

ONE OF THE HALLUCINATIONS.

"I'm sixty to-day,
And the light in my eyes,
I'm sure is as clear
As the blue of the skies.
Do you think I am aging? Ah, Heaven forbid.
For I feel just as young as ever I did.

LEVENOL
And yet—well—um—er—sixty is sixty,
And between you and me,
He isn't as young as
He used to be.
—W. J. Lampton, in Detroit Free Press.



CHAPTER VI—CONTINUED.

I took the thorn up gingerly and held it in the light of the lantern. It was long, sharp and black, with a glazed look near the point as though some gummy substance had dried upon it. The blunt end had been trimmed and rounded off with a knife.

"Is this an English thorn?" he asked. "No, it certainly is not." "With all these data you should be able to draw some just inference. But here are the regulars; so the auxiliary forces may beat a retreat."

As he spoke, the steps which had been coming nearer sounded loudly on the passage, and a very stout, portly man in a gray suit strode heavily into the room. He was red-faced, burly and pithoric, with a pair of very small twinkling eyes which looked keenly out from behind swollen and puffy pouches. He was closely followed by an inspector in uniform, and by the still palpitating Thaddeus Sholto.

"Here's a business!" he cried, in a muffled husky voice. "Here's a pretty business! But who are all these? Why, the house seems to be as full as a rabbit-warren."

"I think you very much recollect me, Mr. Athelney Jones," said Holmes, quietly. "Why, of course I do!" he wheezed. "It's Mr. Sherlock Holmes, the theorist. Remember you! I'll never forget how you lectured us all on causes and inferences and effects in the Bishopsgate jewel case. It's true you set us on the right track; but you'll own now that it was more by good luck than good guidance."

"It was a piece of very simple reasoning." "Oh, come, now, come! Never be ashamed to own up. But what is all this? Bad business! Bad business! Stern facts here—no room for theories. How lucky that I happened to be out at Norwood over another case! I was at the station when the message arrived. What d'you think the man died of?"

"Oh, this is hardly a case for me to theorize over," said Holmes, dryly. "No, no. Still, we can't deny that you hit the nail on the head sometimes. Dear me! Door locked, I understand. Jewels worth half a million missing. How was the window?"

"Fastened; but there are steps on the sill." "Well, well, if it was fastened the steps could have nothing to do with the matter. That's common sense. Man might have died in a fit; but then the jewels are missing. Ha! I have a



"CONFIRMS IT IN EVERY RESPECT."

theory. These flashes come upon me at times. Just step outside, sergeant, and you, Mr. Sholto. Your friend can remain. What do you think of this, Holmes? Sholto was, on his own confession, with his brother last night. The brother died in a fit, on which Sholto walked off with the treasure. How's that?"

brother; there was a quarrel; so much we know. The brother is dead and the jewels are gone. So much also we know. No one saw the brother from the time Thaddeus left him. His bed had not been slept in. Thaddeus is evidently in a most disturbed state of mind. His appearance is—well, not attractive. You see that I am weaving my web round Thaddeus. The net begins to close upon him."

"You are not quite in possession of the facts yet," said Holmes. "This splinter of wood, which I have every reason to believe to be poisoned, was in the man's scalp where you still see the mark; this card, inscribed as you see it, was on the table; and beside it lay this rather curious stone-headed instrument. How does all that fit into your theory?"

"Confirms it in every respect," said the fat detective, pompously. "Housse is full of Indian curiosities. Thaddeus brought this up, and if this splinter be poisonous Thaddeus may as well have made murderous use of it as any other man. The card is some hocus-pocus—a blind, as like as not. The only question is, how did he depart? Ah, of course, here is a hole in the roof." With great activity, considering his bulk, he sprang up the steps and squeezed through into the garret, and immediately afterwards we heard his exulting voice proclaiming that he had found the trap-door.

