

# The Holladay Case

A Mystery Of Two Continents

By BURTON E. STEVENSON  
Copyright, 1905, by Henry Holt and Company

(CONTINUED.)

Yes, I could doubt no longer that there was a plot, whose depths I had not before even suspected, and I drew back from the thought with a little shiver. What was the plot? What intricate, dreadful crime was this which he was planning? The murder of the father, then, had been only the first step. The abduction of Frances Holladay was the second. What would the third be? How could we prevent his taking it? Suppose we should be unsuccessful? And, candidly, what chance of success could we have, fighting in the dark against this accomplished scoundrel? He had the threads all in his fingers; he controlled the situation; we were struggling blindly, snarled in a net of mystery from which there seemed no escaping. My imagination clothed him with superhuman attributes. For a moment a wild desire possessed me to turn upon him, to confront him, to accuse him, to confound him with the very certainty of my knowledge, to surprise his secret, to trample him down!

But the frenzy passed. No, he must not discover that I suspected him. I must not yield up that advantage. I might yet surprise him, mislead him, set a trap for him, get him to say more than he wished to say. That battle of wits would come later on—this very night perhaps—but for the moment I could do nothing better than carry out my first plan, yet he must not suspect the direction of my search. I must throw him off the track. Why, this was for all the world just like the penny dreadful of my boyhood. And I smiled at the thought that I had become an actor in a drama fitted for a red and yellow cover!

My plan was soon made. I crossed Broadway and turned into Cortlandt



He staggered and seemed to fall.

street, sauntering along it until the elevated loomed ahead; I heard the roar of an approaching train and stopped to purchase some fruit at the corner stand. My pursuer was some distance behind, closely inspecting the bric-a-brac in a peddler's cart. The train rumbled into the station, and, starting as though I had just perceived it, I bounded up the stair, slammed my ticket into the chopper and dashed across the platform. The guard at the rear of the train held the gate open for me for an instant and then clanged it shut. We were off with a jerk. As I looked back I saw Martigny rush out upon the platform. He stood staring after me for an instant; then, with a sudden grasping at his breast, staggered and seemed to fall. A crowd closed about him, the train whisked around a corner, and I could see no more.

But at any rate I was well free of him, and I got off at Bleecker street, walked on to the square and began my search. My plan was very simple. Beginning on the east side of West Broadway, it was my intention to stop at every house and inquire whether lodgers were kept. My experience at the first place was a pretty fair sample of all the rest.

A frowsy headed woman answered my knock.

"You have rooms to let?" I asked.

"Oh, yes, monsieur," she answered, with an expansive grin. "Step zis way."

We mounted a dirty stair, and she threw open a door with a flourish meant to be impressive.

"Zese are ze rooms, monsieur; zey

are ver' fine."

I looked around them with simulated interest, smothering my disgust as well as I could.

"How long have they been vacant?" I asked.

"Since only two days, monsieur. As you see, zey are ver' fine rooms."

That settled it. If they had been vacant only two days, I had no further interest in them, and with some excuse I made my way out, glad to escape from that fetid atmosphere of garlic and onions. So I went from house to house, stumbling over dirty children, climbing grimy stairs, catching glimpses of crowded sweatshops, peering into all sorts of holes called rooms by courtesy, inhaling a hundred stenches in as many minutes, gaining an insight that sickened me into the squalid life of the quarter. Sometimes I began to hope that at last I was on the right track, but further inquiry would prove my mistake. So the morning passed, and the afternoon. I had covered two blocks to no purpose, and I turned eastward to Broadway and took a car downtown to the office. My assistants had reported again—they had met with no better success than I. Mr. Graham noticed my dejected appearance and spoke a word of comfort.

"I think you're on the right track, Lester," he said. "But you can't hope to do much by yourself—it's too big a job. Wouldn't it be better to employ half a dozen private detectives and put them under your supervision? You could save yourself this nerve trying work and at the same time get over the ground much more rapidly. Besides, experienced men may be able to suggest something that you've overlooked."

I had thought of that—I had wondered if I were making the best possible use of my opportunities—and the suggestion tempted me. But something rose within me—pride, ambition, stubbornness, what you will—and I shook my head, determined to hang on. Besides, I had still before me that battle of wits with Martigny, and I was resolved to make the most of it.

"Let me keep on by myself a day or two longer, sir," I said. "I believe I'll succeed yet. If I don't there will still be time to call in outside help. I fancy I've made a beginning, and I want to see what comes of it."

He shook me kindly by the hand.

