

# The Return of Sherlock Holmes

BY A. CONAN DOYLE.

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## VI. THE ADVENTURE OF BLACK PETER.



“I have never known my friend to be in better form, both mental and physical, than in the year '95. His increasing fame had brought with it an immense practice, and I should be guilty of indiscretion if I were even to hint at the identity of some of the illustrious clients who crossed our humble threshold in Baker street. Holmes, however, like all great artists, lived for his art's sake, and, save in the case of the Duke of Holderness, I have seldom known him to claim any large reward for his inestimable services. So unworshipful and so capricious: he frequently refused his help to the powerful and wealthy where the problem made no appeal to his sympathies, while he would devote weeks of intense application to the affairs of some humble client whose case presented novel and dramatic qualities which appealed to his imagination and challenged his ingenuity.”

In this memorable year '95, a curious and incongruous succession of cases had engaged his attention, ranging from the sudden death of Cardinal Tosca—an inquiry which was carried out by him at the express desire of His Holiness the Pope—down to the arrest of Wilson, the notorious canary trainer, which removed a plague spot from the East End of London. Close on the heels of these two famous cases came the tragedy of Woodman's Lee, and the very obscure circumstances which surrounded the death of Captain Peter Carey. No record of the doings of Mr. Sherlock Holmes would be complete which did not include some account of this very unusual affair.

During the first week of July, my friend had been absent so often and so long from our lodgings that I knew that he had something on hand. The fact that several rough looking cards during that time, and inquired for Basil made me understand that Holmes was working somewhere under one of the numerous disguises and names with which he concealed his own formidable identity. He had at least five small refuges in different parts of London, in which he was able to change his personality. He said nothing of his business to me, and it was not my habit to force a confidence. The first positive sign which he gave me of the direction which his investigation was taking was an extraordinary one. He had gone out before breakfast, and I had sat down to mine when he strode into the room, his hat upon his head and a huge barbed-head spear tucked like an umbrella under his arm.

“Good gracious, Holmes!” I cried. “You don't mean to tell me that you have been walking about London with that thing?”

“I drove to the butcher's and back.”

“The butcher's?”

“And I return with an excellent appetite. There is no question, my dear Watson, of the value of exercise before breakfast. But I am prepared to bet that you will not guess the form that my exercise has taken.”

“I will not attempt it.”

He chuckled as he poured out the coffee.

“If you could have looked into Allardyce's back shop, you would have seen a dead pig swung from a hook in the ceiling, and a gentleman in his shirt sleeves furiously stabbing at it with this weapon. I was that energetic person, and I have satisfied myself that by no exertion of my strength can I transfix the pig with a single blow. Perhaps you would care to try?”

“Not for worlds. But why were you doing this?”

“Because it seemed to me to have an indirect bearing upon the mystery of Woodman's Lee. Ah, Hopkins, I got your wire last night, and I have been expecting you. Come and join us.”

Our visitor was an exceedingly alert man, thirty years of age, dressed in a quiet, tweed suit, but retaining the erect bearing of one who was accustomed to official uniform. I recognized him at once as Stanley Hopkins, a young police inspector, for whose future Holmes had high hopes, while he in turn professed the admiration and respect of a pupil for the scientific methods of the famous amateur. Hopkins' brow was clouded, and he sat down with an air of deep dejection.

“No, thank you, sir. I breakfasted before I came round. I spent the night in town, for I came up yesterday to report.”

“And what had you to report?”

“Failure, sir, absolute failure.”

“You have made no progress?”

“None.”

“Dear me! I must have a look at the matter.”

“I wish to heavens that you would, Mr. Holmes. It's my first big chance, and I am at my wit's end. For goodness' sake, come down and lend me a hand.”

“Well, well, it just happens that I have already read all the available evidence, including the report of the inquest, with some care. By the way, what do you make of that tobacco pouch, found on the scene of the crime? Is there no clew there?”

Hopkins looked surprised.

“It was the man's own pouch, sir. His initials were inside it. And it was of seal-skin, and he was an old sealer.”

“But he had no pipe.”

“No, sir, we could find no pipe. Indeed, he smoked very little, and yet he might have kept some tobacco for his friends.”