"He can find something," remarked Holmes, shrugging his shoulders. "He has occasional glimmerings of reason. I'll n'y a pas des sots si incommodes que ceux qui ont de l'esprit!"

"You see!" said Athelney Jones, reappearing down the steps again. "Facts are better than mere theories, after all. My view of the case is confirmed. There is a trap-door communicating with the roof, and it is partly open."

"It was I who opened it." "Oh, indeed! You did notice it, then?" He seemed a little crestfallen at the discovery. "Well, whoever noticed it, it shows how our gentleman got away. Inspector?"

"Yes, sir," from the passage. "Ask Mr. Sholto to step this way.—Mr. Sholto, it is my duty to inform you that anything which you may say will be used against you. I arrest you in the queen's name as being concerned in the death of your brother."

"There, now! Didn't I tell you?" cried the poor little man, throwing out his hands and looking from one to the other of us.

"Don't trouble yourself about it, Mr. Sholto," said Holmes. "I think that I can engage to clear you of the charge."

"Don't promise too much, Mr. Theorist—don't promise too much!" snapped the detective. "You may find it a harder matter than you think."

"Not only will I clear him, Mr. Jones, but I will make you a free present of the name and description of one of the two people who were in this room last night. His name, I have every reason to believe, is Jonathan Small. He is a poorly-educated man, small, active, with his right leg off and wearing a wooden stump which is worn away upon the inner side. His left boot has a coarse, square-toed sole, with an iron band round the heel. He is a middle-aged man, much sunburned, and has been a convict. These few indications may be of some assistance to you, coupled with the fact that there is a good deal of skin missing from the palm of his hand. The other man—"

"Ah! the other man?" asked Athelney Jones, in a sneering voice, but impressed none the less, as I could easily see, by the precision of the other's manner.

"Is a rather curious person," said Sherlock Holmes, turning upon his heel. "I hope before long to be able to introduce you to the pair of them. A word with you, Watson."

He led me out to the head of the stair. "This unexpected occurrence," he said, "has caused us rather to lose sight of the original purpose of our journey."

"I have just been thinking so," I answered. "It is not right that Miss Morstan should remain in this stricken house."

"No. You must escort her home. She lives with Mrs. Cecil Forrester in Lower Camberwell; so it is not very far. I will wait for you here if you will drive out again. Or perhaps you are too tired?"

"By no means. I don't think I could rest until I know more of this fantastic business. I have seen something of the rough side of life, but I give you my word that this quick succession of strange surprises to-night has shaken my nerve completely. I should like, however, to see the matter through with you, now that I have got so far."

"Your presence will be of great service to me," he answered. "We shall work the case out independently and leave this fellow Jones to exult over any mare's-nest which he may choose to construct. When you have dropped Miss Morstan I wish you to go on to No. 3 Pinchin lane, down near the water's edge at Lambeth. The third house on the right-hand side is a bird stuffer's; Sherman is the name. You will see a wren's nest holding a young rabbit in the window. Knock old Sherman up and tell him, with my compliments, that I want Toby at once. You will bring Toby back in the cab with you."

"A dog, I suppose." "Yes—a queer mongrel, with a most amazing power of scent. I would rather have Toby's help than that of the whole detective force of London."

"I shall bring him, then," said I. "It is one now. I ought to be back before three, if I can get a fresh horse."

"And I," said Holmes, "shall see what I can learn from Mrs. Bernstone, and from the Indian servant, who, Mr. Thaddeus tells me, sleeps in the next garret. Then I shall study the great Jones's methods and listen to his not too delicate sarcasms. 'Wir sind gewohnt dass die Menschen verholnen was sie nicht verstehen.' Goethe is always pithy."

CHAPTER VII

THE EPISODE OF THE BARREL.