"I like your grit," he said approvingly, "and I've every confidence in you. It wasn't lack of confidence that prompted the suggestion. Only don't overdo the thing and break down as Royce has. He's better, by the way, but the doctor says that he must take a long vacation—a thorough rest."

"I'm glad he's better. I'll be careful," I assented, and left the office.

While I waited for a car I bought a copy of the last edition of my paper, from force of habit more than anything, then, settling myself in a seat—still from force of habit—I turned to the financial column and looked it over. There was nothing of special interest there and I turned back to the general news, glancing carelessly from item to item. Suddenly one caught my eye which brought me up with a shock. The item read:

Shortly after 10 o'clock this morning a man ran up the steps of the Cortlandt street station of the Sixth avenue elevated in the effort to catch an uptown train just pulling out and dropped over on the platform with heart disease. An ambulance was called from the Hudson Street hospital and the man taken there. At noon it was said he would recover. He was still too weak to talk, but among other things a card of the Cafe Jourdain, 61 West Houston street, was found in his pocketbook. An inquiry there developed the fact that his name is Pierre Bethune, that he is recently from France and has no relatives in this country.

In a moment I was out of the car and running westward to the elevated. I felt that I held in my hand the address I needed.

## CHAPTER XII.

FIFTY-FOUR West Houston street, just three blocks south of Washington square, was a narrow four story and basement building of gray brick with battered brown stone trimmings, at one time perhaps a fashionable residence, but with its last vestige of glory long since departed. In the basement was a squalid cobbler's shop, and the restaurant occupied the first floor. Dirty lace curtains hung at the windows, screening the interior from the street, but when I mounted the step to the door and entered I found the place typical of its class. I sat down at one of the little square tables and ordered a bottle of wine. It was M. Jourdain himself who brought it—a little fat man, with trousers very tight and a waistcoat very dazzling. The night trade had not yet begun in earnest, so he was for the mo-

ment at leisure, and he consented to drink a glass of wine with me. I had ordered the "superieur."

"You have lodgings to let, I suppose, on the floors above?" I questioned.

He squinted at me through his glass, trying with French shrewdness to read me before answering.

"Why, yes, we have lodgings. Still, a man of monsieur's habit would scarcely wish"—

"The habit does not always gauge the purse," I pointed out.

"That is true," he smiled, sipping his wine. "Monsieur then wishes a lodging?"

"I should like to look at yours."

"You understand, monsieur," he explained, "that this is a good quarter, and our rooms are not at all the ordinary rooms. Oh, no; they are quite superior to that. They are in great demand. We have only one vacant at this moment. In fact, I am not certain that it is yet at liberty. I will call my wife."

She was summoned from behind the counter, where she presided at the money drawer, and presented to me as Mme. Jourdain. I filled a glass for her.

"Monsieur, here, is seeking a lodging," he began. "Is the one on the second floor back at our disposal yet, Celine?"

His wife pondered the question a moment, looking at me with sharp little eyes.

"I do not know," she said at last. "We shall have to ask M. Bethune. He said he might again have need of it. He has paid for it until the 15th."

My heart leaped at the name. I saw that I must take the bull by the horns—assume a bold front—for if they waited to consult my pursuer I should never gain the information I was seeking.

"It was through M. Bethune that I secured your address," I said boldly. "He was taken ill this morning. His heart, you know," and I tapped my chest.

They nodded, looking at me, nevertheless, with eyes narrow with suspicion.

"Yes, monsieur, we know," said Jourdain. "The authorities at the hospital at once notified us."

"It is not the first attack," I asserted, with a temerity born of necessity. "He has had others, but none so serious as this."

They nodded sympathetically. Plainly they had been considerably impressed by their lodger.

"So," I continued brazenly, "he knows at last that his condition is very bad, and he wishes to remain at the hospital for some days until he has quite recovered. In the meantime I am to have the second floor back, which was occupied by the ladies."

I spoke the last word with seeming nonchalance, without the quiver of a lash, though I was inwardly a-quake, for I was risking everything upon it. Then in an instant I breathed more freely. I saw that I had hit the mark and that their suspicions were gradually growing less.

"They, of course, are not coming back," I added, "at least not for a long time. So he has no further use for the room. This is the fourteenth. I can take possession tomorrow."

They exchanged a glance, and Mme. Jourdain arose.

"Very well, monsieur," she said. "Will you have the kindness to come and look at the room?"

I followed her up the stair, giddy at my good fortune. She opened a door and lighted a gas jet against the wall.

"I am sure you will like the apartment, monsieur," she said. "You see, it is a very large one and most comfortable."

