of horses and unslinging of guns, while

fresh horsemen came galloping up to reinforce the vanguard. The word

‘Redskins’ was on every lip.

“There can’t be any number of Injuns here,” said the elderly man who

appeared to be in command. “We have passed the Pawnees, and there are no

other tribes until we cross the great mountains.”

“Shall I go forward and see, Brother Stangerson,” asked one of the band.

“And I,” “and I,” cried a dozen voices.

“Leave your horses below and we will await you here,” the Elder

answered. In a moment the young fellows had dismounted, fastened their

horses, and were ascending the precipitous slope which led up to the

object which had excited their curiosity. They advanced rapidly and

noiselessly, with the confidence and dexterity of practised scouts.

The watchers from the plain below could see them flit from rock to rock

until their figures stood out against the skyline. The young man who had

first given the alarm was leading them. Suddenly his followers saw him

throw up his hands, as though overcome with astonishment, and on joining

him they were affected in the same way by the sight which met their

eyes.

On the little plateau which crowned the barren hill there stood a

single giant boulder, and against this boulder there lay a tall man,

long-bearded and hard-featured, but of an excessive thinness. His placid

face and regular breathing showed that he was fast asleep. Beside him

lay a little child, with her round white arms encircling his brown

sinewy neck, and her golden haired head resting upon the breast of his

velveteen tunic. Her rosy lips were parted, showing the regular line of

snow-white teeth within, and a playful smile played over her infantile

features. Her plump little white legs terminating in white socks and

neat shoes with shining buckles, offered a strange contrast to the long

shrivelled members of her companion. On the ledge of rock above this

strange couple there stood three solemn buzzards, who, at the sight of

the new comers uttered raucous screams of disappointment and flapped

sullenly away.

The cries of the foul birds awoke the two sleepers who stared about [20]

them in bewilderment. The man staggered to his feet and looked down upon

the plain which had been so desolate when sleep had overtaken him, and

which was now traversed by this enormous body of men and of beasts. His

face assumed an expression of incredulity as he gazed, and he passed his

boney hand over his eyes. “This is what they call delirium, I guess,”

he muttered. The child stood beside him, holding on to the skirt of

his coat, and said nothing but looked all round her with the wondering

questioning gaze of childhood.

The rescuing party were speedily able to convince the two castaways that

their appearance was no delusion. One of them seized the little girl,

and hoisted her upon his shoulder, while two others supported her gaunt

companion, and assisted him towards the waggons.

“My name is John Ferrier,” the wanderer explained; “me and that little

un are all that’s left o’ twenty-one people. The rest is all dead o’

thirst and hunger away down in the south.”

“Is she your child?” asked someone.

“I guess she is now,” the other cried, defiantly; “she’s mine ‘cause I

saved her. No man will take her from me. She’s Lucy Ferrier from this

day on. Who are you, though?” he continued, glancing with curiosity at

his stalwart, sunburned rescuers; “there seems to be a powerful lot of

ye.”

“Nigh upon ten thousand,” said one of the young men; “we are the

persecuted children of God--the chosen of the Angel Merona.”

“I never heard tell on him,” said the wanderer. “He appears to have

chosen a fair crowd of ye.”

“Do not jest at that which is sacred,” said the other sternly. “We are

of those who believe in those sacred writings, drawn in Egyptian letters

on plates of beaten gold, which were handed unto the holy Joseph Smith

at Palmyra. We have come from Nauvoo, in the State of Illinois, where we

had founded our temple. We have come to seek a refuge from the violent

man and from the godless, even though it be the heart of the desert.”

The name of Nauvoo evidently recalled recollections to John Ferrier. “I

see,” he said, “you are the Mormons.”

“We are the Mormons,” answered his companions with one voice.

“And where are you going?”

“We do not know. The hand of God is leading us under the person of our

Prophet. You must come before him. He shall say what is to be done with

you.”

They had reached the base of the hill by this time, and were surrounded

by crowds of the pilgrims--pale-faced meek-looking women, strong

laughing children, and anxious earnest-eyed men. Many were the cries

of astonishment and of commiseration which arose from them when they

perceived the youth of one of the strangers and the destitution of the

other. Their escort did not halt, however, but pushed on, followed by

a great crowd of Mormons, until they reached a waggon, which was

conspicuous for its great size and for the gaudiness and smartness of

its appearance. Six horses were yoked to it, whereas the others were

furnished with two, or, at most, four a-piece. Beside the driver there

sat a man who could not have been more than thirty years of age, but

whose massive head and resolute expression marked him as a leader. He

was reading a brown-backed volume, but as the crowd approached he laid

it aside, and listened attentively to an account of the episode. Then he

turned to the two castaways.

“If we take you with us,” he said, in solemn words, “it can only be as

believers in our own creed. We shall have no wolves in our fold. Better

far that your bones should bleach in this wilderness than that you

should prove to be that little speck of decay which in time corrupts the

whole fruit. Will you come with us on these terms?”

“Guess I’ll come with you on any terms,” said Ferrier, with such

emphasis that the grave Elders could not restrain a smile. The leader

alone retained his stern, impressive expression.

“Take him, Brother Stangerson,” he said, “give him food and drink,

and the child likewise. Let it be your task also to teach him our holy

creed. We have delayed long enough. Forward! On, on to Zion!”

“On, on to Zion!” cried the crowd of Mormons, and the words rippled down

the long caravan, passing from mouth to mouth until they died away in a

dull murmur in the far distance. With a cracking of whips and a creaking

of wheels the great waggons got into motion, and soon the whole caravan

was winding along once more. The Elder to whose care the two waifs

had been committed, led them to his waggon, where a meal was already

awaiting them.

“You shall remain here,” he said. “In a few days you will have recovered

from your fatigues. In the meantime, remember that now and for ever you

are of our religion. Brigham Young has said it, and he has spoken with

the voice of Joseph Smith, which is the voice of God.”

CHAPTER II. THE FLOWER OF UTAH.

THIS is not the place to commemorate the trials and privations endured

by the immigrant Mormons before they came to their final haven. From the

shores of the Mississippi to the western slopes of the Rocky Mountains

they had struggled on with a constancy almost unparalleled in history.

The savage man, and the savage beast, hunger, thirst, fatigue, and

disease--every impediment which Nature could place in the way, had all

been overcome with Anglo-Saxon tenacity. Yet the long journey and the

accumulated terrors had shaken the hearts of the stoutest among them.

There was not one who did not sink upon his knees in heartfelt prayer

when they saw the broad valley of Utah bathed in the sunlight beneath

them, and learned from the lips of their leader that this was the

promised land, and that these virgin acres were to be theirs for

evermore.

Young speedily proved himself to be a skilful administrator as well as a

resolute chief. Maps were drawn and charts prepared, in which the future

city was sketched out. All around farms were apportioned and allotted in

proportion to the standing of each individual. The tradesman was put

to his trade and the artisan to his calling. In the town streets and

squares sprang up, as if by magic. In the country there was draining

and hedging, planting and clearing, until the next summer saw the whole

country golden with the wheat crop. Everything prospered in the strange

settlement. Above all, the great temple which they had erected in the

centre of the city grew ever taller and larger. From the first blush of

dawn until the closing of the twilight, the clatter of the hammer

and the rasp of the saw was never absent from the monument which the

immigrants erected to Him who had led them safe through many dangers.

The two castaways, John Ferrier and the little girl who had shared his

fortunes and had been adopted as his daughter, accompanied the Mormons

to the end of their great pilgrimage. Little Lucy Ferrier was borne

along pleasantly enough in Elder Stangerson’s waggon, a retreat which

she shared with the Mormon’s three wives and with his son, a headstrong

forward boy of twelve. Having rallied, with the elasticity of childhood,

from the shock caused by her mother’s death, she soon became a pet

with the women, and reconciled herself to this new life in her moving

canvas-covered home. In the meantime Ferrier having recovered from his

privations, distinguished himself as a useful guide and an indefatigable

hunter. So rapidly did he gain the esteem of his new companions, that

when they reached the end of their wanderings, it was unanimously agreed

that he should be provided with as large and as fertile a tract of land

as any of the settlers, with the exception of Young himself, and of

Stangerson, Kemball, Johnston, and Drebber, who were the four principal

Elders.

On the farm thus acquired John Ferrier built himself a substantial

log-house, which received so many additions in succeeding years that it

grew into a roomy villa. He was a man of a practical turn of mind,

keen in his dealings and skilful with his hands. His iron constitution

enabled him to work morning and evening at improving and tilling his

lands. Hence it came about that his farm and all that belonged to

him prospered exceedingly. In three years he was better off than his

neighbours, in six he was well-to-do, in nine he was rich, and in twelve

there were not half a dozen men in the whole of Salt Lake City who could

compare with him. From the great inland sea to the distant Wahsatch

Mountains there was no name better known than that of John Ferrier.

There was one way and only one in which he offended the susceptibilities

of his co-religionists. No argument or persuasion could ever induce him

to set up a female establishment after the manner of his companions. He

never gave reasons for this persistent refusal, but contented himself by

resolutely and inflexibly adhering to his determination. There were some

who accused him of lukewarmness in his adopted religion, and others who

put it down to greed of wealth and reluctance to incur expense. Others,

again, spoke of some early love affair, and of a fair-haired girl who

had pined away on the shores of the Atlantic. Whatever the reason,

Ferrier remained strictly celibate. In every other respect he conformed

to the religion of the young settlement, and gained the name of being an

orthodox and straight-walking man.

Lucy Ferrier grew up within the log-house, and assisted her adopted

father in all his undertakings. The keen air of the mountains and the

balsamic odour of the pine trees took the place of nurse and mother to

the young girl. As year succeeded to year she grew taller and stronger,

her cheek more rudy, and her step more elastic. Many a wayfarer upon

the high road which ran by Ferrier’s farm felt long-forgotten thoughts

revive in their mind as they watched her lithe girlish figure tripping

through the wheatfields, or met her mounted upon her father’s mustang,

and managing it with all the ease and grace of a true child of the West.

So the bud blossomed into a flower, and the year which saw her father

the richest of the farmers left her as fair a specimen of American

girlhood as could be found in the whole Pacific slope.

It was not the father, however, who first discovered that the child had

developed into the woman. It seldom is in such cases. That mysterious

change is too subtle and too gradual to be measured by dates. Least of

all does the maiden herself know it until the tone of a voice or the

touch of a hand sets her heart thrilling within her, and she learns,

with a mixture of pride and of fear, that a new and a larger nature has

awoken within her. There are few who cannot recall that day and remember

the one little incident which heralded the dawn of a new life. In the

case of Lucy Ferrier the occasion was serious enough in itself, apart

from its future influence on her destiny and that of many besides.

