

The Return of Sherlock Holmes

BY A. CONAN DOYLE.

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THE ADVENTURE OF BLACK PETER—Continued.

"You are just the man I want," said he. "Here's the agreement on the side-table. If you sign it the whole matter will be settled."

The seaman lurched across the room and took up the pen.

"Shall I sign here?" he asked, stooping over the table.

Holmes leaned over his shoulder and glanced both hands over his neck.

"This will do," said he.

I heard a click of steel and a bellow like an enraged bull. The next instant Holmes and the seaman were rolling on the ground together.

Holmes was a man of such gigantic strength that even with the handcuffs which Holmes had so deftly fastened upon his wrists, he would have very quickly overpowered my friend had Hopkins and I not rushed to his rescue.

Only when I pressed the muzzle of the revolver to his temple did he at last understand that resistance was vain.

We lashed his ankles with cord, and rose breathless from the struggle.

"I must really apologize, Hopkins," said Sherlock Holmes. "I fear that the scrambled eggs are cold. However, you will enjoy the rest of your breakfast all the better, will you not, for the thought that you have brought your case to a triumphant conclusion."

Stanley Hopkins was speechless with amazement.

"I don't know what to say, Mr. Holmes," he blurted out at last, with a very red face. "It seems to me that I have been making a fool of myself from the beginning. I understand now, what I should never have forgotten, that I am the pupil and you are the master. Even now I see what you have done, but I don't know how you did it, or what it signifies."

"Well, well," said Holmes, good humoredly, "we all learn by experience, and your lesson this time is that you should never lose sight of the alternative. You were so absorbed in your Nollan that you could not spare a thought to Patrick Cairns, the true murderer of Peter Carey."

The hoarse voice of the seaman broke in on our conversation.

"See here, mister," said he, "I make no complaint of being man-handled in this fashion, but I would have you call things by their right names. You say I murdered Peter Carey, I say I killed Peter Carey, and there's all the difference. Maybe you don't believe what I say. Maybe you think I am just slinging you a yarn."

"Not at all," said Holmes. "Let us hear what you have to say."

"It's soon told, and by the Lord, every word of it is true. I knew Black Peter, and when he pulled out his knife I whipped a harpoon through him sharp, for I knew that it was him or me. That's how he died. You can call it murder, or what you like, but I don't care. I was master of the Sea Unicorn, and I was spare harpooner. We were coming out of the ice pack on our way home, with head winds and a week's southerly gale, when we picked up a little craft that had been blown north. It was a man and a woman, and a child. The crew had thought she would founder, and had made for the Norwegian coast in the dinghy. I guess they had drowned. Well, we took him on board, this man, and he and the skipper had some long talks in the cabin. All the baggage we took off was in a box. I guessed that he was a man, and the man's name was never mentioned, and on the second night he disappeared as if he had never been. It was given out that he had either thrown himself overboard or fallen overboard in the heavy weather that we were having. Only one man knew what had happened, and that was me, for, with my own eyes, I saw the skipper tip up his heels and put him over the rail in the middle watch of a dark night, two days before we sighted the Shetland Lights."

"Well, I kept my knowledge to myself, and waited to see what would come of it. When we got back to Scotland he was easily hushed up, and nobody asked any questions. A stranger died by accident, and it was nobody's business to inquire. Shortly after Peter Carey gave up the sea, and it was long years before I could find where he was. I guessed that he had done the deed for the sake of what was in that tin box, and that he could afford now to pay me well for keeping my mouth shut."

"I found out where he was through a sailor man who had met him in London, and down I went to squeeze him. The first night he was reasonable enough, and was ready to give me what would make me free of the sea for life. We were to fix it all two nights later. When I came, I found him three-parts drunk and in a vile temper. We sat down and he and I waited for a bit, but all was quiet, so I took heart once more. I looked round, and there was the tin box on the shelf. I had as much right to it as Peter Carey, anyhow, so I took it with me and left the hut. Like a fool I left my baccy pouch upon the table."

"Now I'll tell you the queerest part of the whole story. I had hardly got outside the hut when I heard someone coming, and I hid among the bushes. A man came strolling along, went into the hut, gave a cry as if he had seen a ghost, and legged it as hard as he could run until he was out of sight. Who he was or what he wanted is more than I can tell. For my part I walked ten miles, got a train at Tunbridge Wells, and so reached London, and no one the wiser."

"Well, when I came to examine the box I found there was no money in it, and nothing but papers that I would not dare to sell. I had lost my hold on Black Peter, and was stranded in London without a shilling. There was only my trade left. I saw these advertisements about harpooners, and high wages, so I went to the shipping agents, and they sent me here. That's all I know, and I say again that if I killed Black Peter, the law should give me thanks, for I saved them the price of a hempen rope."

