Return of Sherlock Holmes---The Adventure of the Empty House

of a very remarkable man, that they are ers disappear among the throng. not to blame me if I have not shared my My observations of No. 427 Park Lane did knowledge with them, for I should have little to clear up the problem in which I considered it my first duty to have done was interested. The house was separated so, had I not been barred by a positive from the street by a low wall and railing. prohibition from his own lips, which was the whole not more than five feet high. only withdrawn upon the third of last It was perfectly easy, therefore, for anyone month.

ested me deeply in crime, and that after the most active man to climb it. More his disappearance I never failed to read puzzled than ever, I retraced my steps to with care the various problems which came Kensington. I had not been in my study before the public. And I even attempted, five minutes when the muld entered to say more than once, for my own private satis- that a person desired to see me. To my faction, to employ his methods in their astonishment it was none other than my There was none, however, which appealed wizened face peering out from a frame of to me like this tragedy of Ronald Adair. white hair and his precious volumes, a As I read the evidence at the inquest, which led up to a verdict of willful murder right arm. against some person or persons unknows. I realized more clearly than I had ever he, in a strange, croaking voice. done the loss which the community had sustained by the death of Sherlock Holmes. leas which would, I was sure, have spe- came hobbling after you, I thought to myor more probably anticipated, by the gruff in my manner there was not any harm trained observation and the alert mind of the first criminal agent in Europe. All day, as I drove upon my round, I turned, "You make too much of a trifle," said L over the case in my mind, and found no "May I ask how you knew who I was?" explanation which appeared to me to be told tale. I will recapitulate the facts as clusion of the inquest.

The Honorable Ronald Adair was the sectime governor of one of the Australian Adair's mother had returned from Australia to undergo the operation for cataract, and she, her son Ronald and her daughter Hilda were living together at 427 Park Lane. The youth moved in the best society-had, so far as was known, no enemies, and no particular vices. He had been engaged to engagement had been broken off by muy tual consent some months before, and there was no sign that it had left any very profound feeling behind it. For the rest the man's life moved in a narrow and conventional circle, for his habits were quiet and his nature unemotional. Yet flask in his hand, it was upon this easy going young aristocrat that death came, in most strange and membered voice, "I owe you a thousand unexpected form, between the hours of 10 Ronald Adair was fond of cards-playing

continually, but never for such stakes as would hurt him. He was a member of the Baldwin, the Cavendish and the Bagatelle card clubs. It was shown that, after dinner on the day of his death, he had played a rubber of whist at the latter club. He had also played there in the afternoon. The evidence of those who had played with him-Mr. Murray, Sir John Hardy and Colonel Moran-showed that the game was whist, and that there was a fairly equal fall of the cards. Adair might have lost £5, but not more. His fortune was a considerable one, and such a loss could not in any way affect him. He had played nearly every day at one club or other, but he was a cautious player, and usually rose a winner. It came out in evidence that, in partnership with Colonel Moran, he had actually won as much as £420 in a sitting. some weeks before, from Godfrey Milner and Lord Balmoral. So much for his recent history as it came out at the inquest

On the evening of the crime, he returned from the club exactly at 10. His mother and sister were out spending the evening with a relation. The servant deposed that she heard him enter the front room on the second floor, generally used as his sitthig room. She had lit a fire there, and as it smoked she had opened the window. THE STRANGE OLD BOOK COLLECTOR. No sound was heard from the room until 11:20, the hour of the return of Lady Maynooth and her daughter. Desiring to say goodnight, she attempted to enter her son's room. The door was locked on the Inside. and no answer could be got to their cries and knocking. Help was obtained and the possible that you succeeded in climbing out door forced. The unfortunate young man was found lying near the table. His head had been horribly mutilated by an expanding revolver bullet, but no weapon of any sort was to be found in the room. On the table lay two bank notes for £10 each and £17-£10 in silver and gold, the money arranged in little piles of varying amount. There were some figures also upon a sheet of paper, with the names of some club friends opposite to them, from which it was conjectured that before his death he was endeavoring to make out his losses or

winnings at cards.