The police had brought a cab with them, and in this I escorted Miss Morstan back to her home. After the angelic fashion of women, she had borne trouble with a calm face as long as there was some one weaker than herself to support, and I had found her bright and placid by the side of the frightened housekeeper. In the cab, however, she first turned faint, and then burst into a passion of weeping—so sorely had she been tried by the adventures of the night. She has told me since that she thought me cold and distant upon that journey. She little guessed the struggle within my breast, or the effort of self-restraint which held me back. My sympathies and my love went out to her, even as my hand had in the garden. I felt that years of the conventionalities of life could not teach me to know her sweet, brave nature as had this one day of strange experiences. Yet there were two thoughts which sealed the words of affection upon my lips. She was weak and helpless, shaken in mind and nerve. It was to take her at a disadvantage to obtrude love upon her at such a time. Worse, still, she was rich. If Holmes' researches were successful she would be an heiress. Was it fair, was it honorable, that a half-pay surgeon should take such advantage of an intimacy which chance had brought about? Might she not look upon me as a mere vulgar fortune seeker? I could not bear to risk that such a thought should cross her mind. This Agra treasure intervened like an impassable barrier between us.

It was nearly two o'clock when we reached Mrs. Cecil Forrester's. The servants had retired hours ago, but Mrs. Forrester had been so interested by the strange message which Miss Morstan had received that she had sat up in the hope of her return. She opened the door herself, a middle-aged, graceful woman, and it gave me joy to see how tenderly her arm stole round the other's waist and how motherly was the voice in which she greeted her. She was clearly no mere paid dependant, but an honored friend. I was introduced, and Mrs. Forrester earnestly begged me to step in and to tell her our adventures. I explained, however, the importance of my errand, and promised faithfully to call and report any progress which we might make with the case. As we drove away I stole a glance back, and I still seem to see that little group on the step, the two graceful, clinging figures, the half-opened door, the hall light shining through stained glass, the barometer, and the bright stairrods. It was soothing to catch even that passing glimpse of a tranquil English home in the midst of the wild, dark business which had absorbed us.

And the more I thought of what had happened, the wilder and darker it grew. I reviewed the whole extraordinary sequence of events as I rattled on through the silent gas-lit streets. There was the original problem; that at least was pretty clear now. The death of Capt. Morstan, the sending of the pearls, the advertisement, the letter—we had had light upon all those events. They had only led us, however, to a deeper and far more tragic mystery. The Indian treasure, the curious plan found among Morstan's baggage, the strange scene at Maj. Sholto's death, the rediscovery of the treasure immediately followed by the murder of the discoverer, the very singular accompaniment of the crime, the footprints, the remarkable weapons, the words upon the card, corresponding with those upon Capt. Morstan's chart—here indeed was a labyrinth in which a man less singularly endowed than my fellow lodger might well despair of ever finding the clew.

Pinchin lane was a row of shabby two-storied brick houses in the lower quarter of Lambeth. I had to knock for some time at No. 3 before I could make any impression. At last, however, there was the glint of a candle behind the blind, and a face looked out at the upper window.

"Go on, you drunken vagabond," said the face. "If you kick up any more row I'll open the kennels and let out forty-three dogs upon you."

"If you'll let me out it's just what I have come for," said I.

"Go on!" yelled the voice. "So help me gracious, I have a wiper in this bag, an' I'll drop it on you're 'ead if you don't hook it."

"But I want a dog!" I cried.

"I won't be argued with!" shouted Mr. Sherman. "Now stand clear; for when I say 'three,' down goes the wiper."

"Mr. Sherlock Holmes—" I began, but the words had a most magical effect, for the window instantly slammed down, and within a minute the door was unbarred and open. Mr. Sherman was a lanky, lean old man, with stooping shoulders, a stringy neck and bluetinted glasses.