"A very clear statement," said Holmes, rising and lighting his pipe. "I think, Hopkins, that you should lose no time in conveying your prisoner to a place of safety. This room is not well adapted for a cell, and Mr. Patrick Cairns occupies too large a proportion of our carpet."

"Mr. Holmes," said Hopkins, "I do not know how to express my gratitude. Even now I do not understand how you attained this result."

"Simply by having the good fortune to get the right clue from the beginning. It is very possible if I had known about this note book it might have led away my thoughts, as it did yours. But all I heard pointed in one direction. The amazing strength, the skill in the use of the harpoon, the rum and water, the seal-skin tobacco pouch with the coarse tobacco—all these pointed to a seaman, and one who had been a whaler. I was convinced that the initials 'P. C.' upon the pouch were a coincidence, and not those of Peter Carey, since he seldom smoked, and no pipe was found in his cabin. You remember that I asked whether whisky and brandy were in the cabin. You said they were. How many landmen are there who would drink rum when they could get these other spirits? Yes, I was certain it was a seaman."

"And how did you find him?"

"My dear sir, the problem had become a very simple one. If it were a seaman, it could only be a seaman who had been with him on the Sea Unicorn. So far as I could learn he had sailed in no other ship. I spent three days in wiring to Dundee, and at the end of that time I had ascertained the names of the crew of the Sea Unicorn in 1883. When I found Patrick Cairns among the harpooners, my research was nearing its end. I argued that he would be in London, and that he would desire to leave the country for a time. I therefore spent some days in the East End, devised an Arctic expedition, put forth tempting terms for harpooners who would serve under Captain Basil—

and behold the result!"

"Wonderful!" cried Hopkins. "Wonderful!"

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have gained the confidence and affection of trusting women. He deals with no niggard hand. I happen to know that he paid seven hundred pounds to a footman for a note two lines in length, and that the ruin of a whole noble family was the result. Everything which is in the market goes to Milverton, and there are hundreds in this great city who turn white at his name. No one knows where his grip may fall, for he is far too rich and far too cunning to work from hand to mouth. He will hold a card back for years in order to play it at the moment when the stake is best worth winning. I have said that he is the worst man in London, and I would ask you how could one compare this ruffian, who in hot blood bludgeoned his mate, with this man, who methodically and at his leisure tortures the soul and wrings the nerves in order to add to his already swollen money bags?"

"I had seldom heard my friend speak with such intensity of feeling."

"But surely," said I, "the fellow must be within the grasp of the law?"

"Technically, no doubt, but practically, not. What would it profit a woman, for example, to get him a few months imprisonment, if her own ruin must immediately follow? His victims dare not hit back. If ever he blackmailed an innocent person then indeed we should have him, but he is as cunning as the Evil One. No, no, we must find other ways to fight him."

"And why is he here?"

"Because an illustrious client has placed her piteous case in my hands. It is the Lady Eva Blackwell, the most beautiful debutante of last season. She is to be married in a fortnight to the Earl of Dovercourt. This fiend has several imprudent letters—imprudent, Watson, nothing worse—which were written to an impecunious young squire in the country. They would suffice to break off the match. Milverton will send the letters to the earl unless a large sum of money is paid him. I have been commissioned to meet him and—to make the best terms I can."

"At that instant there was a clatter and a rattle in the street below. Looking down I saw a dark, shaggy, pair, the brilliant lamps gleaming on the glossy haunches of the noble chestnuts. A footman opened the door, and a small, stout man in a shaggy astrakhan overcoat descended. A minute later he was in the room."

"Charles Augustus Milverton was a man of fifty, with a large, intellectual head, a round, plump, hairless face, a perpetual, frozen smile, and two keen gray eyes, which gleamed brightly from behind broad, gold-rimmed glasses. There was something of Mr. Pickwick's benevolence in his appearance, marred only by the insincerity of the fixed smile and by the hard glitter of those restless and penetrating eyes. His voice was as smooth and suave as his countenance, but, of course, the securities which Peter Carey has sold are lost forever. There's the cab, Hopkins, and you can remove your man. If you want me for the trial, my address and that of Watson will be somewhere in Norway—I'll send particulars later."

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Was Well Recommended.
From Everybody's.
The buxom maid had been hinting that she did not think much of working out, and this, in conjunction with the nightly appearance of a rather sheepish young man, caused her mistress much apprehension.

"Martha, is it possible that you are thinking of getting married?"

"Yes'm," admitted Martha, blushing.

"Not that young fellow who has been calling on you lately?"

"Yes'm, he's the one."

"But you have known him only a few days?"