A minute examination of the circumstances served only to make the case more dreadful chasm. complex. In the first place, no reason could be given why the young man should have fastened the door upon the inside. There was the possibility that the murderer had done this, and had afterwards escaped by the window. The drop was at least twenty feet, however, and a bed of crocuses in full bloom lay beneath. Neither the flowers nor the earth showed any sign of having been disturbed, nor were there any marks upon the narrow strip of grass which separated the house from the road. Apparently, therefore, it was the young man himself who had fastened the door. But how did he come by his death? No one could have climbed up to the window without leaving traces. Suppose a man had fired through the window, he would of us. Perhaps it would be better if I gave moment indeed be a remarkable shot who could with a revolver inflict so deadly a wound. Again, Park Lane is a frequented thoroughfare; there is a cab stand within prefer to hear now. yards of the house. No one heard a shot. And yet there was the dead man, and there the revolver bullets, which had mushroomed out, as softnosed bullets will, and so inflicted a wound which must have caused instantaneous the Park Lane mystery, which were further that I never was in it." complicated by the entire absence of mosince, as I have said, young Adair

money or valuables in the room.

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T. W. in the eventing I T WAS in the spring of the year strolled across the park and found myself, 1894 that all London was inter- about 6 o'clock, at the Oxford street end of ested, and the fashionable world Park Lane. A group of loafers upon the dismayed, by the murder of the pavements, all staring up at a particular Honorable Ronald Adair under window, directed me to the house which I most unusual and inexplicable circumstan- had come to see. A tall, thin man with colces. The public has already learned those ored glasses, whom I strongly suspected of particulars of the crime which came out in being a plain clothes detective, was pointthe police investigation, but a good deal ing out some theory of his own, while the was suppressed upon that occasion, since others crowded round to listen to what he the case for the prosecution was so over- said. I got as near him as I could, but whelmingly strong that it was not neces- his observations seemed to me to be absurd, sary to bring forward all the facts. Only so I withdrew again in disgust. As I did now, at the end of nearly ten years, and I so I struck against an elderly, deformed allowed to supply those missing links which man, who had been behind me, and I make up the whole of that remarkable knocked down several books which he was chain. The crime was of interest in itself, carrying. I remember that as I picked but that interest was as nothing to me them up I observed the title of one of compared to the inconceivable sequel, them, "The Origin of Tree Worship," and which afforded me the greatest shock and it struck me that the follow must be some surprise of any event in my adventurous poor bibliophile, who, either as a trade or Even now, after this long interval. as a hobby, was a collector of obscure vol-I find myself thrilling as I think of it, and umes. I endeavored to apologize for the feeling once more that sudden flood of accident, but it was evident that these joy, amazement and incredulity which ut- books which I had so unfortunately malterly submerged my mind. Let me say to treated were very precious objects in the that public, which has shown some interest eyes of their owner. With a snarl of in those glimpses which I have occasionally contempt he turned upon his heel, and I given them of the thoughts and actions saw his curved back and white side whisk-

to get into the garden, but the window was It can be imagined that my close inti- entirely inaccessible, since there was no macy with Sheriock Holmes had inter- water pipe or anything which could help solution, though with indifferent success, strange old book collector, his sharp, dozen of them, at least, wedged under his

"You're surprised to see me, sir," said

I acknowledged that I was. "Well, I've a conscience, sir, and when I There were points about this strange busi- chanced to see you go into this house as I cially appealed to him, and the efforts of self, I'll just step in and see that kind gen-the police would have been supplemented, tleman and tell him that if I was a bit meant and that I am obliged to him for picking up my books."

adequate. At the risk of telling a twice- I am a neighbor of yours, for you'll find they were known to the public at the street, and very happy to see you, I am my little bookshop at the corner of Church sure. Maybe you collect yourself, ond son of the earl of Maynooth, at that "The Holy War'-a bargain, every one of them. With five volumes you could just fill that gap on that second shelf. It looks untidy, does it not, sir?"