“No doubt. I only mention it because, if I had been handling the case, I should have been inclined to make that the starting point of my investigation. However, my friend, Dr. Watson, knows nothing of this matter, and I should be none the worse for hearing the sequence of events once more. Just give us some short sketches of the essentials.”

Stanley Hopkins drew a slip of paper from his pocket.

“I have a few dates here which will give you the career of the dead man,

Captain Peter Carey. He was born in '45—fifty years of age. He was a most daring and successful seal and whale fisher. In 1833 he commanded the steam sealer Sea Unicorn, of Dundee. He had then had several successful voyages in succession, and in the following year, 1834, he retired. After that he traveled for some years, and finally he bought a small place called Woodman's Lee, near Forest Row, in Sussex. There he has lived for six years, and there he died just a week ago today.

“There were some most singular points about the man. In ordinary life, he was a strict Puritan—a silent, gloomy fellow. His household consisted of his wife, his daughter, aged twenty, and two female servants. These last were continually changing, for it was never a very cheery situation, and sometimes it became past all bearing. The man was an intermittent drunkard, and when he had the command of him he was a perfect fiend. He has been known to drive his wife and daughter out of doors in the middle of the night, and flog them through the park until the whole village outside the gates was aroused by their screams.

“He was summoned once for a savage assault upon the old vicar, who had called upon him to remonstrate with him upon his conduct. In short, Mr. Holmes, you would go far before you found a more dangerous man than Peter Carey, and I have heard that he bore the same character when he commanded his ship. He was known in the trade as Black Peter, and the name was given him, not only on account of his swarthy features and the color of his huge beard, but for the humors which were the terror of all around him. I need not say that he was loathed and avoided by every one of his neighbors, and that I have not heard one single word of sorrow about his terrible end.

“You must have read in the account of the inquest about the man's cabin, Mr. Holmes, but perhaps your friend here has not heard of it. He had built himself a wooden outhouse—he always called it the ‘cabin’—a few hundred yards from his house, and it was here that he slept every night. It was a little, single-roomed hut, sixteen feet by ten. He kept the key in his pocket, and he had a small window, which he allowed no other foot to cross the threshold. There are small windows on each side, which were covered by curtains and never opened. One of these windows was turned towards the high roof, and when the light burned in it at night the folk used to point it out to each other and wonder what Black Peter was doing in there. That's the window, Mr. Holmes, which gave us one of the few bits of positive evidence that came out of the inquest.

“On the Tuesday, Peter Carey was in one of his blackest moods, flushed with drink and as savage as a dangerous wild beast. He roamed about the house, and the women ran for it when they heard his roaring. Late in the evening he went down to his own room. About 2 o'clock the following morning, his daughter, who slept with her window open, heard a most fearful yell from that direction, but it was no yell from the man, but a shout and shout which he was in the habit of making when he was in drink, so no notice was taken. On rising at 7, one of the maids noticed that the door of the hut was open, but so great was the terror which the man caused that it was midday before anyone would venture down to see what had become of him. Peeping into the open door, they saw a sight which sent them flying, with white faces, into the village. Within an hour, I was on the spot and had taken over the case.

“Well, I have fairly steady nerves, as you know, Mr. Holmes, but I give you my word, that I got a shake when I put my head into that little house. It was dripping like a harmonium with the flies and bluebottles, and the floor and walls were like a slaughter house. He had called it a cabin, and a cabin it was, sure enough, for you would have thought that you were in a ship. There was a bunk at one end, a sea chest, maps and charts, a picture of the Sea Unicorn, a line of logbooks on a shelf, all exactly as one would expect to find it in a captain's room. And there, in the middle of it, was the man himself, his face twisted like a lost soul in torment, and his great brindled beard stuck upwards in his agony. Right through his broad breast a steel harpoon had been driven, and it had sunk deep into the wood of the wall behind him. He was pinned like a beetle on a card. Of course, he was quite dead, and had been so from the instant that he had uttered that last yell of agony.

“I know your methods, sir, and I applied them. Before we permitted anything to be moved, I examined most carefully the ground outside, and also the floor of the room. There were no footmarks.”

“Meaning that you saw none?”

“I assure you, sir, that there were none.”