It was indeed of good size and well furnished. The bed was in a kind of alcove, and beyond it was a bath—unlooked for luxury! One thing, however, struck me as peculiar. The windows were closed by heavy shutters, which were barred upon the inside, and the bars were secured in place by padlocks.

"I shall want to open the windows," I remarked. "Do you always keep them barred?"

She hesitated a moment, looking a little embarrassed.

"You see, monsieur, it is this way," she explained at last. "M. Bethune himself had the locks put on, for he feared that his poor sister would throw herself down into the courtyard, which is paved with stone and where she would certainly have been killed. She was very bad some days, poor dear. I was most glad when they took her away, for the thought of her made me nervous. I will in the morning open the windows and air the room well for you."

"That will do nicely," I assented as carelessly as I could. I knew that I had chanced upon a new development, though I could not in the least guess its bearing. "What do you ask for the apartment?"

"Ten dollars the week, monsieur," she answered, eyeing me narrowly.

I knew it was not worth so much and, remembering my character, repressed my first inclination to close the bargain.

"That is a good deal," I said hesitatingly. "Haven't you a cheaper room, Mme. Jourdain?"

"This is the only one we have now vacant, monsieur," she assured me.

I turned back toward the door with a little sigh.

"I fear I can't take it," I said.

"Monsieur does not understand," she protested. "That price, of course, includes breakfast."

"And dinner?"

She hesitated, eyeing me again.

"For \$1 additional it shall include dinner."

"Done, madame!" I cried. "I pay you for a week in advance." And I suited the action to the word. "Only," I added, "be sure to air the room well tomorrow. It seems very close. Still, Bethune was right to make sure that his sister could not harm herself."

"Yes," she nodded, placing the money carefully in an old purse, with the true miserly light in her eyes. "Yes; she broke down most sudden. It was the departure of her mother, you know, monsieur."

I nodded thoughtfully.

"When they first came, six weeks ago, she was quite well. Then her mother a position of some sort secured and went away. She never left her room after that, just sat there and cried or rattled at the doors and windows. Her brother was heartbroken about her. No one else would be permitted to attend her. But I hope that she is well now, poor child, for she is again with her mother."

"Her mother came after her?" I asked.

"Oh, yes; ten days ago, and together they drove away. By this time they are again in the good France."

I pretended to be inspecting a wardrobe, for I felt sure my face would betray me. At a flash I saw the whole story. There was nothing more Mme. Jourdain could tell me.

"Yes," I repeated, steady my voice, "the good France."

"M. Bethune has himself been absent for a week," she added, "on affairs of business. He was not certain that he would return, but he paid us to the 15th."

I nodded. "Yes—tomorrow—I will take possession then."

"Very well, monsieur," she assented. "I will have it in readiness."

For an instant I hesitated. Should I use the photograph? Was it necessary? How explain my possession of it? Did

events of the day.

Certainly I had progressed. I had undoubtedly got on the track of the fugitives; I had found out all that I could reasonably have hoped to find out. And yet my exultation was short lived. Admitted that I was on their track, how much nearer success had I got? I knew that they had sailed for France, but for what part of France? They would disembark at Havre. How was I, reaching Havre two weeks later, to discover which direction they had taken? Suppose they had gone to Paris, as seemed most probable, how could I ever hope to find them there? Even if I did find them, would I be in time to checkmate Martigny?

For a time I paused, appalled at the magnitude of the task that lay before me—in all France to find three people! But, after all, it might not be so great. Most probably these women were from one of the towns Holladay and his wife had visited during their stay in France. Which towns they were I, of course, had no means of knowing, yet I felt certain that some means of discovering them would present itself. That must be my work for the morrow.

A half hour passed, and I sat lost in speculation, watching the blue smoke curling upward, striving vainly to penetrate the mystery. For I was as far as ever from a solution of it. Who were these people? What was their aim? How had they managed to win Miss Holladay over to their side, to persuade her to accompany them, to flee from her friends—above all, from our junior partner? How had they caused her change of attitude toward him? Or had they really abducted her? Was there really danger of foul play; danger that she would fall a victim as well as her father? Who was Martigny? And, above all, what was the plot? What did he hope to gain? What was he striving for? What was this great stake for which he risked so much?

To these questions I could find no reasonable answer. I was still groping aimlessly in the dark, and at last in sheer confusion I put down my pipe, turned out the light and went to bed.

(To be Continued.)



"Do you always keep them barred?"

I not already know all that Mme. Jourdain could tell me? I turned to the stair.

"Then I must be going," I said. "I have some business affairs to arrange," and we went down together.