"Three weeks come Thursday," corrected Martha.

"Do you think that is long enough to know a man before taking such an important step?"

"Well," answered Martha, with spirit, "taint 's if he was some new feller. He's well recommended; a perfectly lovely girl I knew was engaged to him for a long while."

"Ailing Women.
Keep the Kidneys Well and the Kidneys Will Keep You Well.

Sick, suffering, languid women are learning the true cause of bad backs and how to cure them. Mrs. W. G. Davis, of Groesbeck, Texas, says: "Back-aches hurt me so I could hardly stand. Spells of dizziness and sick headache were frequent and the action of the kidneys was irregular."

Soon after I began taking Doan's Kidney Pills I passed several gravel stones. I got well and the trouble has not returned. My back is good and strong and my general health better."

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

A Wise Father.
From the Boston Herald.

When the late Sherman Hoar, a lawyer of recognized ability, left the law school and opened an office in Boston, his father, Judge Hoar, was at the height of his legal reputation.

The young man's first client was an Irishman, and the case, though only some small matter of a boundary line, was one that required the examination of a number of deeds and records. Mr. Hoar accordingly told his client to come back in two days for his opinion.

The Irishman left the office, evidently very reluctant at the delay. Turning at the door, he asked: "Couldn't ye give me the answer tomorrow, Misther Hoar?"

"No, no," was the reply; "come on Thursday."

The client went as far as the stairs. Then he turned and looked back to the door and put his head inside, with a finger to his lips.

"Whist!" he whispered. "Couldn't ye get to see your father tonight, Misther Hoar?"

"What He Called Lallagagging.
From the Boston Herald.

A few years ago while keeping a summer hotel in Jaffrey, N. H., we employed for all around work a young fellow named Johnnie Donahue. Now Johnnie was a small chap and not at all prepossessing as to appearance. However, he tried to be quite a beau monde in the house, especially with the dishwasher, Lizzie Stone.

The second season he was with us some of the boys of the neighborhood were in the hotel office, and began to chaff him about Lizzie, and asked if he knew she was to work there again that year. He replied that he did not, but he was "not going to have her lallagagging around him the way she did the year before."

They asked what he called lallagagging, and he replied: "Why, asking a girl to go somewhere and she won't go."

Operation Was Unnecessary.
Nurses in advising hospital treatment often meet with fixed objections. One girl was urged to go to a hospital for removal of fatty tumor. The Celtic neighbor on the same floor strongly urged against it. Said she: "They're asking you to operate. My own Maggie, when she went, the doctors they said, said they, 'She's got appendicitis, that new kind of thing. And I begged, 'O, docher, darlin', give her two days' chance.' And what do you think? Before she was two days was up, she caught it up."

Keep the Cultivators Busy. That's the way to keep crops humming in a very dry season. In orchard or corn field the shallow cultivator is the thing now.

Knifed.
Coffee Knifed an Old Soldier.

An old soldier, released from coffee at 72, recovered his health and tells about it as follows:

"I stuck to coffee for years, although it knifed me again and again."

"About eight years ago (as a result of coffee-drinking, which congested my liver) I was taken with a very severe attack of malarial fever."

"I would apparently recover and start about my usual work only to suffer a relapse. After this had been repeated several times during the year I was again taken violently ill."

"The Doctor said he had carefully studied my case and it was either 'quit coffee or die,' advising me to take Postum in its place. I had always thought coffee one of my dearest friends, and especially when sick, and I was very much taken back by the Doctor's decision, for I hadn't suspected the coffee I drank could possibly cause my troubles."

"I thought it over for a few minutes and finally told the Doctor I would make the change. Postum was procured for me the same day and made according to directions; well, I liked it and stuck to it, and since then I have been a new man. The change in health began in a few days and surprised me, and now, although I am seventy-two years of age, I do lots of hard work, and for the past month have been teaming, driving sixteen miles a day besides loading and unloading the wagon. That's what Postum in the place of coffee has done for me. I now like the Postum as well as I did coffee."

"I have known people who did not care for Postum at first, but after having learned to make it properly according to directions they have come to like it as well as coffee. I never miss a chance to praise it." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

Look for the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pits.



PRACTICAL FARM NOTES

SUMMER COMFORT FOR HORSE.

If a human being had to undergo some of the discomforts at night that horses are forced to submit to in the stables both day and night, one would then realize how inhuman it is not to furnish the small comforts which can be given at so little cost. Water at night is not, as a rule, considered necessary for horses yet many horses are constituted that they ought to have free access to water at night. This can be supplied readily and without danger of spilling it over the floor in this manner. Make a shelf at one end of the manger large enough to hold a pail; to prevent the pail from being overturned get a strong loop of