It was a warm June morning, and the Latter Day Saints were as busy as

the bees whose hive they have chosen for their emblem. In the fields and

in the streets rose the same hum of human industry. Down the dusty high

roads defiled long streams of heavily-laden mules, all heading to the

west, for the gold fever had broken out in California, and the Overland

Route lay through the City of the Elect. There, too, were droves of

sheep and bullocks coming in from the outlying pasture lands, and trains

of tired immigrants, men and horses equally weary of their interminable

journey. Through all this motley assemblage, threading her way with the

skill of an accomplished rider, there galloped Lucy Ferrier, her fair

face flushed with the exercise and her long chestnut hair floating out

behind her. She had a commission from her father in the City, and was

dashing in as she had done many a time before, with all the fearlessness

of youth, thinking only of her task and how it was to be performed. The

travel-stained adventurers gazed after her in astonishment, and even

the unemotional Indians, journeying in with their pelties, relaxed their

accustomed stoicism as they marvelled at the beauty of the pale-faced

maiden.

She had reached the outskirts of the city when she found the road

blocked by a great drove of cattle, driven by a half-dozen wild-looking

herdsmen from the plains. In her impatience she endeavoured to pass this

obstacle by pushing her horse into what appeared to be a gap. Scarcely

had she got fairly into it, however, before the beasts closed in behind

her, and she found herself completely imbedded in the moving stream of

fierce-eyed, long-horned bullocks. Accustomed as she was to deal with

cattle, she was not alarmed at her situation, but took advantage of

every opportunity to urge her horse on in the hopes of pushing her way

through the cavalcade. Unfortunately the horns of one of the creatures,

either by accident or design, came in violent contact with the flank of

the mustang, and excited it to madness. In an instant it reared up upon

its hind legs with a snort of rage, and pranced and tossed in a way that

would have unseated any but a most skilful rider. The situation was full

of peril. Every plunge of the excited horse brought it against the horns

again, and goaded it to fresh madness. It was all that the girl could

do to keep herself in the saddle, yet a slip would mean a terrible death

under the hoofs of the unwieldy and terrified animals. Unaccustomed to

sudden emergencies, her head began to swim, and her grip upon the bridle

to relax. Choked by the rising cloud of dust and by the steam from the

struggling creatures, she might have abandoned her efforts in despair,

but for a kindly voice at her elbow which assured her of assistance. At

the same moment a sinewy brown hand caught the frightened horse by

the curb, and forcing a way through the drove, soon brought her to the

outskirts.

“You’re not hurt, I hope, miss,” said her preserver, respectfully.

She looked up at his dark, fierce face, and laughed saucily. “I’m awful

frightened,” she said, naively; “whoever would have thought that Poncho

would have been so scared by a lot of cows?”

“Thank God you kept your seat,” the other said earnestly. He was a tall,

savage-looking young fellow, mounted on a powerful roan horse, and

clad in the rough dress of a hunter, with a long rifle slung over his

shoulders. “I guess you are the daughter of John Ferrier,” he remarked,

“I saw you ride down from his house. When you see him, ask him if he

remembers the Jefferson Hopes of St. Louis. If he’s the same Ferrier, my

father and he were pretty thick.”

“Hadn’t you better come and ask yourself?” she asked, demurely.

The young fellow seemed pleased at the suggestion, and his dark eyes

sparkled with pleasure. “I’ll do so,” he said, “we’ve been in the

mountains for two months, and are not over and above in visiting

condition. He must take us as he finds us.”

“He has a good deal to thank you for, and so have I,” she answered,

“he’s awful fond of me. If those cows had jumped on me he’d have never

got over it.”

“Neither would I,” said her companion.

“You! Well, I don’t see that it would make much matter to you, anyhow.

You ain’t even a friend of ours.”

The young hunter’s dark face grew so gloomy over this remark that Lucy

Ferrier laughed aloud.

“There, I didn’t mean that,” she said; “of course, you are a friend now.

You must come and see us. Now I must push along, or father won’t trust

me with his business any more. Good-bye!”

“Good-bye,” he answered, raising his broad sombrero, and bending over

her little hand. She wheeled her mustang round, gave it a cut with her

riding-whip, and darted away down the broad road in a rolling cloud of

dust.

Young Jefferson Hope rode on with his companions, gloomy and taciturn.

He and they had been among the Nevada Mountains prospecting for silver,

and were returning to Salt Lake City in the hope of raising capital

enough to work some lodes which they had discovered. He had been as keen

as any of them upon the business until this sudden incident had drawn

his thoughts into another channel. The sight of the fair young girl,

as frank and wholesome as the Sierra breezes, had stirred his volcanic,

untamed heart to its very depths. When she had vanished from his sight,

he realized that a crisis had come in his life, and that neither silver

speculations nor any other questions could ever be of such importance to

him as this new and all-absorbing one. The love which had sprung up in

his heart was not the sudden, changeable fancy of a boy, but rather the

wild, fierce passion of a man of strong will and imperious temper. He

had been accustomed to succeed in all that he undertook. He swore in

his heart that he would not fail in this if human effort and human

perseverance could render him successful.

He called on John Ferrier that night, and many times again, until

his face was a familiar one at the farm-house. John, cooped up in the

valley, and absorbed in his work, had had little chance of learning

the news of the outside world during the last twelve years. All this

Jefferson Hope was able to tell him, and in a style which interested

Lucy as well as her father. He had been a pioneer in California, and

could narrate many a strange tale of fortunes made and fortunes lost

in those wild, halcyon days. He had been a scout too, and a trapper, a

silver explorer, and a ranchman. Wherever stirring adventures were to be

had, Jefferson Hope had been there in search of them. He soon became a

favourite with the old farmer, who spoke eloquently of his virtues. On

such occasions, Lucy was silent, but her blushing cheek and her bright,

happy eyes, showed only too clearly that her young heart was no longer

her own. Her honest father may not have observed these symptoms,

but they were assuredly not thrown away upon the man who had won her

affections.

It was a summer evening when he came galloping down the road and pulled

up at the gate. She was at the doorway, and came down to meet him. He

threw the bridle over the fence and strode up the pathway.

“I am off, Lucy,” he said, taking her two hands in his, and gazing

tenderly down into her face; “I won’t ask you to come with me now, but

will you be ready to come when I am here again?”

“And when will that be?” she asked, blushing and laughing.

“A couple of months at the outside. I will come and claim you then, my

darling. There’s no one who can stand between us.”

“And how about father?” she asked.

“He has given his consent, provided we get these mines working all

right. I have no fear on that head.”

“Oh, well; of course, if you and father have arranged it all, there’s

no more to be said,” she whispered, with her cheek against his broad

breast.

“Thank God!” he said, hoarsely, stooping and kissing her. “It is

settled, then. The longer I stay, the harder it will be to go. They are

waiting for me at the cañon. Good-bye, my own darling--good-bye. In two

months you shall see me.”

He tore himself from her as he spoke, and, flinging himself upon his

horse, galloped furiously away, never even looking round, as though

afraid that his resolution might fail him if he took one glance at

what he was leaving. She stood at the gate, gazing after him until

he vanished from her sight. Then she walked back into the house, the

happiest girl in all Utah.

CHAPTER III. JOHN FERRIER TALKS WITH THE PROPHET.

THREE weeks had passed since Jefferson Hope and his comrades had

departed from Salt Lake City. John Ferrier’s heart was sore within him

when he thought of the young man’s return, and of the impending loss of

his adopted child. Yet her bright and happy face reconciled him to

the arrangement more than any argument could have done. He had always

determined, deep down in his resolute heart, that nothing would ever

induce him to allow his daughter to wed a Mormon. Such a marriage he

regarded as no marriage at all, but as a shame and a disgrace. Whatever

he might think of the Mormon doctrines, upon that one point he was

inflexible. He had to seal his mouth on the subject, however, for to

express an unorthodox opinion was a dangerous matter in those days in

the Land of the Saints.

Yes, a dangerous matter--so dangerous that even the most saintly dared

only whisper their religious opinions with bated breath, lest something

which fell from their lips might be misconstrued, and bring down a

swift retribution upon them. The victims of persecution had now turned

persecutors on their own account, and persecutors of the most

terrible description. Not the Inquisition of Seville, nor the German

Vehm-gericht, nor the Secret Societies of Italy, were ever able to put

a more formidable machinery in motion than that which cast a cloud over

the State of Utah.

Its invisibility, and the mystery which was attached to it, made

this organization doubly terrible. It appeared to be omniscient and

omnipotent, and yet was neither seen nor heard. The man who held out

against the Church vanished away, and none knew whither he had gone or

what had befallen him. His wife and his children awaited him at home,

but no father ever returned to tell them how he had fared at the

hands of his secret judges. A rash word or a hasty act was followed

by annihilation, and yet none knew what the nature might be of this

terrible power which was suspended over them. No wonder that men

went about in fear and trembling, and that even in the heart of the

wilderness they dared not whisper the doubts which oppressed them.

At first this vague and terrible power was exercised only upon the

recalcitrants who, having embraced the Mormon faith, wished afterwards

to pervert or to abandon it. Soon, however, it took a wider range. The

supply of adult women was running short, and polygamy without a female

population on which to draw was a barren doctrine indeed. Strange

rumours began to be bandied about--rumours of murdered immigrants and

rifled camps in regions where Indians had never been seen. Fresh women

appeared in the harems of the Elders--women who pined and wept, and

bore upon their faces the traces of an unextinguishable horror. Belated

wanderers upon the mountains spoke of gangs of armed men, masked,

stealthy, and noiseless, who flitted by them in the darkness. These

tales and rumours took substance and shape, and were corroborated and

re-corroborated, until they resolved themselves into a definite name.

To this day, in the lonely ranches of the West, the name of the Danite

Band, or the Avenging Angels, is a sinister and an ill-omened one.

Fuller knowledge of the organization which produced such terrible

results served to increase rather than to lessen the horror which it

inspired in the minds of men. None knew who belonged to this ruthless

society. The names of the participators in the deeds of blood and

violence done under the name of religion were kept profoundly secret.

The very friend to whom you communicated your misgivings as to the

Prophet and his mission, might be one of those who would come forth at

night with fire and sword to exact a terrible reparation. Hence every

man feared his neighbour, and none spoke of the things which were

nearest his heart.

One fine morning, John Ferrier was about to set out to his wheatfields,

when he heard the click of the latch, and, looking through the window,

saw a stout, sandy-haired, middle-aged man coming up the pathway. His

heart leapt to his mouth, for this was none other than the great Brigham

Young himself. Full of trepidation--for he knew that such a visit boded

him little good--Ferrier ran to the door to greet the Mormon chief. The

latter, however, received his salutations coldly, and followed him with

a stern face into the sitting-room.

“Brother Ferrier,” he said, taking a seat, and eyeing the farmer keenly

from under his light-coloured eyelashes, “the true believers have been

good friends to you. We picked you up when you were starving in the

desert, we shared our food with you, led you safe to the Chosen Valley,

gave you a goodly share of land, and allowed you to wax rich under our

protection. Is not this so?”

“It is so,” answered John Ferrier.

“In return for all this we asked but one condition: that was, that you

should embrace the true faith, and conform in every way to its usages.

This you promised to do, and this, if common report says truly, you have

neglected.”

“And how have I neglected it?” asked Ferrier, throwing out his hands in

expostulation. “Have I not given to the common fund? Have I not attended

at the Temple? Have I not----?”

“Where are your wives?” asked Young, looking round him. “Call them in,

that I may greet them.”

“It is true that I have not married,” Ferrier answered. “But women

were few, and there were many who had better claims than I. I was not a

lonely man: I had my daughter to attend to my wants.”