“I wish to heavens that you would, Mr. Holmes. It's my first big chance, and I am at my wit's end. For goodness' sake, come down and lend me a hand.”

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“I have a few dates here which will give you the career of the dead man,

“My good Hopkins, I have investigated many crimes, but I have never yet seen one which was committed by a flying creature. As long as the criminal remains upon two legs so long must there be some indentation, some abrasion, some trifling displacement which can be detected by the scientific searcher. It is incredible that this blood-bespattered room contained no trace which could have aided us. I understand, however, from the inquest that the man's objects which you failed to overlook.”

“The young inspector winced at my companion's ironical comments.

“I was a fool not to call you in at the time, Mr. Holmes. However, that's past praying for now. Yes, there were several objects in the room which called for special attention. One was the harpoon with which the deed was committed. It had been snatched down from a rack on the wall. Two others remained there, and there was a vacant space for the third. On the stock was engraved ‘Ss. Sea Unicorn, Dundee.’ This seemed to establish that the crime had been done in a moment of fury, and that the murderer had seized the first weapon which came in his way. The fact that the crime was committed at 2 o'clock in the morning, and yet Peter Carey was fully dressed, suggested that he had an appointment with the murderer, which is borne out by the fact that a bottle of rum and two dirty glasses stood upon the table.”

“Yes,” said Holmes: “I think that both inferences are permissible. Was there any other spirit but rum in the room?”

“Yes, there was a tantalus containing brandy and whisky on the sea chest. It is of no importance to us, however, since the decanters were full, and it had therefore not been used.”

“For all that, its presence has some significance,” said Holmes. “However, let us hear some more about the objects which do seem to you to bear upon the case.”

“There was this tobacco pouch upon the table.”

“What part of the table?”

“It lay in the middle. It was of coarse seal-skin—the straight-haired skin, with neither down nor nap. Inside was printed letters ‘C. P. R.’, and then came several sheets of numbers. Another heading was ‘Argentine,’ another ‘Costa Rica,’ and another ‘San Paulo,’ each with pages of signs and figures after it.”

“What do you make of these?” asked Holmes.

“They appear to be lists of stock exchange securities. I thought that ‘J. H. N.’ were the initials of a broker, and that ‘C. P. R.’ may have been his client.”

“Try Canadian Pacific Railway,” said Holmes.

Stanley Hopkins swore between his teeth, and struck his thigh with his clenched hand.

“What a fool I have been!” he cried. “Of course, it is as you say. Then ‘J. H. N.’ are the only initials we have to solve. I have already examined the old stock exchange lists, and I can find no one in 1883, either in the house or among the outside brokers, whose initials correspond with these. Yet I feel that the clue is the most important one that I hold. You will admit, Mr. Holmes, that there is a possibility that these initials are those of the second person who was present in other words, of the murderer. I would also urge that the introduction into the case of a document relating to large masses of valuable securities gives us for the first time some indication of a motive for the crime.”

“The trellis, which is entirely overspread, is 100 by 110 feet in dimensions, embracing an area of approximately one-fourth of an acre. A company of 800 people are said to have been in the vine on the time of the murder, and the vine is found shade beneath the umbrageous branches.

The vine is still in a healthy state of growth, and, if permitted to do so, bids fair to further enlarge itself by many square rods. The largest crop ever yet actually weighed was ten tons, in 1885. This did not include miscellaneous distributions to visitors and friends of the proprietor. A common estimate of the entire yield was 24,000 pounds. The larger clusters are reported to have weighed nine or ten pounds each.

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“Cracked Ice Goes to Waste.”  
From the Boston Herald.  
Simeon Ford has a story of a New York hotel man whose cafe and rathskeller are the resorts of a bohemian set. This bohemian was spending his vacation in Maine, when one evening he was kept in his hotel by a terrific storm. The windows of his room were broken by hailstones of a size generally compared to hen's eggs.

It happened that the proprietor of the hotel was the room engaged in conversation with the New Yorker during most of the storm. The hotel man observed that his guest appeared to be laboring under great emotion, so asked: “Does the storm scare you?” “Not exactly,” was the reply, “but it does tear my heartstrings to see so much cracked ice wasted on a prohibition state.”

