

Return of Sheriock Holmes

As to the arrest of John Mitton, the valet, it was a council of despair as an Godolphia street." alternative to absolute inaction. But no case could be sustained against him. He had visited friends in Hammer. while be finished his breakfast. smith that night. The alibi was complete. It is true that he started home at an hour which should have brought him to Westminster before the time suffering, but if I have told you nothwhen the crime was discovered, but his own explanation that he had walked part of the way seemed probable enough in view of the fineness of the night. He had actually arrived at 12 o'clock and appeared to be overwhelmed by the unexpected tragedy. He had always been on good terms with his master. Several of the dead man's possessions, notably a small case of razors, had been found in the valet's boxes, but he explained that they had been presents from the deceased, and the housekeeper was able to corroborate the story. Mitton had been in Lucas' employment for three years. It was noticeable that Lucas did not take Mitton on the continent with him. Sometimes he visited Paris for three months on end, but Mitton was left in charge of the Godolphin street house. As to the housekeeper, she heard nothing on the night of the crime. If her master had a visitor he had himself admitted him.

So for three mornings the mystery remained, so far as I could follow it in the papers. If Holmes knew more, he kept his own counsel, but as he told me that Inspector Lestrade had taken him into his confidence in the case I knew that he was in close touch with every development. Upon the fourth day there appeared a long telegram from Paris which seemed to solve the whole question.

"A discovery has just been made by the Parisian police," said the Daily Telegraph, "which raises the vell which hung round the tragic fate of Mr. Eduardo Lucas, who met his death by violence last Monday night in Godolphin street. Westminster. Our readers will remember that the deceased gentleman was found stabbed in his room and that some suspicion attached to his valet, but that the case broke down on an alibi. Yesterday a lady, who has been known as Mme. Henri Fournave, occupying a small villa in the Rue Austerlitz, was reported to the authorities by her servants as being insane. An examination showed she had indeed developed mania of a dangerous and permanent form. On inquiry the police have discovered that Mme. Henri Fournaye only returned from a journey to London on Tuesday last, and there is evidence to connect her with the crime at Westminster. A comparison of photographs has proved conclusively that M. Henri Fournaye and Eduardo Lucas were really one and the same person and that the deceased had for some reason lived a double life in London and Paris. Mme, Fournaye, who is of creole origin, is of an extremely excitable nature and has suffered in the past from attacks of jealousy which have amounted to frenzy. It is confectured that it was in one of these that she committed the terrible crime which has caused such a sensation in London. Her movements upon the Monday night have not yet been traced. but it is undoubted that a woman answering to her description attracted much attention at Charing Cross station on Tuesday morning by the wildness of her appearance and the vio-

she is unable to give any coherent account of the past, and the doctors hold out no hopes of the re-establishment of her reason. There is evidence that a woman, who might have been Mme. Fournaye, was seen for some hours upon Monday night watching the house in

"What do you think of that, Holmes?" I had read the account aloud to him

"My dear Watson," said he as he rose from the table and paced up and down the room, "you are most long there is nothing to tell. Even now this report from Paris does not help us much."

"Surely it is final as regards the

man's death." "The man's death is a mere incident a trivial episode, in comparison with our real task, which is to trace this document and save a European catastrophe. Only one important thing has happened in the last three days, and that is that nothing has happened. I get reports almost hourly from the government, and it is certain that nowhere in Europe is there any sign of trouble. Now, if this letter were loose-no, it can't be loose but if it isn't loose where can it be? Who has it? Why is It held back? That's the question that beats in my brain like a hammer. Was it, indeed, a coincidence that Lucas should meet his death on the night when the letter disappeared? Did the letter ever reach him? If so, why is it not among his papers? Did this mad wife of his carry it off with her? If so, is it in her house in Paris? How could I search for it without the French police having their suspicions aroused? It is a case, my dear Watson, where the law is as dangerous to us as the criminals are. Every man's having puzzled the famous expert. hand is against us, and yet the interests at stake are colossal. Should I bring it to a successful conclusion it will certainly represent the crowning glory of my career. Ah, here is my latest from the front!" He glanced hurriedly at the note which had been handed in. "Hello! Lestrade seems to have observed something of interest.

Put on your hat, Watson, and we will stroll down together to Westminster." It was my first visit to the scene of ed house, prim, formal and solid, like the century which gave it birth. Lestrade's buildog features gazed out at us from the front window, and he greeted us warmly when a big constable had opened the door and let us in. The room into which we were shown was that in which the crime had been committed, but no trace of it now reupon the carpet. This carpet was a citement. small square drugget in the center of the room, surrounded by a broad exnanse of beautiful, old fashioned wood flooring in square blocks highly polished. Over the fireplace was a magnificent trophy of weapons, one of which had been used on that tragic night. In the window was a sumptuous writing desk, and every detail of the apartment, the pictures, the rugs and the bangings, all pointed to a taste which was luxurious to the verge of effemi-

"Seen the Paris news?" asked Lestrade.

Holmes nodded.

"Our French friends seem to have you!" buched the spot this time. No doubt it's just as they say. She knocked at the door-surprise visit, I guess, for he into the hall, and a few moments later kept his life in water tight compart-ments—he let her in, couldn't keep her back room. in the street. She told him how she lence of her gestures. It is probable, had traced him, repreached him; one therefore, that the crime was either comane or that its immedi- dagger so handy the end soon came. hind that listless manner burst out in L. W. WAKELEY,

yonder, and he had one in his hand as if he had tried to hold her off with it. We've got it all clear as if we had seen

Holmes raised his eyebrows.