“It is of that daughter that I would speak to you,” said the leader

of the Mormons. “She has grown to be the flower of Utah, and has found

favour in the eyes of many who are high in the land.”

John Ferrier groaned internally.

“There are stories of her which I would fain disbelieve--stories that

she is sealed to some Gentile. This must be the gossip of idle tongues.

What is the thirteenth rule in the code of the sainted Joseph Smith?

‘Let every maiden of the true faith marry one of the elect; for if

she wed a Gentile, she commits a grievous sin.’ This being so, it is

impossible that you, who profess the holy creed, should suffer your

daughter to violate it.”

John Ferrier made no answer, but he played nervously with his

riding-whip.

“Upon this one point your whole faith shall be tested--so it has been

decided in the Sacred Council of Four. The girl is young, and we would

not have her wed grey hairs, neither would we deprive her of all

choice. We Elders have many heifers, [29] but our children must also

be provided. Stangerson has a son, and Drebber has a son, and either of

them would gladly welcome your daughter to their house. Let her choose

between them. They are young and rich, and of the true faith. What say

you to that?”

Ferrier remained silent for some little time with his brows knitted.

“You will give us time,” he said at last. “My daughter is very

young--she is scarce of an age to marry.”

“She shall have a month to choose,” said Young, rising from his seat.

“At the end of that time she shall give her answer.”

He was passing through the door, when he turned, with flushed face and

flashing eyes. “It were better for you, John Ferrier,” he thundered,

“that you and she were now lying blanched skeletons upon the Sierra

Blanco, than that you should put your weak wills against the orders of

the Holy Four!”

With a threatening gesture of his hand, he turned from the door, and

Ferrier heard his heavy step scrunching along the shingly path.

He was still sitting with his elbows upon his knees, considering how he

should broach the matter to his daughter when a soft hand was laid upon

his, and looking up, he saw her standing beside him. One glance at her

pale, frightened face showed him that she had heard what had passed.

“I could not help it,” she said, in answer to his look. “His voice rang

through the house. Oh, father, father, what shall we do?”

“Don’t you scare yourself,” he answered, drawing her to him, and passing

his broad, rough hand caressingly over her chestnut hair. “We’ll fix it

up somehow or another. You don’t find your fancy kind o’ lessening for

this chap, do you?”

A sob and a squeeze of his hand was her only answer.

“No; of course not. I shouldn’t care to hear you say you did. He’s a

likely lad, and he’s a Christian, which is more than these folk here, in

spite o’ all their praying and preaching. There’s a party starting for

Nevada to-morrow, and I’ll manage to send him a message letting him know

the hole we are in. If I know anything o’ that young man, he’ll be back

here with a speed that would whip electro-telegraphs.”

Lucy laughed through her tears at her father’s description.

“When he comes, he will advise us for the best. But it is for you that

I am frightened, dear. One hears--one hears such dreadful stories about

those who oppose the Prophet: something terrible always happens to

them.”

“But we haven’t opposed him yet,” her father answered. “It will be time

to look out for squalls when we do. We have a clear month before us; at

the end of that, I guess we had best shin out of Utah.”

“Leave Utah!”

“That’s about the size of it.”

“But the farm?”

“We will raise as much as we can in money, and let the rest go. To tell

the truth, Lucy, it isn’t the first time I have thought of doing it. I

don’t care about knuckling under to any man, as these folk do to their

darned prophet. I’m a free-born American, and it’s all new to me. Guess

I’m too old to learn. If he comes browsing about this farm, he might

chance to run up against a charge of buckshot travelling in the opposite

direction.”

“But they won’t let us leave,” his daughter objected.

“Wait till Jefferson comes, and we’ll soon manage that. In the meantime,

don’t you fret yourself, my dearie, and don’t get your eyes swelled up,

else he’ll be walking into me when he sees you. There’s nothing to be

afeared about, and there’s no danger at all.”

John Ferrier uttered these consoling remarks in a very confident tone,

but she could not help observing that he paid unusual care to the

fastening of the doors that night, and that he carefully cleaned and

loaded the rusty old shotgun which hung upon the wall of his bedroom.

CHAPTER IV. A FLIGHT FOR LIFE.

ON the morning which followed his interview with the Mormon Prophet,

John Ferrier went in to Salt Lake City, and having found his

acquaintance, who was bound for the Nevada Mountains, he entrusted him

with his message to Jefferson Hope. In it he told the young man of the

imminent danger which threatened them, and how necessary it was that he

should return. Having done thus he felt easier in his mind, and returned

home with a lighter heart.

As he approached his farm, he was surprised to see a horse hitched to

each of the posts of the gate. Still more surprised was he on entering

to find two young men in possession of his sitting-room. One, with a

long pale face, was leaning back in the rocking-chair, with his feet

cocked up upon the stove. The other, a bull-necked youth with coarse

bloated features, was standing in front of the window with his hands in

his pocket, whistling a popular hymn. Both of them nodded to Ferrier as

he entered, and the one in the rocking-chair commenced the conversation.

“Maybe you don’t know us,” he said. “This here is the son of Elder

Drebber, and I’m Joseph Stangerson, who travelled with you in the desert

when the Lord stretched out His hand and gathered you into the true

fold.”

“As He will all the nations in His own good time,” said the other in a

nasal voice; “He grindeth slowly but exceeding small.”

John Ferrier bowed coldly. He had guessed who his visitors were.

“We have come,” continued Stangerson, “at the advice of our fathers to

solicit the hand of your daughter for whichever of us may seem good to

you and to her. As I have but four wives and Brother Drebber here has

seven, it appears to me that my claim is the stronger one.”

“Nay, nay, Brother Stangerson,” cried the other; “the question is not

how many wives we have, but how many we can keep. My father has now

given over his mills to me, and I am the richer man.”

“But my prospects are better,” said the other, warmly. “When the

Lord removes my father, I shall have his tanning yard and his leather

factory. Then I am your elder, and am higher in the Church.”

“It will be for the maiden to decide,” rejoined young Drebber, smirking

at his own reflection in the glass. “We will leave it all to her

decision.”

During this dialogue, John Ferrier had stood fuming in the doorway,

hardly able to keep his riding-whip from the backs of his two visitors.

“Look here,” he said at last, striding up to them, “when my daughter

summons you, you can come, but until then I don’t want to see your faces

again.”

The two young Mormons stared at him in amazement. In their eyes this

competition between them for the maiden’s hand was the highest of

honours both to her and her father.

“There are two ways out of the room,” cried Ferrier; “there is the door,

and there is the window. Which do you care to use?”

His brown face looked so savage, and his gaunt hands so threatening,

that his visitors sprang to their feet and beat a hurried retreat. The

old farmer followed them to the door.

“Let me know when you have settled which it is to be,” he said,

sardonically.

“You shall smart for this!” Stangerson cried, white with rage. “You have

defied the Prophet and the Council of Four. You shall rue it to the end

of your days.”

“The hand of the Lord shall be heavy upon you,” cried young Drebber; “He

will arise and smite you!”

“Then I’ll start the smiting,” exclaimed Ferrier furiously, and would

have rushed upstairs for his gun had not Lucy seized him by the arm and

restrained him. Before he could escape from her, the clatter of horses’

hoofs told him that they were beyond his reach.

“The young canting rascals!” he exclaimed, wiping the perspiration from

his forehead; “I would sooner see you in your grave, my girl, than the

wife of either of them.”

“And so should I, father,” she answered, with spirit; “but Jefferson

will soon be here.”

“Yes. It will not be long before he comes. The sooner the better, for we

do not know what their next move may be.”

It was, indeed, high time that someone capable of giving advice and

help should come to the aid of the sturdy old farmer and his adopted

daughter. In the whole history of the settlement there had never been

such a case of rank disobedience to the authority of the Elders. If

minor errors were punished so sternly, what would be the fate of this

arch rebel. Ferrier knew that his wealth and position would be of no

avail to him. Others as well known and as rich as himself had been

spirited away before now, and their goods given over to the Church. He

was a brave man, but he trembled at the vague, shadowy terrors which

hung over him. Any known danger he could face with a firm lip, but

this suspense was unnerving. He concealed his fears from his daughter,

however, and affected to make light of the whole matter, though she,

with the keen eye of love, saw plainly that he was ill at ease.

He expected that he would receive some message or remonstrance from

Young as to his conduct, and he was not mistaken, though it came in an

unlooked-for manner. Upon rising next morning he found, to his surprise,

a small square of paper pinned on to the coverlet of his bed just over

his chest. On it was printed, in bold straggling letters:--

“Twenty-nine days are given you for amendment, and then----”

The dash was more fear-inspiring than any threat could have been. How

this warning came into his room puzzled John Ferrier sorely, for his

servants slept in an outhouse, and the doors and windows had all been

secured. He crumpled the paper up and said nothing to his daughter, but

the incident struck a chill into his heart. The twenty-nine days were

evidently the balance of the month which Young had promised. What

strength or courage could avail against an enemy armed with such

mysterious powers? The hand which fastened that pin might have struck

him to the heart, and he could never have known who had slain him.

Still more shaken was he next morning. They had sat down to their

breakfast when Lucy with a cry of surprise pointed upwards. In the

centre of the ceiling was scrawled, with a burned stick apparently,

the number 28. To his daughter it was unintelligible, and he did not

enlighten her. That night he sat up with his gun and kept watch and

ward. He saw and he heard nothing, and yet in the morning a great 27 had

been painted upon the outside of his door.

Thus day followed day; and as sure as morning came he found that his

unseen enemies had kept their register, and had marked up in some

conspicuous position how many days were still left to him out of the

month of grace. Sometimes the fatal numbers appeared upon the walls,

sometimes upon the floors, occasionally they were on small placards

stuck upon the garden gate or the railings. With all his vigilance John

Ferrier could not discover whence these daily warnings proceeded. A

horror which was almost superstitious came upon him at the sight of

them. He became haggard and restless, and his eyes had the troubled look

of some hunted creature. He had but one hope in life now, and that was

for the arrival of the young hunter from Nevada.

Twenty had changed to fifteen and fifteen to ten, but there was no news

of the absentee. One by one the numbers dwindled down, and still there

came no sign of him. Whenever a horseman clattered down the road, or a

driver shouted at his team, the old farmer hurried to the gate thinking

that help had arrived at last. At last, when he saw five give way to

four and that again to three, he lost heart, and abandoned all hope of

escape. Single-handed, and with his limited knowledge of the mountains

which surrounded the settlement, he knew that he was powerless. The

more-frequented roads were strictly watched and guarded, and none could

pass along them without an order from the Council. Turn which way he

would, there appeared to be no avoiding the blow which hung over him.

Yet the old man never wavered in his resolution to part with life itself

before he consented to what he regarded as his daughter’s dishonour.

He was sitting alone one evening pondering deeply over his troubles, and

searching vainly for some way out of them. That morning had shown the

figure 2 upon the wall of his house, and the next day would be the last

of the allotted time. What was to happen then? All manner of vague and

terrible fancies filled his imagination. And his daughter--what was to

become of her after he was gone? Was there no escape from the invisible

network which was drawn all round them. He sank his head upon the table

and sobbed at the thought of his own impotence.