Cock-a-Doodle-Do!  
When Frank Stockton started out with his Rudder Grange experiences he undertook to keep chickens. One old motherly Plymouth Rock brought out a brood late in the fall, and Stockton gave her a good deal of his attention. He named each of the chicks after some literary friend, among the rest Miss Mary Mapes Dodge. Mrs. Dodge was visiting the farm some time later, and happening to think of her namesake, she said: “By the way, Frank, how does little Mary Mapes Dodge get along?” “The funny thing about little Mary Mapes Dodge,” said he, “is, she turns out to be Thomas Bailey Aldrich.”

Twice-Told Testimony.  
A Woman Who Has Suffered Tell How to Find Relief.  
The thousands of women who suffer backache, languor, urinary disorders and other kidney ills, will find comfort in the words of Mrs. Jane Farrell, of 606 Ocean Ave., Jersey City, N. J., who says: “I reiterate all I have said before in praise of Doan's Kidney Pills. I had been having a heavy backache and my general health was affected when I began using them. My feet were swollen, my eyes puffed, and dizzy spells were frequent. Kidney action was irregular and the secretions highly colored. To-day, however, I am a well woman, and I am confident that Doan's Kidney Pills have made me so, and are keeping me well.”

Sold by all dealers. 50 cents a box. Foster-Viburno Co., Buffalo, N. Y.

A Vine Shelters 800 People.  
From the Los Angeles Times.  
In the Carpenteria valley, half encircled by a picturesque range of the Santa Yues mountains, stands the world's greatest grapevine.

Sixty-four years ago a Spanish woman named Joaquina Lugodi Ayala planted a small twig of the Mission grape. She watched and tended it with jealous care through its early growth and in later years kept it neatly trimmed and trained. Some twenty years ago the vine was purchased with a plot of ground by Jacob Wilson, who has since denied it further compass by keeping it constantly pruned. Its present measurements, however, are by no means uninteresting. At the ground level the trunk measures nine feet nine inches in circumference. Five feet above ground it has a girth of seven feet eleven inches. At a height of six feet the trunk branches into five divisions which radiate in different directions. These five branches have a combined circumference of four feet seven inches, the smallest measuring two feet and the largest four feet three inches. Within a radius of eighteen feet from the trunk there are twenty-nine subdivisions or runners, each measuring from ten to twenty-two inches in circumference, together with countless smaller branches. The longest runner at present reaches the enormous distance of seventy-six feet.

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# PRACTICAL FARM NOTES

A PROTECTED MILK PAIL.  
That many of the odors and much of the dirt which gets into milk is during the process of milking most of us know, hence every precaution to overcome this should be taken. One of the best methods of protecting the milk in the pail is to arrange a cover of tin and cheese cloth. Have a tin cover made to go over the pail loosely so as to allow for the space taken by the cloth strainer. The tin cover should be higher in the center than at the sides (see small cut below) and a hole about four inches in diameter made in the center through which the milk is directed. Then have plenty of cheese cloth

but the bordeaux mixture should be used alone until the bugs are noticed. When it is figured that the cost of spraying does not exceed seven dollars an acre, and it is often less, while experiments have proved that the value of the crop was increased three or four times the cost for spraying, it certainly pays well.

DON'T OVERDO THE SEPARATING.  
It is unfortunate that no great good can come without its bringing at least the temptation to do more or less harm. A case in point is with the separator, or rather with the man who runs the machine. The value of the separator cannot be denied and it is a machine which should be used on every dairy farm whether the milk is sold or butter is made. A word of warning, however, to the man who sells milk to the consumer. Don't separate too closely or you may run against the law of the state which requires that the milk be up to a certain standard under test. Near the writer are located two farms whose owners have had splendid trade in a near by town in milk and cream. They each bought separators and, as cream sold at 20 cents a quart and the demand was great, they proceeded to use the separator to the point that they were selling what was little better than skimmed milk to their customers and at 8 cents a quart, with the result that one of them has lost nearly 80 per cent. of his trade and the other more than half, and all within nine months. Other milkmen who do not own separators are being sold their milk by a separator by all means, but do not use it consciously or unconsciously to cheat the public.