"And yet you have sent for me?" "Ah, yes, that's another matter; a mere trifle, but the sort of thing you take an interest in-queer, you know, and what you might call freakish. It has nothing to do with the main factcan't have, on the face of it."

"What is it, then?"

"Well, you know, after a crime of this sort we are very careful to keep things in their position. Nothing has been moved. Officer in charge here day and night. This morning, as the man was buried and the investigation over -so far as this room is concerned-we thought we could tidy up a bit. This carpet-you see, it is not fastened down, only just laid there. We had occasion to raise it. We found"-"Yes? You found"-

Holmes' face grew tense with anx-

"Well, I'm sure you would never mess in a hundred years what we did find. You see that stain on the carpet? Well, a great deal must have soaked through, must it not?"

"Undoubtedly it must." "Well, you will be surprised to hear that there is no stain on the white woodwork to correspond."

"No stain! But there must"-"Yes, so you would say. But the fact emains that there isn't."

He took the corner of the carpet in his hand, and, turning it over, he showed that it was indeed as he said.

"But the underside is as stained as the upper. It must have left a mark." Lestrade chuckled with delight at

"Now, I'll show you the explanation. There is a second stain, but it does not correspond with the other. See for yourself." As he spoke he turned over another portion of the carpet, and there, sure enough, was a great crimson spill upon the square white facing of the old fashloned floor. "What do you make of that, Mr. Holmes?"

"Why, it is simple enough. The two stains did correspond, but the carpet has been turned round. As it was the crime—a high, dingy, narrow chest- square and unfastened it was easily

> "The official police don't need you. Mr. Holmes, to tell them that the carnet must have been turned round. That's clear enough, for the stains lie above each other-if you lay it over this way. But what I want to know is. who shifted the carpet, and why?"

I could see from Holmes' rigid face mained save an ugly, irregular stain that he was vibrating with inward ex-

"Look here, Lestrade," said he, "has that constable in the passage been in charge of the place all the time?" "Yes, he has."

"Well, take my advice. Examine him carefully. Don't do it before us. We'll wait here. You take him into the back room. You'll be more likely to get a confession out of him alone. Ask him how he dared to admit people and leave them alone in this room. Don't ask him if he has done it. Take it for granted. Tell him you know some one has been here. Press him. Tell him that a full confession is his only chance of forgiveness. Do exactly what I tell

"By George, if he knows I'll have it out of him?" cried Lestrade. He darted

"Now, Watson, now!" cried Holmes ate effect was to drive the unhappy at wasn't all done in an instant, though, a percayen of energy. He tore the wasness out of her mind. At present for these chains were all swent over drugget from the floor and in an instant was fown on his hands and

kness clawing at each of the squares of wood beneath it. One turned side

ways as be dug his nails into the edge of it. It hinged back like the lid of a box. A small black cavity opened beneath it. Holmes plunged his eager hand into it and drew it out with a hitter aneri of anger and disappointment. It was empty.

"Quick, Watson, quick! Get it back again!" The wooden lid was replaced, and the drugget had only just been drawn straight when Lestrade's voice was heard in the passage. He found Holmes leaning languidly against the mantelpiece, resigned and patient, endeavoring to conceal his irrepressible Tawns.

"Sorry to keep you waiting, Mr. Holmes. I can see that you are bored to death with the whole affair. Well, he has confessed, all right. Come in here, MacPherson. Let these gentlemen hear of your most inexcusable conduct."

The big constable, very hot and penitent, sidled into the room.

"I meant no harm, sir, I'm sure. The young woman came to the door last And then we got talking. It's lonesome when you're on duty here all

"Well, what happened then?"

"She wanted to see where the crime was done-had read about it in the papers, she said. She was a very respectable, well spoken young woman, sir, and I saw no barm in letting her have a peep. When she saw that mark on the carpet down she dropped on the floor and lay as if she were dead. I ran to the back and got some water. but I could not bring her to. Then I went round the corner to the Ivy Plant for some brandy, and by the time I had brought it back the young woman had recovered and was off-ashamed of berself, I dare say, and dared not face

"How about moving that drugget?" "Well, sir, it was a bit rumpled, certainly, when I came back. You see, she fell on it, and it lies on a polished floor with nothing to keep it in place. I straightened it out afterward."

"It's a lesson to you that you can't

deceive me, Constable MacPherson," said Lestrade, with dignity. "No doubt you thought that your breach of duty could never be discovered, and yet a mere glance at that drugget was enough to convince me that some one had been admitted to the room. It's lucky for you, my man, that nothing is missing, or you would find yourself in Queer street. I'm sorry to have called you down over such a petty business, Mr. Holmes, but I thought the point of the second stain not corresponding with the first would inter-

"Certainly, it was most interesting. Has this woman only been here once, constable?"

"Yes, sir; only once." "Who was she?"

"Don't know the name, sir. Was an swering an advertisement about typewriting and came to the wrong number-very pleasant, genteel young wo-

man, sir." "Tall? Handsome?"

"Yes, sir; she was a well grown young woman. I suppose you might say she was handsome. Perhaps some would say she was very handsome. 'Oh. officer, do let me have a pecp! says she. She had pretty, coaxing ways, as you might say, and I thought there was no harm in letting her just put her head through the door."

"How was she dressed?" "Quiet, sir-a long mantle down to

ber feet." "What time was it?"

"It was just growing dusk at the time. They were lighting the lamps as I came back with the brandy."

"Very good," said Holmes. "Come Watson, I think that we have more im portant work elsewhere."

(To be continued.)



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