What was that? In the silence he heard a gentle scratching sound--low,

but very distinct in the quiet of the night. It came from the door of

the house. Ferrier crept into the hall and listened intently. There

was a pause for a few moments, and then the low insidious sound was

repeated. Someone was evidently tapping very gently upon one of the

panels of the door. Was it some midnight assassin who had come to carry

out the murderous orders of the secret tribunal? Or was it some agent

who was marking up that the last day of grace had arrived. John Ferrier

felt that instant death would be better than the suspense which shook

his nerves and chilled his heart. Springing forward he drew the bolt and

threw the door open.

Outside all was calm and quiet. The night was fine, and the stars were

twinkling brightly overhead. The little front garden lay before the

farmer’s eyes bounded by the fence and gate, but neither there nor on

the road was any human being to be seen. With a sigh of relief, Ferrier

looked to right and to left, until happening to glance straight down at

his own feet he saw to his astonishment a man lying flat upon his face

upon the ground, with arms and legs all asprawl.

So unnerved was he at the sight that he leaned up against the wall with

his hand to his throat to stifle his inclination to call out. His first

thought was that the prostrate figure was that of some wounded or dying

man, but as he watched it he saw it writhe along the ground and into the

hall with the rapidity and noiselessness of a serpent. Once within the

house the man sprang to his feet, closed the door, and revealed to the

astonished farmer the fierce face and resolute expression of Jefferson

Hope.

“Good God!” gasped John Ferrier. “How you scared me! Whatever made you

come in like that.”

“Give me food,” the other said, hoarsely. “I have had no time for bite

or sup for eight-and-forty hours.” He flung himself upon the [21] cold

meat and bread which were still lying upon the table from his host’s

supper, and devoured it voraciously. “Does Lucy bear up well?” he asked,

when he had satisfied his hunger.

“Yes. She does not know the danger,” her father answered.

“That is well. The house is watched on every side. That is why I crawled

my way up to it. They may be darned sharp, but they’re not quite sharp

enough to catch a Washoe hunter.”

John Ferrier felt a different man now that he realized that he had

a devoted ally. He seized the young man’s leathery hand and wrung it

cordially. “You’re a man to be proud of,” he said. “There are not many

who would come to share our danger and our troubles.”

“You’ve hit it there, pard,” the young hunter answered. “I have a

respect for you, but if you were alone in this business I’d think twice

before I put my head into such a hornet’s nest. It’s Lucy that brings me

here, and before harm comes on her I guess there will be one less o’ the

Hope family in Utah.”

“What are we to do?”

“To-morrow is your last day, and unless you act to-night you are lost.

I have a mule and two horses waiting in the Eagle Ravine. How much money

have you?”

“Two thousand dollars in gold, and five in notes.”

“That will do. I have as much more to add to it. We must push for Carson

City through the mountains. You had best wake Lucy. It is as well that

the servants do not sleep in the house.”

While Ferrier was absent, preparing his daughter for the approaching

journey, Jefferson Hope packed all the eatables that he could find into

a small parcel, and filled a stoneware jar with water, for he knew by

experience that the mountain wells were few and far between. He had

hardly completed his arrangements before the farmer returned with his

daughter all dressed and ready for a start. The greeting between the

lovers was warm, but brief, for minutes were precious, and there was

much to be done.

“We must make our start at once,” said Jefferson Hope, speaking in a low

but resolute voice, like one who realizes the greatness of the peril,

but has steeled his heart to meet it. “The front and back entrances are

watched, but with caution we may get away through the side window and

across the fields. Once on the road we are only two miles from the

Ravine where the horses are waiting. By daybreak we should be half-way

through the mountains.”

“What if we are stopped,” asked Ferrier.

Hope slapped the revolver butt which protruded from the front of his

tunic. “If they are too many for us we shall take two or three of them

with us,” he said with a sinister smile.

The lights inside the house had all been extinguished, and from the

darkened window Ferrier peered over the fields which had been his own,

and which he was now about to abandon for ever. He had long nerved

himself to the sacrifice, however, and the thought of the honour and

happiness of his daughter outweighed any regret at his ruined fortunes.

All looked so peaceful and happy, the rustling trees and the broad

silent stretch of grain-land, that it was difficult to realize that

the spirit of murder lurked through it all. Yet the white face and set

expression of the young hunter showed that in his approach to the house

he had seen enough to satisfy him upon that head.

Ferrier carried the bag of gold and notes, Jefferson Hope had the scanty

provisions and water, while Lucy had a small bundle containing a few

of her more valued possessions. Opening the window very slowly and

carefully, they waited until a dark cloud had somewhat obscured the

night, and then one by one passed through into the little garden. With

bated breath and crouching figures they stumbled across it, and gained

the shelter of the hedge, which they skirted until they came to the gap

which opened into the cornfields. They had just reached this point when

the young man seized his two companions and dragged them down into the

shadow, where they lay silent and trembling.

It was as well that his prairie training had given Jefferson Hope the

ears of a lynx. He and his friends had hardly crouched down before the

melancholy hooting of a mountain owl was heard within a few yards

of them, which was immediately answered by another hoot at a small

distance. At the same moment a vague shadowy figure emerged from the

gap for which they had been making, and uttered the plaintive signal cry

again, on which a second man appeared out of the obscurity.

“To-morrow at midnight,” said the first who appeared to be in authority.

“When the Whip-poor-Will calls three times.”

“It is well,” returned the other. “Shall I tell Brother Drebber?”

“Pass it on to him, and from him to the others. Nine to seven!”

“Seven to five!” repeated the other, and the two figures flitted away

in different directions. Their concluding words had evidently been some

form of sign and countersign. The instant that their footsteps had died

away in the distance, Jefferson Hope sprang to his feet, and helping his

companions through the gap, led the way across the fields at the top

of his speed, supporting and half-carrying the girl when her strength

appeared to fail her.

“Hurry on! hurry on!” he gasped from time to time. “We are through the

line of sentinels. Everything depends on speed. Hurry on!”

Once on the high road they made rapid progress. Only once did they

meet anyone, and then they managed to slip into a field, and so avoid

recognition. Before reaching the town the hunter branched away into a

rugged and narrow footpath which led to the mountains. Two dark jagged

peaks loomed above them through the darkness, and the defile which led

between them was the Eagle Cañon in which the horses were awaiting them.

With unerring instinct Jefferson Hope picked his way among the great

boulders and along the bed of a dried-up watercourse, until he came to

the retired corner, screened with rocks, where the faithful animals had

been picketed. The girl was placed upon the mule, and old Ferrier upon

one of the horses, with his money-bag, while Jefferson Hope led the

other along the precipitous and dangerous path.

It was a bewildering route for anyone who was not accustomed to face

Nature in her wildest moods. On the one side a great crag towered up a

thousand feet or more, black, stern, and menacing, with long basaltic

columns upon its rugged surface like the ribs of some petrified monster.

On the other hand a wild chaos of boulders and debris made all advance

impossible. Between the two ran the irregular track, so narrow in places

that they had to travel in Indian file, and so rough that only practised

riders could have traversed it at all. Yet in spite of all dangers and

difficulties, the hearts of the fugitives were light within them,

for every step increased the distance between them and the terrible

despotism from which they were flying.

They soon had a proof, however, that they were still within the

jurisdiction of the Saints. They had reached the very wildest and most

desolate portion of the pass when the girl gave a startled cry, and

pointed upwards. On a rock which overlooked the track, showing out dark

and plain against the sky, there stood a solitary sentinel. He saw them

as soon as they perceived him, and his military challenge of “Who goes

there?” rang through the silent ravine.

“Travellers for Nevada,” said Jefferson Hope, with his hand upon the

rifle which hung by his saddle.

They could see the lonely watcher fingering his gun, and peering down at

them as if dissatisfied at their reply.

“By whose permission?” he asked.

“The Holy Four,” answered Ferrier. His Mormon experiences had taught him

that that was the highest authority to which he could refer.

“Nine from seven,” cried the sentinel.

“Seven from five,” returned Jefferson Hope promptly, remembering the

countersign which he had heard in the garden.

“Pass, and the Lord go with you,” said the voice from above. Beyond his

post the path broadened out, and the horses were able to break into a

trot. Looking back, they could see the solitary watcher leaning upon

his gun, and knew that they had passed the outlying post of the chosen

people, and that freedom lay before them.

CHAPTER V. THE AVENGING ANGELS.

ALL night their course lay through intricate defiles and over irregular

and rock-strewn paths. More than once they lost their way, but Hope’s

intimate knowledge of the mountains enabled them to regain the track

once more. When morning broke, a scene of marvellous though savage

beauty lay before them. In every direction the great snow-capped peaks

hemmed them in, peeping over each other’s shoulders to the far horizon.

So steep were the rocky banks on either side of them, that the larch

and the pine seemed to be suspended over their heads, and to need only a

gust of wind to come hurtling down upon them. Nor was the fear entirely

an illusion, for the barren valley was thickly strewn with trees and

boulders which had fallen in a similar manner. Even as they passed,

a great rock came thundering down with a hoarse rattle which woke

the echoes in the silent gorges, and startled the weary horses into a

gallop.

As the sun rose slowly above the eastern horizon, the caps of the great

mountains lit up one after the other, like lamps at a festival, until

they were all ruddy and glowing. The magnificent spectacle cheered the

hearts of the three fugitives and gave them fresh energy. At a wild

torrent which swept out of a ravine they called a halt and watered their

horses, while they partook of a hasty breakfast. Lucy and her father

would fain have rested longer, but Jefferson Hope was inexorable. “They

will be upon our track by this time,” he said. “Everything depends upon

our speed. Once safe in Carson we may rest for the remainder of our

lives.”

During the whole of that day they struggled on through the defiles, and

by evening they calculated that they were more than thirty miles from

their enemies. At night-time they chose the base of a beetling crag,

where the rocks offered some protection from the chill wind, and there

huddled together for warmth, they enjoyed a few hours’ sleep. Before

daybreak, however, they were up and on their way once more. They had

seen no signs of any pursuers, and Jefferson Hope began to think that

they were fairly out of the reach of the terrible organization whose

enmity they had incurred. He little knew how far that iron grasp could

reach, or how soon it was to close upon them and crush them.

About the middle of the second day of their flight their scanty store

of provisions began to run out. This gave the hunter little uneasiness,

however, for there was game to be had among the mountains, and he had

frequently before had to depend upon his rifle for the needs of life.

Choosing a sheltered nook, he piled together a few dried branches and

made a blazing fire, at which his companions might warm themselves, for

they were now nearly five thousand feet above the sea level, and the air

was bitter and keen. Having tethered the horses, and bade Lucy adieu,

he threw his gun over his shoulder, and set out in search of whatever

chance might throw in his way. Looking back he saw the old man and the

young girl crouching over the blazing fire, while the three animals

stood motionless in the back-ground. Then the intervening rocks hid them

from his view.

He walked for a couple of miles through one ravine after another without

success, though from the marks upon the bark of the trees, and other

indications, he judged that there were numerous bears in the vicinity.