"A friend of Mr. Sherlock is always welcome," said he. "Step in, sir. Keep clear of the badger; for he bites. Ah, naughty, naughty, would you take a

nip at the gentleman?" This to a stoat which thrust its wicked head and red eyes between the bars of its cage. "Don't mind that, sir; it's only a slow-worm. It hasn't got no fangs, so I gives it the run o' the room, for it keeps the beetles down. You must not mind my bein' just a little short w' you at first, for I'm gayed at by the children, and there's many a one just comes down this lane to knock me up. What was it that Mr. Sherlock Holmes wanted, sir?"

"He wanted a dog of yours." "Ah! that would be Toby." "Yes, Toby was the name." "Toby lives at No. 7 on the left here." He moved slowly forward with his candle among the queer animal family which he had gathered round him. In the uncertain, shadowy light I could see dimly that there were glancing, glimmering eyes peeping down at us from every cranny and corner. Even the rafters above our heads were lined by solemn fowls, who lazily shifted their weight from one leg to the other as our voices disturbed their slumbers.

Toby proved to be an ugly, long-haired, lop-eared creature, half spaniel and half lurcher, brown-and-white in color, with a very clumsy waddling gait. It accepted, after some hesitation, a lump of sugar which the old naturalist handed to me, and, having thus sealed an alliance, it followed me to the cab, and made no difficulties about accompanying me. It had just struck three on the palace clock when I found myself back once more at Pondicherry lodge. The ex-prize-fighter McMurdo had, I found, been arrested as an accessory, and both he and Mr. Sholto had been marched off to the station. Two constables guarded the narrow gate, but they allowed me to pass with the dog on my mentioning the detective's name.

Holmes was standing on the doorstep, with his hands in his pockets, smoking his pipe.

"Ah, you have him there!" said he. "Good dog, then! Athelney Jones has gone. We have had an immense display of energy since you left. He has arrested not only friend Thaddeus, but the gatekeeper, the housekeeper, and the Indian servant. We have the place to ourselves, but for a sergeant upstairs. Leave the dog here, and come up."

We tied Toby to the hall table, and reascended the stairs. The room was as we had left it, save that a sheet had been draped over the central figure. A weary-looking police sergeant reclined in the corner.

"Lend me your bull's-eye, sergeant," said my companion. "Now tie this bit of card round my neck, so as to hang it in front of me. Thank you. Now I must kick off my boots and stockings! Just you carry them down with you. Watson, I am going to do a little climbing. And dip my handkerchief into the creosote. That will do. Now come up into the garret with me for a moment."

We clambered up through the hole. Holmes turned his light once more upon the footprints in the dust.

"I wish you particularly to notice these footmarks," he said. "Do you observe anything noteworthy about them?"

"They belong," I said, "to a child or a small woman."

"Apart from their size, though. Is there anything else?"

"They appear to be much as other footmarks."

"Not at all. Look here! This is the print of a right foot in the dust. Now I make one with my naked foot beside it. What is the chief difference?"

"Your toes are all cramped together. The other print has each toe distinctly divided."

"Quite so. That is the point. Bear that in mind. Now, would you kindly step over to the flap-window and smell the edge of the woodwork? I shall stay over here, as I have this handkerchief in my hand."

I did as he directed, and was instantly conscious of a strong tarry smell.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

A Chance for Inventors.

"I dare say," remarked Mr. Billtops, "that some time somebody will make a fortune by inventing something that will enable us to get a straight part in our hair the first time. Everybody knows that often though we try and try again the part still looks more like a zigzag streak of lightning than a straight part, and we lose much time in this way, and sometimes we lose our temper. What a blessing the hair parter will be, a simple and inexpensive contrivance that will need to be passed over the head but once, giving a straight part every time!"

PITH AND POINT.

—The Professor—"What do you regard as the most objectionable feature in our modern plays?" First Nighter—"The scale of prices."—The Great Divide.

—"So the insolent fellow refused to pay his rent?" "He did not say so in words, but he intimated it." "How so?" "He kicked me down-stairs."—Le Figaro.

—Dora—"Have you decided what you will wear at the hotel hop to-night?" Cora—"Do you know, I have thought of absolutely nothing."—Clothing and Furnisher.