FARM FOR YOUR CROP.  
A writer familiar with the cotton situation in the south says that the cotton growers insist in planting cotton instead of farming for cotton, meaning that they grow cotton after cotton using commercial fertilizers to force the crops rather than diversified farming which includes the raising of stock food and the feeding of stock in order to turn the manure back to the farm. Other sections of the country make the same mistake in different ways. In the corn belt the grower plants seed from his crib and his yield gets smaller year after year and he frantically resorts to the commercial fertilizers which force growth. If he would plan diversified farming and, more than all, start in on a plan of improving his seed corn by first getting a good crop of corn, he would buy and select certain plants as they grow from which to take the corn for seed the next year, keeping up this selection of the best from the best for several years, he would have larger crops of better corn and make a corresponding profit. Look into this plan, friend.

BETTER PRICES FOR TOMATOES.  
The demand for canned tomatoes, the scarcity of labor and, more than all, some sections the demand for the fresh vegetable has forced canners to raise the price for tomatoes grown for them on contract and also to remove some of the restrictions which have made it impossible to grow the crop profitably with any certainty. Certain forms and shades of color are no longer condemned nor are growers compelled to buy the plants from the owner of the cannery as was the case in many sections. There promises to be an extended area devoted to tomatoes this year, but it is hoped that where a grower is located near a good market he will be able to himself by agreeing not to market the fresh vegetable. Remember that one of the chief reasons for the increase in the price from the canneries is the increased demand for the fresh fruit. The producer is entitled to share the profit of this demand with the canner but he can't do it if he does not obligate himself to grow solely for the canneries.

SUMMER GRAIN FOR POULTRY.  
It is not to be expected that the fowls can be taken care of wholly on the range during the summer no matter how extensive it may be, grain must be fed in a great degree, more than during the summer we do without the mashes and corn, feeding wheat and buckwheat, and, beginning in June, more or less cottonseed meal, adding it in very small quantities and increasing it gradually until about one-tenth of the daily ration consists of the oil meal, more than all, because it has been proven that the moulting is made much easier if the hen gets a lot of this oily meal in her system; of course there is more or less virtue in the meal anyway as a food, but we have the moulting period mainly in mind. Once a week we mix up a lot of buckwheat, wheat, a little oil meal and just a very little cracked corn with some wheat bran and let the birds have it dry; this we usually feed on a strip of meadow which has been run over with a lawn mower set very low. The grass is thin and when cut very short the birds spend several hours scratching and eating. This feed they seem to enjoy immensely and we know they get much good from it for enough is given to pretty well satisfy their appetites.

ECONOMIZING GREEN FOOD.  
When green food is scarce or difficult to obtain it pays to plan some way so it will not be wasted. The following description is of a feeding box that works well. Cut two pieces for the ends each 24 inches long, getting proper curve by using a compass. Make the back of the holder of this board one foot long and twenty-four inches wide and nail one end (figure 5) in place, hinging the other end, using small straps of leather to hold it shut. Covers the holder with coarse mesh wire netting

SPRAYING FOR POTATOES.  
The recognized formula for bordeaux mixture for use on potatoes is six pounds of copper sulphate, blue vitriol, four pounds unslaked quicklime and 50 gallons of water. The copper sulphate is dissolved in one barrel and the lime in another. Add to each 25 gallons of water and then mix thoroughly. Taking ten cent corn for the purpose it is scored as follows: Vigor of plant, 20 points; position of ear, 5 points; weight of ear, 50 points; length of ear, 5 points; uniformity of plant and ear, 10 points, and shape of kernel and size of germ, 10 points. Very important in the scoring is the discoloration of the plants growing under less than normal staps; plants lying upon the ground or badly broken; plants diseased; plants maturing too late or too early. To select the seed corn from such plants is fatal to the following crop. The vigor of the plant is indicated by the circumference of the stalk below the ear; by its upright growth and by its leaf development and freedom from disease. The ideal position of the ear is such that it does not pull too heavily upon the plant. The weight of the ear is to be determined by scales when the ear is thoroughly air-dry. The plan of uniformity of plant and ear is based on the habit of growth and vigor of plant as well as size, shape, color and indentation of ear. Corn growers everywhere should profit by these points which will mean decidedly improved crops.