At last, after two or three hours’ fruitless search, he was thinking of

turning back in despair, when casting his eyes upwards he saw a sight

which sent a thrill of pleasure through his heart. On the edge of a

jutting pinnacle, three or four hundred feet above him, there stood a

creature somewhat resembling a sheep in appearance, but armed with a

pair of gigantic horns. The big-horn--for so it is called--was acting,

probably, as a guardian over a flock which were invisible to the hunter;

but fortunately it was heading in the opposite direction, and had not

perceived him. Lying on his face, he rested his rifle upon a rock, and

took a long and steady aim before drawing the trigger. The animal sprang

into the air, tottered for a moment upon the edge of the precipice, and

then came crashing down into the valley beneath.

The creature was too unwieldy to lift, so the hunter contented himself

with cutting away one haunch and part of the flank. With this trophy

over his shoulder, he hastened to retrace his steps, for the evening was

already drawing in. He had hardly started, however, before he realized

the difficulty which faced him. In his eagerness he had wandered far

past the ravines which were known to him, and it was no easy matter

to pick out the path which he had taken. The valley in which he found

himself divided and sub-divided into many gorges, which were so like

each other that it was impossible to distinguish one from the other.

He followed one for a mile or more until he came to a mountain torrent

which he was sure that he had never seen before. Convinced that he had

taken the wrong turn, he tried another, but with the same result. Night

was coming on rapidly, and it was almost dark before he at last found

himself in a defile which was familiar to him. Even then it was no easy

matter to keep to the right track, for the moon had not yet risen, and

the high cliffs on either side made the obscurity more profound. Weighed

down with his burden, and weary from his exertions, he stumbled along,

keeping up his heart by the reflection that every step brought him

nearer to Lucy, and that he carried with him enough to ensure them food

for the remainder of their journey.

He had now come to the mouth of the very defile in which he had left

them. Even in the darkness he could recognize the outline of the cliffs

which bounded it. They must, he reflected, be awaiting him anxiously,

for he had been absent nearly five hours. In the gladness of his heart

he put his hands to his mouth and made the glen re-echo to a loud halloo

as a signal that he was coming. He paused and listened for an answer.

None came save his own cry, which clattered up the dreary silent

ravines, and was borne back to his ears in countless repetitions. Again

he shouted, even louder than before, and again no whisper came back from

the friends whom he had left such a short time ago. A vague, nameless

dread came over him, and he hurried onwards frantically, dropping the

precious food in his agitation.

When he turned the corner, he came full in sight of the spot where the

fire had been lit. There was still a glowing pile of wood ashes there,

but it had evidently not been tended since his departure. The same

dead silence still reigned all round. With his fears all changed to

convictions, he hurried on. There was no living creature near the

remains of the fire: animals, man, maiden, all were gone. It was only

too clear that some sudden and terrible disaster had occurred during

his absence--a disaster which had embraced them all, and yet had left no

traces behind it.

Bewildered and stunned by this blow, Jefferson Hope felt his head spin

round, and had to lean upon his rifle to save himself from falling. He

was essentially a man of action, however, and speedily recovered from

his temporary impotence. Seizing a half-consumed piece of wood from the

smouldering fire, he blew it into a flame, and proceeded with its help

to examine the little camp. The ground was all stamped down by the feet

of horses, showing that a large party of mounted men had overtaken

the fugitives, and the direction of their tracks proved that they had

afterwards turned back to Salt Lake City. Had they carried back both of

his companions with them? Jefferson Hope had almost persuaded himself

that they must have done so, when his eye fell upon an object which made

every nerve of his body tingle within him. A little way on one side of

the camp was a low-lying heap of reddish soil, which had assuredly

not been there before. There was no mistaking it for anything but a

newly-dug grave. As the young hunter approached it, he perceived that a

stick had been planted on it, with a sheet of paper stuck in the cleft

fork of it. The inscription upon the paper was brief, but to the point:

JOHN FERRIER,

FORMERLY OF SALT LAKE CITY, [22]

Died August 4th, 1860.

The sturdy old man, whom he had left so short a time before, was gone,

then, and this was all his epitaph. Jefferson Hope looked wildly round

to see if there was a second grave, but there was no sign of one. Lucy

had been carried back by their terrible pursuers to fulfil her original

destiny, by becoming one of the harem of the Elder’s son. As the young

fellow realized the certainty of her fate, and his own powerlessness to

prevent it, he wished that he, too, was lying with the old farmer in his

last silent resting-place.

Again, however, his active spirit shook off the lethargy which springs

from despair. If there was nothing else left to him, he could at least

devote his life to revenge. With indomitable patience and perseverance,

Jefferson Hope possessed also a power of sustained vindictiveness, which

he may have learned from the Indians amongst whom he had lived. As he

stood by the desolate fire, he felt that the only one thing which could

assuage his grief would be thorough and complete retribution, brought

by his own hand upon his enemies. His strong will and untiring energy

should, he determined, be devoted to that one end. With a grim, white

face, he retraced his steps to where he had dropped the food, and having

stirred up the smouldering fire, he cooked enough to last him for a

few days. This he made up into a bundle, and, tired as he was, he

set himself to walk back through the mountains upon the track of the

avenging angels.

For five days he toiled footsore and weary through the defiles which he

had already traversed on horseback. At night he flung himself down among

the rocks, and snatched a few hours of sleep; but before daybreak he was

always well on his way. On the sixth day, he reached the Eagle Cañon,

from which they had commenced their ill-fated flight. Thence he could

look down upon the home of the saints. Worn and exhausted, he leaned

upon his rifle and shook his gaunt hand fiercely at the silent

widespread city beneath him. As he looked at it, he observed that

there were flags in some of the principal streets, and other signs of

festivity. He was still speculating as to what this might mean when he

heard the clatter of horse’s hoofs, and saw a mounted man riding towards

him. As he approached, he recognized him as a Mormon named Cowper, to

whom he had rendered services at different times. He therefore accosted

him when he got up to him, with the object of finding out what Lucy

Ferrier’s fate had been.

“I am Jefferson Hope,” he said. “You remember me.”

The Mormon looked at him with undisguised astonishment--indeed, it was

difficult to recognize in this tattered, unkempt wanderer, with ghastly

white face and fierce, wild eyes, the spruce young hunter of former

days. Having, however, at last, satisfied himself as to his identity,

the man’s surprise changed to consternation.

“You are mad to come here,” he cried. “It is as much as my own life is

worth to be seen talking with you. There is a warrant against you from

the Holy Four for assisting the Ferriers away.”

“I don’t fear them, or their warrant,” Hope said, earnestly. “You must

know something of this matter, Cowper. I conjure you by everything you

hold dear to answer a few questions. We have always been friends. For

God’s sake, don’t refuse to answer me.”

“What is it?” the Mormon asked uneasily. “Be quick. The very rocks have

ears and the trees eyes.”

“What has become of Lucy Ferrier?”

“She was married yesterday to young Drebber. Hold up, man, hold up, you

have no life left in you.”

“Don’t mind me,” said Hope faintly. He was white to the very lips, and

had sunk down on the stone against which he had been leaning. “Married,

you say?”

“Married yesterday--that’s what those flags are for on the Endowment

House. There was some words between young Drebber and young Stangerson

as to which was to have her. They’d both been in the party that followed

them, and Stangerson had shot her father, which seemed to give him the

best claim; but when they argued it out in council, Drebber’s party was

the stronger, so the Prophet gave her over to him. No one won’t have

her very long though, for I saw death in her face yesterday. She is more

like a ghost than a woman. Are you off, then?”

“Yes, I am off,” said Jefferson Hope, who had risen from his seat. His

face might have been chiselled out of marble, so hard and set was its

expression, while its eyes glowed with a baleful light.

“Where are you going?”

“Never mind,” he answered; and, slinging his weapon over his shoulder,

strode off down the gorge and so away into the heart of the mountains to

the haunts of the wild beasts. Amongst them all there was none so fierce

and so dangerous as himself.

The prediction of the Mormon was only too well fulfilled. Whether it was

the terrible death of her father or the effects of the hateful marriage

into which she had been forced, poor Lucy never held up her head again,

but pined away and died within a month. Her sottish husband, who had

married her principally for the sake of John Ferrier’s property, did not

affect any great grief at his bereavement; but his other wives mourned

over her, and sat up with her the night before the burial, as is the

Mormon custom. They were grouped round the bier in the early hours of

the morning, when, to their inexpressible fear and astonishment,

the door was flung open, and a savage-looking, weather-beaten man in

tattered garments strode into the room. Without a glance or a word to

the cowering women, he walked up to the white silent figure which had

once contained the pure soul of Lucy Ferrier. Stooping over her, he

pressed his lips reverently to her cold forehead, and then, snatching

up her hand, he took the wedding-ring from her finger. “She shall not be

buried in that,” he cried with a fierce snarl, and before an alarm could

be raised sprang down the stairs and was gone. So strange and so brief

was the episode, that the watchers might have found it hard to believe

it themselves or persuade other people of it, had it not been for the

undeniable fact that the circlet of gold which marked her as having been

a bride had disappeared.

For some months Jefferson Hope lingered among the mountains, leading

a strange wild life, and nursing in his heart the fierce desire for

vengeance which possessed him. Tales were told in the City of the weird

figure which was seen prowling about the suburbs, and which haunted

the lonely mountain gorges. Once a bullet whistled through Stangerson’s

window and flattened itself upon the wall within a foot of him. On

another occasion, as Drebber passed under a cliff a great boulder

crashed down on him, and he only escaped a terrible death by throwing

himself upon his face. The two young Mormons were not long in

discovering the reason of these attempts upon their lives, and led

repeated expeditions into the mountains in the hope of capturing or

killing their enemy, but always without success. Then they adopted the

precaution of never going out alone or after nightfall, and of having

their houses guarded. After a time they were able to relax these

measures, for nothing was either heard or seen of their opponent, and

they hoped that time had cooled his vindictiveness.

Far from doing so, it had, if anything, augmented it. The hunter’s mind

was of a hard, unyielding nature, and the predominant idea of revenge

had taken such complete possession of it that there was no room for

any other emotion. He was, however, above all things practical. He soon

realized that even his iron constitution could not stand the incessant

strain which he was putting upon it. Exposure and want of wholesome food

were wearing him out. If he died like a dog among the mountains, what

was to become of his revenge then? And yet such a death was sure to

overtake him if he persisted. He felt that that was to play his enemy’s

game, so he reluctantly returned to the old Nevada mines, there to

recruit his health and to amass money enough to allow him to pursue his

object without privation.

His intention had been to be absent a year at the most, but a

combination of unforeseen circumstances prevented his leaving the mines

for nearly five. At the end of that time, however, his memory of

his wrongs and his craving for revenge were quite as keen as on that

memorable night when he had stood by John Ferrier’s grave. Disguised,

and under an assumed name, he returned to Salt Lake City, careless

what became of his own life, as long as he obtained what he knew to

be justice. There he found evil tidings awaiting him. There had been a

schism among the Chosen People a few months before, some of the younger

members of the Church having rebelled against the authority of the

Elders, and the result had been the secession of a certain number of the

malcontents, who had left Utah and become Gentiles. Among these had been

Drebber and Stangerson; and no one knew whither they had gone. Rumour

reported that Drebber had managed to convert a large part of his

property into money, and that he had departed a wealthy man, while his

companion, Stangerson, was comparatively poor. There was no clue at all,

however, as to their whereabouts.