—Mrs. Norris—"In this book I have written down most of the little incidents of our married life." Old Bonder—"Ah! Sort of family scrap-book, eh?"—Brooklyn Life.

—"How's all the boys makin' out now?" "None of 'em a-doin' of anything, 'ceptin' of Jim." "An' what's Jim a-doin' of?" "Loadin' around!"—Atlanta Constitution.

—The Cigarette.—Old Man Guff—"There's nothing quite as rank as a cigarette, is there?" Old Man Nuff—"I can't recall anything, unless it is the party smoking it."—Detroit Free Press.

—Mr. Dunn (unpaid bill in his hand).—"When shall I call again, Mr. Owens?" Mr. Owens—"Well, it would hardly be proper for you to call again until I have returned the present call."—Harper's Bazar.

—He—"Wasn't Brown's wife named Stone before she was married?" She—"Yes, and it was a very suitable name." He—"What do you mean?" She—"Oh, nothing! Only she threw herself at his head."—Life.

—A Close Father.—She—"You must ask father for his consent." He—"He won't give it to me." She—"Why not?" He—"He's too close. He never gave anything to anybody in his life."—Detroit Free Press.

—Student—"Several of my friends are coming to dine here, so I want a big table." Mine Host—"Just look at this one, sir. Fifteen persons could sleep quite comfortably under it."—Fliegenden Blatter.

—Fogg thinks it a remarkable instance of the superior intelligence of the house fly that it can remember, after lying dormant all winter, which member of the family is possessed of a bald head.—Boston Transcript.

—Ethel (looking at the statue of the Venus of Milo)—"It seems to me, Maud, that the women of ancient times had larger waists than they have now." Maud—"Well, perhaps the men had longer arms."—Pearson's Weekly.

—Benevolent Old Lady—"Why do you drink? Don't you know that rum is your worst enemy?" Red-Nosed Mike—"Jhat's zhust wasser matter. Don't zhe Bible shay a man should love iz enemies?"—Philadelphia Record.

—"I want to see a big, roomy flat," exclaimed the pompous man, as he strode into the real estate agent's office, "and I'm in a hurry, too." "You'll find a mirror in the wash-room," replied the clerk, politely.—Chicago Post.

—"Married!" sighed the elderly friend. "Married, and with no provisions for the future." "No," smilingly chirped the young bride, "there are no provisions for the future in the house. He just detests canned goods."—Indianapolis Journal.

—A Mount Washington school teacher told her pupils to write a sentence containing the word towards. This is what one small boy produced, after a great deal of mental exertion: "I tired my pants yesterday."—Pittsburgh Chronicle-Telegraph.

BUZZING IN HIS POCKET.

The Alarm Clock He Carried Wouldn't Stop Ringing.

An engraver, who always uses a clock to time his work at his place of business, was the victim of a practical joke the other evening.

For some reason it was necessary to take this clock home on a car, and his brother fixed it so the alarm would sound during the trip.

The car was going along smoothly with the man standing in quite a prominent place when the alarm sounded.

The passengers, trying to locate the noise, found that it originated in an innocent little package held in the gentleman's hand, but the scene reached its height when the man became frantic in his endeavors to hide the timepiece either in his coat-pocket or inside his vest.

Some one from an obscure corner remarked that it was time to get up for breakfast.

The owner of the clock was just going to hurl it through a closed window when with a few closing taps of the bell it became silent.—Columbus Dispatch.

Two Mean Men.

"My husband," said the large, fleshy lady, "has a habit of marking all paragraphs in the paper that say mean things about women."

"So you will not fail to see them, eh? Still, that is not as mean a trick as mine plays. He cuts them all out. Then I have to get another paper, only to find that I have been fooled again."—Indianapolis Journal.

—When men first take up an opinion, and then seek for reasons for it, they must be contented with such as the absurdity of it will afford.—South.