I moved my head to look at the cabinet behind me. When I turned again, Sherlock Holmes was standing smiling at me across my study table. I rose to my feet stared at him for some seconds in utter Miss Edith Woodley of Carstairs, but the amazement, and then it appears that I must have fainted for the first and the last time in my life. Certainly a gray mist swirled before my eyes, and when it cleared I found my collar-ends undone and the tingling aftertaste of brandy upon my lips. Holmes was bending over my chair, his

"My dear Watson," said the well-re-



apologies. I had no idea that you would

be so affected." I gripped him by the arms

'Holmes!" I cried. "Is it really you? Can it indeed be that you are alive? Is it

of that awful abyss?" 'Walt a moment," said he. "Are you sure that you are really fit to discuss things? I have given you a serious shock by my unnecessarily dramatic reappear-

anse. "I am all right, but indeed, Holmes, I can hardly believe my eyes. Good heavens! to think that you-you of all menshould be standing in my study." Again I gripped him by the sleeve, and felt the thin, sinewy arm beneath it. "Well, you're not a spirit, anyhow," said I. "My dear in the wet notches of the rock, I thought chap, I'm overjoyed to see you. Sit down that I was gone. But I struggled upward, and tell me how you came alive out of that and at last I reached a ledge several feet

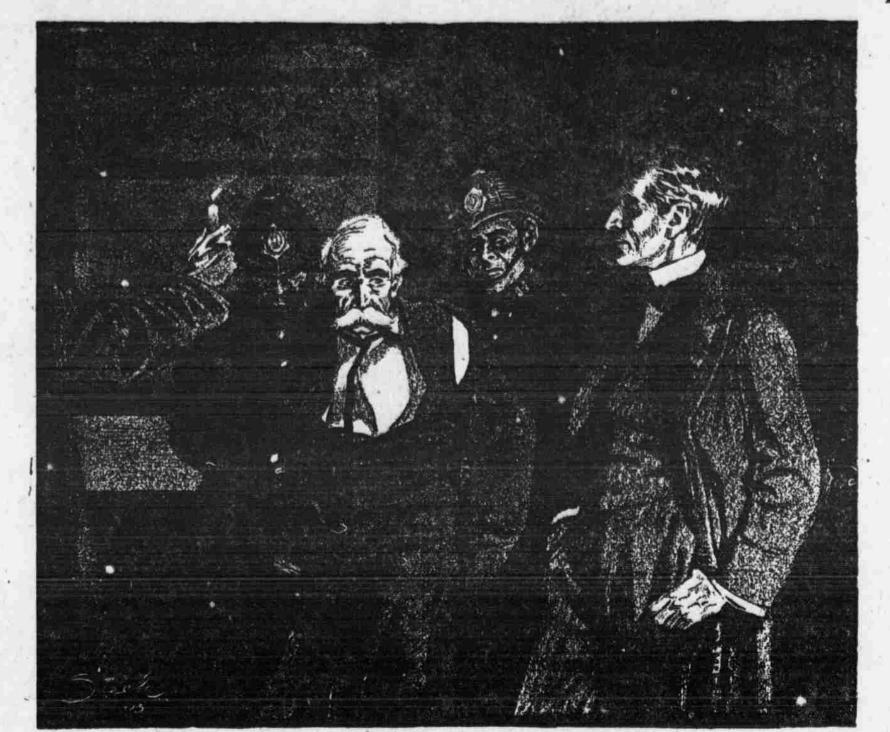
in his old, nonchalant manner. He was comfort. There I was stretched, when you, dressed in the seedy frockcoat of the book my dear Watson, and all your following merchant, but the rest of that individual lay in a pile of white hair and old books and inefficient manner the circumstances upon the table. Holmes looked even thin- of my death. ner and keener than of old, but there was a dead-white tinge in his aquiline face inevitable and totally erroneous conclu which told me that his life recently had

not been a healthy one. "I am glad to stretch myself, Watson," has to take a foot off his stature for several hours on end. Now, my dear fellow, in the matter of these explanations, we have, if I may ask for your co-operation, a hard and dangerous night's work in front I thought that it was an accident, but a you an account of the whole situation when that work is finished."