Many a man, however vindictive, would have abandoned all thought of

revenge in the face of such a difficulty, but Jefferson Hope never

faltered for a moment. With the small competence he possessed, eked out

by such employment as he could pick up, he travelled from town to town

through the United States in quest of his enemies. Year passed into

year, his black hair turned grizzled, but still he wandered on, a human

bloodhound, with his mind wholly set upon the one object upon which he

had devoted his life. At last his perseverance was rewarded. It was

but a glance of a face in a window, but that one glance told him that

Cleveland in Ohio possessed the men whom he was in pursuit of. He

returned to his miserable lodgings with his plan of vengeance all

arranged. It chanced, however, that Drebber, looking from his window,

had recognized the vagrant in the street, and had read murder in

his eyes. He hurried before a justice of the peace, accompanied by

Stangerson, who had become his private secretary, and represented to him

that they were in danger of their lives from the jealousy and hatred of

an old rival. That evening Jefferson Hope was taken into custody, and

not being able to find sureties, was detained for some weeks. When at

last he was liberated, it was only to find that Drebber’s house was

deserted, and that he and his secretary had departed for Europe.

Again the avenger had been foiled, and again his concentrated hatred

urged him to continue the pursuit. Funds were wanting, however, and

for some time he had to return to work, saving every dollar for his

approaching journey. At last, having collected enough to keep life in

him, he departed for Europe, and tracked his enemies from city to

city, working his way in any menial capacity, but never overtaking the

fugitives. When he reached St. Petersburg they had departed for Paris;

and when he followed them there he learned that they had just set off

for Copenhagen. At the Danish capital he was again a few days late, for

they had journeyed on to London, where he at last succeeded in running

them to earth. As to what occurred there, we cannot do better than quote

the old hunter’s own account, as duly recorded in Dr. Watson’s Journal,

to which we are already under such obligations.

CHAPTER VI. A CONTINUATION OF THE REMINISCENCES OF JOHN WATSON, M.D.

OUR prisoner’s furious resistance did not apparently indicate any

ferocity in his disposition towards ourselves, for on finding himself

powerless, he smiled in an affable manner, and expressed his hopes that

he had not hurt any of us in the scuffle. “I guess you’re going to take

me to the police-station,” he remarked to Sherlock Holmes. “My cab’s at

the door. If you’ll loose my legs I’ll walk down to it. I’m not so light

to lift as I used to be.”

Gregson and Lestrade exchanged glances as if they thought this

proposition rather a bold one; but Holmes at once took the prisoner at

his word, and loosened the towel which we had bound round his ancles.

[23] He rose and stretched his legs, as though to assure himself that

they were free once more. I remember that I thought to myself, as I eyed

him, that I had seldom seen a more powerfully built man; and his dark

sunburned face bore an expression of determination and energy which was

as formidable as his personal strength.

“If there’s a vacant place for a chief of the police, I reckon you

are the man for it,” he said, gazing with undisguised admiration at my

fellow-lodger. “The way you kept on my trail was a caution.”

“You had better come with me,” said Holmes to the two detectives.

“I can drive you,” said Lestrade.

“Good! and Gregson can come inside with me. You too, Doctor, you have

taken an interest in the case and may as well stick to us.”

I assented gladly, and we all descended together. Our prisoner made no

attempt at escape, but stepped calmly into the cab which had been his,

and we followed him. Lestrade mounted the box, whipped up the horse, and

brought us in a very short time to our destination. We were ushered into

a small chamber where a police Inspector noted down our prisoner’s name

and the names of the men with whose murder he had been charged. The

official was a white-faced unemotional man, who went through his

duties in a dull mechanical way. “The prisoner will be put before the

magistrates in the course of the week,” he said; “in the mean time, Mr.

Jefferson Hope, have you anything that you wish to say? I must warn you

that your words will be taken down, and may be used against you.”

“I’ve got a good deal to say,” our prisoner said slowly. “I want to tell

you gentlemen all about it.”

“Hadn’t you better reserve that for your trial?” asked the Inspector.

“I may never be tried,” he answered. “You needn’t look startled. It

isn’t suicide I am thinking of. Are you a Doctor?” He turned his fierce

dark eyes upon me as he asked this last question.

“Yes; I am,” I answered.

“Then put your hand here,” he said, with a smile, motioning with his

manacled wrists towards his chest.

I did so; and became at once conscious of an extraordinary throbbing and

commotion which was going on inside. The walls of his chest seemed to

thrill and quiver as a frail building would do inside when some powerful

engine was at work. In the silence of the room I could hear a dull

humming and buzzing noise which proceeded from the same source.

“Why,” I cried, “you have an aortic aneurism!”

“That’s what they call it,” he said, placidly. “I went to a Doctor last

week about it, and he told me that it is bound to burst before many days

passed. It has been getting worse for years. I got it from over-exposure

and under-feeding among the Salt Lake Mountains. I’ve done my work now,

and I don’t care how soon I go, but I should like to leave some account

of the business behind me. I don’t want to be remembered as a common

cut-throat.”

The Inspector and the two detectives had a hurried discussion as to the

advisability of allowing him to tell his story.

“Do you consider, Doctor, that there is immediate danger?” the former

asked, [24]

“Most certainly there is,” I answered.

“In that case it is clearly our duty, in the interests of justice, to

take his statement,” said the Inspector. “You are at liberty, sir, to

give your account, which I again warn you will be taken down.”

“I’ll sit down, with your leave,” the prisoner said, suiting the action

to the word. “This aneurism of mine makes me easily tired, and the

tussle we had half an hour ago has not mended matters. I’m on the brink

of the grave, and I am not likely to lie to you. Every word I say is the

absolute truth, and how you use it is a matter of no consequence to me.”

With these words, Jefferson Hope leaned back in his chair and began

the following remarkable statement. He spoke in a calm and methodical

manner, as though the events which he narrated were commonplace enough.

I can vouch for the accuracy of the subjoined account, for I have had

access to Lestrade’s note-book, in which the prisoner’s words were taken

down exactly as they were uttered.

“It don’t much matter to you why I hated these men,” he said; “it’s

enough that they were guilty of the death of two human beings--a father

and a daughter--and that they had, therefore, forfeited their own

lives. After the lapse of time that has passed since their crime, it was

impossible for me to secure a conviction against them in any court. I

knew of their guilt though, and I determined that I should be judge,

jury, and executioner all rolled into one. You’d have done the same, if

you have any manhood in you, if you had been in my place.

“That girl that I spoke of was to have married me twenty years ago. She

was forced into marrying that same Drebber, and broke her heart over

it. I took the marriage ring from her dead finger, and I vowed that his

dying eyes should rest upon that very ring, and that his last thoughts

should be of the crime for which he was punished. I have carried

it about with me, and have followed him and his accomplice over two

continents until I caught them. They thought to tire me out, but they

could not do it. If I die to-morrow, as is likely enough, I die knowing

that my work in this world is done, and well done. They have perished,

and by my hand. There is nothing left for me to hope for, or to desire.

“They were rich and I was poor, so that it was no easy matter for me to

follow them. When I got to London my pocket was about empty, and I found

that I must turn my hand to something for my living. Driving and riding

are as natural to me as walking, so I applied at a cabowner’s office,

and soon got employment. I was to bring a certain sum a week to the

owner, and whatever was over that I might keep for myself. There was

seldom much over, but I managed to scrape along somehow. The hardest job

was to learn my way about, for I reckon that of all the mazes that ever

were contrived, this city is the most confusing. I had a map beside me

though, and when once I had spotted the principal hotels and stations, I

got on pretty well.

“It was some time before I found out where my two gentlemen were living;

but I inquired and inquired until at last I dropped across them. They

were at a boarding-house at Camberwell, over on the other side of the

river. When once I found them out I knew that I had them at my mercy. I

had grown my beard, and there was no chance of their recognizing me.

I would dog them and follow them until I saw my opportunity. I was

determined that they should not escape me again.

“They were very near doing it for all that. Go where they would about

London, I was always at their heels. Sometimes I followed them on my

cab, and sometimes on foot, but the former was the best, for then they

could not get away from me. It was only early in the morning or late

at night that I could earn anything, so that I began to get behind hand

with my employer. I did not mind that, however, as long as I could lay

my hand upon the men I wanted.

“They were very cunning, though. They must have thought that there was

some chance of their being followed, for they would never go out alone,

and never after nightfall. During two weeks I drove behind them every

day, and never once saw them separate. Drebber himself was drunk half

the time, but Stangerson was not to be caught napping. I watched them

late and early, but never saw the ghost of a chance; but I was not

discouraged, for something told me that the hour had almost come. My

only fear was that this thing in my chest might burst a little too soon

and leave my work undone.

“At last, one evening I was driving up and down Torquay Terrace, as the

street was called in which they boarded, when I saw a cab drive up to

their door. Presently some luggage was brought out, and after a time

Drebber and Stangerson followed it, and drove off. I whipped up my horse

and kept within sight of them, feeling very ill at ease, for I feared

that they were going to shift their quarters. At Euston Station they

got out, and I left a boy to hold my horse, and followed them on to the

platform. I heard them ask for the Liverpool train, and the guard answer

that one had just gone and there would not be another for some hours.

Stangerson seemed to be put out at that, but Drebber was rather pleased

than otherwise. I got so close to them in the bustle that I could hear

every word that passed between them. Drebber said that he had a little

business of his own to do, and that if the other would wait for him he

would soon rejoin him. His companion remonstrated with him, and reminded

him that they had resolved to stick together. Drebber answered that the

matter was a delicate one, and that he must go alone. I could not catch

what Stangerson said to that, but the other burst out swearing, and

reminded him that he was nothing more than his paid servant, and that he

must not presume to dictate to him. On that the Secretary gave it up

as a bad job, and simply bargained with him that if he missed the last

train he should rejoin him at Halliday’s Private Hotel; to which Drebber

answered that he would be back on the platform before eleven, and made

his way out of the station.

“The moment for which I had waited so long had at last come. I had my

enemies within my power. Together they could protect each other,

but singly they were at my mercy. I did not act, however, with undue

precipitation. My plans were already formed. There is no satisfaction in

vengeance unless the offender has time to realize who it is that strikes

him, and why retribution has come upon him. I had my plans arranged by

which I should have the opportunity of making the man who had wronged me

understand that his old sin had found him out. It chanced that some days

before a gentleman who had been engaged in looking over some houses in

the Brixton Road had dropped the key of one of them in my carriage. It

was claimed that same evening, and returned; but in the interval I had

taken a moulding of it, and had a duplicate constructed. By means of

this I had access to at least one spot in this great city where I could

rely upon being free from interruption. How to get Drebber to that house

was the difficult problem which I had now to solve.

“He walked down the road and went into one or two liquor shops, staying

for nearly half-an-hour in the last of them. When he came out he

staggered in his walk, and was evidently pretty well on. There was a

hansom just in front of me, and he hailed it. I followed it so close

that the nose of my horse was within a yard of his driver the whole way.