The place was filling with a motley crowd of diners, but I paused only to exchange a nod with M. Jourdain and then hurried away. The fugitives had taken the French line, of course, and I hastened on to the foot of Morton street, where the French line pier is. A ship was being loaded for the voyage out, and the pier was still open. A clerk directed me to the sailing schedule, and a glance at it confirmed my guess. At 10 o'clock on the morning of Thursday, April 3, La Savoie had sailed for Havre.

"May I see La Savoie's passenger list?" I asked.

"Certainly, sir," and he produced it.

I did not, of course, expect to find Miss Holladay entered upon it; yet I felt that a study of it might be repaid, and I was not mistaken. A Mrs. G. R. Folsom and two daughters had occupied the cabine de luxe, 436, 438, 440. On the company's list which had been given me I saw bracketed after the name of the youngest daughter the single word "invalid."

"La Lorraine sails day after tomorrow, I believe?" I asked.

"Yes, sir."

"And is she full?"

"No, sir; it is a little early in the season yet." And he got down the list of staterooms, showing me which were vacant. I selected an outside double one and deposited half the fare in order to reserve it.

There was nothing more to be done that night, for a glance at my watch showed me the lateness of the hour. As I emerged from the pier I suddenly found myself very weary and very hungry, so I called a cab and was driven direct to my rooms. A bath and dinner set me up again, and finally I settled down with my pipe to arrange the

## NOTICE OF SPECIAL ELECTION.

### Electric Light Bond Proposition.

Notice is hereby given to the electors of the city of Red Cloud, in Webster county, Nebraska, pursuant to a resolution adopted by the Mayor and Council of said city, at an adjourned regular meeting thereof, December 7, 1905, and based upon the petition of more than ten resident freeholders from each ward of said city, that an election is called and will be held in said city, at the usual voting places therein, to wit: in the first ward, at the F. & M. Bank Building and in the second ward at the Firemen's hall, on the 9th day of January, 1906, between the hours of 8 o'clock A. M., and 7 o'clock P. M., of said day, at which the following proposition is submitted to be voted upon:

Shall the Mayor and City Council of the city of Red Cloud, Nebraska, be authorized to issue the coupon bonds to be denominated electric light bonds of said City of Red Cloud, in the amount of Ten Thousand Dollars, in the denomination of five hundred dollars each, payable to bearer and to become due twenty years after the date thereof, but payable any time after the expiration of five years, at the option of said city, and bearing not to exceed five per cent annual interest, and to be dated the day of their issuance. Interest and principal of said bonds to be payable at the fiscal agency of the state of Nebraska, in New York City. Said bonds to be sold for not less than par value, with accrued interest, and the proceeds thereof to be used by said city for the construction and establishing of a system of electric lights in and for said city, and shall the mayor and council of said city annually levy the necessary tax upon all the taxable property within said city, in addition to all other taxes to pay the interest on said bonds as the same becomes due and to furnish a sinking fund for the payment of the principal of said bonds, and an annual tax of not to exceed two mills on the dollar of the assessed valuation of said city, for the purpose of maintaining, operating and extending said system of electric lights.

The form of the ballot to be used at said election shall be as follows:

(Vote for One)

FOR electric light bonds and taxes.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
AGAINST electric light bonds and taxes.....	<input type="checkbox"/>

And to be voted and marked by making a cross in the space provided in the usual manner as provided by law.

Should a majority of the ballots cast at such election be in favor of said proposition, then the Mayor and Council of said city will be authorized to issue and negotiate said bonds according to the conditions and for the purpose specified in the foregoing proposition, and all as contemplated by the provisions of sections 854 to 858, inclusive, of Cobby's Annotated Statutes of 1903, and it shall be the duty of the Mayor and Clerk of said City when so authorized, and by order of the City Council, to sign and attest said bonds, and affix thereto the seal of said city. The proceeds of the sale of said bonds shall be paid to the treasurer of said city of Red Cloud and kept by him in a separate fund, apart from other moneys, to be known as the lighting fund, and paid out only upon the order of the Council and warrant drawn against the same for the said purpose specified and no other.

Dated this December 13th, 1905.  
Attest: By the Mayor,  
L. H. FORT, C. T. DICKENSON,  
(Seal) City Clerk. Jan 5

## RHEUMATISM CURED IN A DAY.

Mystic Cure for Rheumatism and Neuralgia radically cures in 1 to 3 days. Its action upon the system is remarkable and mysterious. It removes at once the cause and the disease immediately disappears. The first dose greatly benefits. 75 cents and \$1.00. Sold by H. E. Gripe Drugist, Red Cloud.