We rattled across Waterloo Bridge and through miles of streets, until,

to my astonishment, we found ourselves back in the Terrace in which he

had boarded. I could not imagine what his intention was in returning

there; but I went on and pulled up my cab a hundred yards or so from

the house. He entered it, and his hansom drove away. Give me a glass of

water, if you please. My mouth gets dry with the talking.”

I handed him the glass, and he drank it down.

“That’s better,” he said. “Well, I waited for a quarter of an hour, or

more, when suddenly there came a noise like people struggling inside the

house. Next moment the door was flung open and two men appeared, one of

whom was Drebber, and the other was a young chap whom I had never seen

before. This fellow had Drebber by the collar, and when they came to

the head of the steps he gave him a shove and a kick which sent him half

across the road. ‘You hound,’ he cried, shaking his stick at him; ‘I’ll

teach you to insult an honest girl!’ He was so hot that I think he would

have thrashed Drebber with his cudgel, only that the cur staggered away

down the road as fast as his legs would carry him. He ran as far as the

corner, and then, seeing my cab, he hailed me and jumped in. ‘Drive me

to Halliday’s Private Hotel,’ said he.

“When I had him fairly inside my cab, my heart jumped so with joy that

I feared lest at this last moment my aneurism might go wrong. I drove

along slowly, weighing in my own mind what it was best to do. I might

take him right out into the country, and there in some deserted lane

have my last interview with him. I had almost decided upon this, when he

solved the problem for me. The craze for drink had seized him again, and

he ordered me to pull up outside a gin palace. He went in, leaving word

that I should wait for him. There he remained until closing time, and

when he came out he was so far gone that I knew the game was in my own

hands.

“Don’t imagine that I intended to kill him in cold blood. It would only

have been rigid justice if I had done so, but I could not bring myself

to do it. I had long determined that he should have a show for his life

if he chose to take advantage of it. Among the many billets which I

have filled in America during my wandering life, I was once janitor and

sweeper out of the laboratory at York College. One day the professor was

lecturing on poisions, [25] and he showed his students some alkaloid,

as he called it, which he had extracted from some South American arrow

poison, and which was so powerful that the least grain meant instant

death. I spotted the bottle in which this preparation was kept, and when

they were all gone, I helped myself to a little of it. I was a fairly

good dispenser, so I worked this alkaloid into small, soluble pills, and

each pill I put in a box with a similar pill made without the poison.

I determined at the time that when I had my chance, my gentlemen should

each have a draw out of one of these boxes, while I ate the pill that

remained. It would be quite as deadly, and a good deal less noisy than

firing across a handkerchief. From that day I had always my pill boxes

about with me, and the time had now come when I was to use them.

“It was nearer one than twelve, and a wild, bleak night, blowing hard

and raining in torrents. Dismal as it was outside, I was glad within--so

glad that I could have shouted out from pure exultation. If any of you

gentlemen have ever pined for a thing, and longed for it during twenty

long years, and then suddenly found it within your reach, you would

understand my feelings. I lit a cigar, and puffed at it to steady my

nerves, but my hands were trembling, and my temples throbbing with

excitement. As I drove, I could see old John Ferrier and sweet Lucy

looking at me out of the darkness and smiling at me, just as plain as I

see you all in this room. All the way they were ahead of me, one on each

side of the horse until I pulled up at the house in the Brixton Road.

“There was not a soul to be seen, nor a sound to be heard, except the

dripping of the rain. When I looked in at the window, I found Drebber

all huddled together in a drunken sleep. I shook him by the arm, ‘It’s

time to get out,’ I said.

“‘All right, cabby,’ said he.

“I suppose he thought we had come to the hotel that he had mentioned,

for he got out without another word, and followed me down the garden.

I had to walk beside him to keep him steady, for he was still a little

top-heavy. When we came to the door, I opened it, and led him into the

front room. I give you my word that all the way, the father and the

daughter were walking in front of us.

“‘It’s infernally dark,’ said he, stamping about.

“‘We’ll soon have a light,’ I said, striking a match and putting it to

a wax candle which I had brought with me. ‘Now, Enoch Drebber,’ I

continued, turning to him, and holding the light to my own face, ‘who am

I?’

“He gazed at me with bleared, drunken eyes for a moment, and then I

saw a horror spring up in them, and convulse his whole features, which

showed me that he knew me. He staggered back with a livid face, and I

saw the perspiration break out upon his brow, while his teeth chattered

in his head. At the sight, I leaned my back against the door and laughed

loud and long. I had always known that vengeance would be sweet, but I

had never hoped for the contentment of soul which now possessed me.

“‘You dog!’ I said; ‘I have hunted you from Salt Lake City to St.

Petersburg, and you have always escaped me. Now, at last your wanderings

have come to an end, for either you or I shall never see to-morrow’s sun

rise.’ He shrunk still further away as I spoke, and I could see on his

face that he thought I was mad. So I was for the time. The pulses in my

temples beat like sledge-hammers, and I believe I would have had a fit

of some sort if the blood had not gushed from my nose and relieved me.

“‘What do you think of Lucy Ferrier now?’ I cried, locking the door, and

shaking the key in his face. ‘Punishment has been slow in coming, but it

has overtaken you at last.’ I saw his coward lips tremble as I spoke. He

would have begged for his life, but he knew well that it was useless.

“‘Would you murder me?’ he stammered.

“‘There is no murder,’ I answered. ‘Who talks of murdering a mad dog?

What mercy had you upon my poor darling, when you dragged her from her

slaughtered father, and bore her away to your accursed and shameless

harem.’

“‘It was not I who killed her father,’ he cried.

“‘But it was you who broke her innocent heart,’ I shrieked, thrusting

the box before him. ‘Let the high God judge between us. Choose and

eat. There is death in one and life in the other. I shall take what you

leave. Let us see if there is justice upon the earth, or if we are ruled

by chance.’

“He cowered away with wild cries and prayers for mercy, but I drew my

knife and held it to his throat until he had obeyed me. Then I swallowed

the other, and we stood facing one another in silence for a minute or

more, waiting to see which was to live and which was to die. Shall I

ever forget the look which came over his face when the first warning

pangs told him that the poison was in his system? I laughed as I saw

it, and held Lucy’s marriage ring in front of his eyes. It was but for

a moment, for the action of the alkaloid is rapid. A spasm of pain

contorted his features; he threw his hands out in front of him,

staggered, and then, with a hoarse cry, fell heavily upon the floor. I

turned him over with my foot, and placed my hand upon his heart. There

was no movement. He was dead!

“The blood had been streaming from my nose, but I had taken no notice of

it. I don’t know what it was that put it into my head to write upon the

wall with it. Perhaps it was some mischievous idea of setting the police

upon a wrong track, for I felt light-hearted and cheerful. I remembered

a German being found in New York with RACHE written up above him, and it

was argued at the time in the newspapers that the secret societies must

have done it. I guessed that what puzzled the New Yorkers would puzzle

the Londoners, so I dipped my finger in my own blood and printed it on

a convenient place on the wall. Then I walked down to my cab and found

that there was nobody about, and that the night was still very wild. I

had driven some distance when I put my hand into the pocket in which

I usually kept Lucy’s ring, and found that it was not there. I was

thunderstruck at this, for it was the only memento that I had of her.

Thinking that I might have dropped it when I stooped over Drebber’s

body, I drove back, and leaving my cab in a side street, I went boldly

up to the house--for I was ready to dare anything rather than lose

the ring. When I arrived there, I walked right into the arms of a

police-officer who was coming out, and only managed to disarm his

suspicions by pretending to be hopelessly drunk.

“That was how Enoch Drebber came to his end. All I had to do then was

to do as much for Stangerson, and so pay off John Ferrier’s debt. I knew

that he was staying at Halliday’s Private Hotel, and I hung about all

day, but he never came out. [26] fancy that he suspected something when

Drebber failed to put in an appearance. He was cunning, was Stangerson,

and always on his guard. If he thought he could keep me off by staying

indoors he was very much mistaken. I soon found out which was the window

of his bedroom, and early next morning I took advantage of some ladders

which were lying in the lane behind the hotel, and so made my way into

his room in the grey of the dawn. I woke him up and told him that the

hour had come when he was to answer for the life he had taken so long

before. I described Drebber’s death to him, and I gave him the same

choice of the poisoned pills. Instead of grasping at the chance of

safety which that offered him, he sprang from his bed and flew at my

throat. In self-defence I stabbed him to the heart. It would have been

the same in any case, for Providence would never have allowed his guilty

hand to pick out anything but the poison.

“I have little more to say, and it’s as well, for I am about done up.

I went on cabbing it for a day or so, intending to keep at it until I

could save enough to take me back to America. I was standing in the

yard when a ragged youngster asked if there was a cabby there called

Jefferson Hope, and said that his cab was wanted by a gentleman at 221B,

Baker Street. I went round, suspecting no harm, and the next thing I

knew, this young man here had the bracelets on my wrists, and as neatly

snackled [27] as ever I saw in my life. That’s the whole of my story,

gentlemen. You may consider me to be a murderer; but I hold that I am

just as much an officer of justice as you are.”

So thrilling had the man’s narrative been, and his manner was so

impressive that we had sat silent and absorbed. Even the professional

detectives, \_blasé\_ as they were in every detail of crime, appeared to

be keenly interested in the man’s story. When he finished we sat for

some minutes in a stillness which was only broken by the scratching

of Lestrade’s pencil as he gave the finishing touches to his shorthand

account.

“There is only one point on which I should like a little more

information,” Sherlock Holmes said at last. “Who was your accomplice who

came for the ring which I advertised?”

The prisoner winked at my friend jocosely. “I can tell my own secrets,”

he said, “but I don’t get other people into trouble. I saw your

advertisement, and I thought it might be a plant, or it might be the

ring which I wanted. My friend volunteered to go and see. I think you’ll

own he did it smartly.”

“Not a doubt of that,” said Holmes heartily.

“Now, gentlemen,” the Inspector remarked gravely, “the forms of the law

must be complied with. On Thursday the prisoner will be brought before

the magistrates, and your attendance will be required. Until then I will

be responsible for him.” He rang the bell as he spoke, and Jefferson

Hope was led off by a couple of warders, while my friend and I made our

way out of the Station and took a cab back to Baker Street.

CHAPTER VII. THE CONCLUSION.

WE had all been warned to appear before the magistrates upon the

Thursday; but when the Thursday came there was no occasion for our

testimony. A higher Judge had taken the matter in hand, and Jefferson

Hope had been summoned before a tribunal where strict justice would

be meted out to him. On the very night after his capture the aneurism

burst, and he was found in the morning stretched upon the floor of the

cell, with a placid smile upon his face, as though he had been able

in his dying moments to look back upon a useful life, and on work well

done.

“Gregson and Lestrade will be wild about his death,” Holmes remarked, as

we chatted it over next evening. “Where will their grand advertisement

be now?”

“I don’t see that they had very much to do with his capture,” I

answered.

“What you do in this world is a matter of no consequence,” returned my

companion, bitterly. “The question is, what can you make people believe

that you have done. Never mind,” he continued, more brightly, after a

pause. “I would not have missed the investigation for anything. There

has been no better case within my recollection. Simple as it was, there

were several most instructive points about it.”

“Simple!” I ejaculated.

“Well, really, it can hardly be described as otherwise,” said Sherlock

Holmes, smiling at my surprise. “The proof of its intrinsic simplicity

is, that without any help save a few very ordinary deductions I was able

to lay my hand upon the criminal within three days.”

“That is true,” said I.

“I have already explained to you that what is out of the common is

usually a guide rather than a hindrance. In solving a problem of this

sort, the grand thing is to be able to reason backwards. That is a very

useful accomplishment, and a very easy one, but people do not practise

it much. In the every-day affairs of life it is more useful to reason

forwards, and so the other comes to be neglected. There are fifty who

can reason synthetically for one who can reason analytically.”

“I confess,” said I, “that I do not quite follow you.”

“I hardly expected that you would. Let me see if I can make it clearer.

Most people, if you describe a train of events to them, will tell you

what the result would be. They can put those events together in their

minds, and argue from them that something will come to pass. There are

few people, however, who, if you told them a result, would be able to

evolve from their own inner consciousness what the steps were which led

up to that result. This power is what I mean when I talk of reasoning

backwards, or analytically.”

“I understand,” said I.

“Now this was a case in which you were given the result and had to

find everything else for yourself. Now let me endeavour to show you the

different steps in my reasoning. To begin at the beginning. I approached

the house, as you know, on foot, and with my mind entirely free from all

impressions. I naturally began by examining the roadway, and there, as I

have already explained to you, I saw clearly the marks of a cab, which,

I ascertained by inquiry, must have been there during the night. I

satisfied myself that it was a cab and not a private carriage by the

narrow gauge of the wheels. The ordinary London growler is considerably

less wide than a gentleman’s brougham.

“This was the first point gained. I then walked slowly down the garden

path, which happened to be composed of a clay soil, peculiarly suitable

for taking impressions. No doubt it appeared to you to be a mere

trampled line of slush, but to my trained eyes every mark upon its

surface had a meaning. There is no branch of detective science which

is so important and so much neglected as the art of tracing footsteps.

Happily, I have always laid great stress upon it, and much practice

has made it second nature to me. I saw the heavy footmarks of the

constables, but I saw also the track of the two men who had first passed

through the garden. It was easy to tell that they had been before the

others, because in places their marks had been entirely obliterated by

the others coming upon the top of them. In this way my second link was

formed, which told me that the nocturnal visitors were two in number,

one remarkable for his height (as I calculated from the length of his

stride), and the other fashionably dressed, to judge from the small and

elegant impression left by his boots.

“On entering the house this last inference was confirmed. My well-booted

man lay before me. The tall one, then, had done the murder, if murder

there was. There was no wound upon the dead man’s person, but the

agitated expression upon his face assured me that he had foreseen his

fate before it came upon him. Men who die from heart disease, or any

sudden natural cause, never by any chance exhibit agitation upon their

features. Having sniffed the dead man’s lips I detected a slightly sour

smell, and I came to the conclusion that he had had poison forced upon

him. Again, I argued that it had been forced upon him from the hatred

and fear expressed upon his face. By the method of exclusion, I had

arrived at this result, for no other hypothesis would meet the facts.

Do not imagine that it was a very unheard of idea. The forcible

administration of poison is by no means a new thing in criminal annals.

The cases of Dolsky in Odessa, and of Leturier in Montpellier, will

occur at once to any toxicologist.

“And now came the great question as to the reason why. Robbery had not

been the object of the murder, for nothing was taken. Was it politics,

then, or was it a woman? That was the question which confronted me.

I was inclined from the first to the latter supposition. Political

assassins are only too glad to do their work and to fly. This murder

had, on the contrary, been done most deliberately, and the perpetrator

had left his tracks all over the room, showing that he had been there

all the time. It must have been a private wrong, and not a political

one, which called for such a methodical revenge. When the inscription

was discovered upon the wall I was more inclined than ever to my

opinion. The thing was too evidently a blind. When the ring was found,

however, it settled the question. Clearly the murderer had used it to

remind his victim of some dead or absent woman. It was at this point

that I asked Gregson whether he had enquired in his telegram to

Cleveland as to any particular point in Mr. Drebber’s former career. He

answered, you remember, in the negative.

“I then proceeded to make a careful examination of the room, which

confirmed me in my opinion as to the murderer’s height, and furnished me

with the additional details as to the Trichinopoly cigar and the length

of his nails. I had already come to the conclusion, since there were no

signs of a struggle, that the blood which covered the floor had burst

from the murderer’s nose in his excitement. I could perceive that the

track of blood coincided with the track of his feet. It is seldom that

any man, unless he is very full-blooded, breaks out in this way through

emotion, so I hazarded the opinion that the criminal was probably a

robust and ruddy-faced man. Events proved that I had judged correctly.

“Having left the house, I proceeded to do what Gregson had neglected. I

telegraphed to the head of the police at Cleveland, limiting my enquiry

to the circumstances connected with the marriage of Enoch Drebber. The

answer was conclusive. It told me that Drebber had already applied for

the protection of the law against an old rival in love, named Jefferson

Hope, and that this same Hope was at present in Europe. I knew now that

I held the clue to the mystery in my hand, and all that remained was to

secure the murderer.

“I had already determined in my own mind that the man who had walked

into the house with Drebber, was none other than the man who had driven

the cab. The marks in the road showed me that the horse had wandered

on in a way which would have been impossible had there been anyone in

charge of it. Where, then, could the driver be, unless he were inside

the house? Again, it is absurd to suppose that any sane man would carry

out a deliberate crime under the very eyes, as it were, of a third

person, who was sure to betray him. Lastly, supposing one man wished

to dog another through London, what better means could he adopt than

to turn cabdriver. All these considerations led me to the irresistible

conclusion that Jefferson Hope was to be found among the jarveys of the

Metropolis.

“If he had been one there was no reason to believe that he had ceased to

be. On the contrary, from his point of view, any sudden change would be

likely to draw attention to himself. He would, probably, for a time at

least, continue to perform his duties. There was no reason to suppose

that he was going under an assumed name. Why should he change his name

in a country where no one knew his original one? I therefore organized

my Street Arab detective corps, and sent them systematically to every

cab proprietor in London until they ferreted out the man that I wanted.

How well they succeeded, and how quickly I took advantage of it, are

still fresh in your recollection. The murder of Stangerson was an

incident which was entirely unexpected, but which could hardly in

any case have been prevented. Through it, as you know, I came into

possession of the pills, the existence of which I had already surmised.

You see the whole thing is a chain of logical sequences without a break

or flaw.”

“It is wonderful!” I cried. “Your merits should be publicly recognized.

You should publish an account of the case. If you won’t, I will for

you.”

“You may do what you like, Doctor,” he answered. “See here!” he

continued, handing a paper over to me, “look at this!”

It was the \_Echo\_ for the day, and the paragraph to which he pointed was

devoted to the case in question.

“The public,” it said, “have lost a sensational treat through the sudden

death of the man Hope, who was suspected of the murder of Mr. Enoch

Drebber and of Mr. Joseph Stangerson. The details of the case will

probably be never known now, though we are informed upon good authority

that the crime was the result of an old standing and romantic feud, in

which love and Mormonism bore a part. It seems that both the victims

belonged, in their younger days, to the Latter Day Saints, and Hope, the

deceased prisoner, hails also from Salt Lake City. If the case has had

no other effect, it, at least, brings out in the most striking manner

the efficiency of our detective police force, and will serve as a lesson

to all foreigners that they will do wisely to settle their feuds at

home, and not to carry them on to British soil. It is an open secret

that the credit of this smart capture belongs entirely to the well-known

Scotland Yard officials, Messrs. Lestrade and Gregson. The man was

apprehended, it appears, in the rooms of a certain Mr. Sherlock Holmes,

who has himself, as an amateur, shown some talent in the detective

line, and who, with such instructors, may hope in time to attain to some

degree of their skill. It is expected that a testimonial of some sort

will be presented to the two officers as a fitting recognition of their

services.”

“Didn’t I tell you so when we started?” cried Sherlock Holmes with a

laugh. “That’s the result of all our Study in Scarlet: to get them a

testimonial!”

“Never mind,” I answered, “I have all the facts in my journal, and the

public shall know them. In the meantime you must make yourself contented

by the consciousness of success, like the Roman miser--

“‘Populus me sibilat, at mihi plaudo

Ipse domi simul ac nummos contemplor in arca.’”

ORIGINAL TRANSCRIBER’S NOTES:

[Footnote 1: Frontispiece, with the caption: “He examined with his glass

the word upon the wall, going over every letter of it with the most

minute exactness.” (\_Page\_ 23.)]

[Footnote 2: “JOHN H. WATSON, M.D.”: the initial letters in the name are

capitalized, the other letters in small caps. All chapter titles are in

small caps. The initial words of chapters are in small caps with first

letter capitalized.]

[Footnote 3: “lodgings.”: the period should be a comma, as in later

editions.]

[Footnote 4: “hoemoglobin”: should be haemoglobin. The o&e are

concatenated.]

[Footnote 5: “221B”: the B is in small caps]

[Footnote 6: “THE LAURISTON GARDEN MYSTERY”: the table-of-contents

lists this chapter as “...GARDENS MYSTERY”--plural, and probably more

correct.]

[Footnote 7: “brought."”: the text has an extra double-quote mark]

[Footnote 8: “individual--“: illustration this page, with the

caption: “As he spoke, his nimble fingers were flying here, there, and

everywhere.”]

[Footnote 9: “manoeuvres”: the o&e are concatenated.]

[Footnote 10: “Patent leathers”: the hyphen is missing.]

[Footnote 11: “condonment”: should be condonement.]

[Footnote 13: “wages.”: ending quote is missing.]

[Footnote 14: “the first.”: ending quote is missing.]

[Footnote 15: “make much of...”: Other editions complete this sentence

with an “it.” But there is a gap in the text at this point, and, given

the context, it may have actually been an interjection, a dash. The gap

is just the right size for the characters “it.” and the start of a new

sentence, or for a “----“]

[Footnote 16: “tho cushion”: “tho” should be “the”]

[Footnote 19: “shoving”: later editions have “showing”. The original is

clearly superior.]

[Footnote 20: “stared about...”: illustration, with the caption: “One of

them seized the little girl, and hoisted her upon his shoulder.”]

[Footnote 21: “upon the”: illustration, with the caption: “As he watched

it he saw it writhe along the ground.”]

[Footnote 22: “FORMERLY...”: F,S,L,C in caps, other letters in this line

in small caps.]

[Footnote 23: “ancles”: ankles.]

[Footnote 24: “asked,”: should be “asked.”]

[Footnote 25: “poisions”: should be “poisons”]

[Footnote 26: “...fancy”: should be “I fancy”. There is a gap in the

text.]

[Footnote 27: “snackled”: “shackled” in later texts.]

[Footnote 29: Heber C. Kemball, in one of his sermons, alludes to his

hundred wives under this endearing epithet.]

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