"I am full of curiosity. I should much very You'll come with me tonight?"

before we need go. Well, then, about that chasm. I had no serious difficulty in get-Such were the circumstances of ting out of it, for the very simple reason

"You never were in it?" "No, Watson, I never was in it. My note was not known to have any enemy and no to you was absolutely genuine. I had little attempt had been made to remove the doubt that I had come to the end of my career when I perceived the somewhat sin-All day I turned these facts over in my ister figure of the late Prof. Mortarty



"COL. MORAN SPRANG FORWARD WITH A SNARL OF RAGE."

revenge himself upon me. We tootered to- world knew what had become of me. has more than once been very useful to it should be thought I was dead, and it is empty house."

into the water." the puffs of his cigarette.

and none returned. "It came about in this way. The instant that the professor had disappeared, it struck me what a really extraordinarily lucky chance Fate had placed in my way. I knew that Moriarty was not the only man who had sworn my death. There were at least three others whose desire for vengeance upon me would only be increased by the death of their leader. They were all most dangerous men. One or the other would certainly get me. On the other hand, if all the world was convinced that I was dead they would take liberties, these men, they would soon lay themselves open, and sooner or later I could destroy them. Then it would be time for me to announce that I was still in the land of the living. So rapidly does the brain act that I believe I had thought this all out before Prof. Moriarty had reached the bottom of the Reichenbach fall.

"I stood up and examined the rock wall behind me. In your picturesque account of the matter, which I read with great interest some months later, you assert that true. A few small footholds presented themselves, and there was some indicamy way along the wet path without leavbusiness. Watson. The fall roared beneath has so often adorned." me. I am not a fanciful person, but I give you my word that I seemed to hear deep and covered with soft green moss. He sat opposite to me and lit a cigarette where I could be unseen in the most perfect were investigating in the most sympathetic

"At last, when you had all formed your sions, you departed for the hotel, and I was left alone. I had imagined that I had reached the end of my adventures. said he. "It is no joke when a tall man but a very unexpected occurrence showed me that there were surpless still in store for me. A huge rock, falling from above, boomed past me, struck the path and bounded over the chasm. For an instant later, looking up, saw head against the darkening sky, and another stone struck the ledge upon which I was stretched, within a foot of my head. Of course, the meaning of this was obvious. "When you like and where you like." Moriarty had not been alone. A confed-"This is indeed, like the old days. We erate—and even that one glance had told shall have time for a mouthful of dinner me how dangerous a man that confederate was-had kept guard while the professor had attacked me. From a distance, unseen by me, he had been a witness of his friend's death and of my escape. He had waited, and then making his way round to the top of the cliff, he had endeavored to succeed where his comrade had failed.

"I did not take long to think about it Watson. Again I saw that grim face look over the cliff and I knew that it was the mind, endeavoring to hit upon some theory standing upon the narrow pathway which precursor of another stone. I scrambled which would reconcile them all and to find led to safety. I read an inexorable purpose down on to the path. I don't think I could that line of least resistance which my poor in his gray eyes. I exchanged some re- have done it in cold blood. It was a hun-

it with my cigarette box and my stick, and by my hands from the edge of the ledge.

I slipped through his grip, and he quite certain that you would not have writmy own eyes, that two went down the path to my identity and led to the most deplorable and irreparable results. As to Mycroft, I had to confide in him in order to obtain the money which I needed. The course of events in London did not run so well as I had hoped, for the trial of the Morlarty gang left two of its most dangerous members, my own most vindictive enemies, at liberty. I traveled for two years in Thibet, therefore, and amused myself by visiting Lhassa and spending some days with the head Llama. You may have read of the remarkable explorations of a Norwegian named Sigerson, but I am sure that it never occurred to you that you were receiving news of your friend. I then passed through Persia, looked in at Mecca, and paid a short but interesting visit to the khalifa at Khartoum, the results of which I have communicated to the Foreign office. Returning to France, I spent some months in a research into the coal tar derivatives, which I conducted in a laboratory at Montpellier. the south of France. Having concluded this to my satisfaction, and learning that only one of my enemies was now left in London, I was about to return when my movements were hastened by the news of the wall was sheer. That was not literally this very remarkable Park Lane mystery, which not only appealed to me by its own merits, but which seemed to offer some tion of a ledge. The cliff is so high that most peculiar personal opportunities. I to climb it all was an obvious impossibil- came over at once to London, called in my ity, and it was equally impossible to make own person at Baker street, threw Mrs. Hudson into violent hysterics and found similar occasions, but the sight of three So it was, my dear Watson, that at 2 Here Holmes turned suddenly to

fatal. More than once, as tufts of grass firmed by the actual sight of a tall, spare came out in my hand or my foot slipped figure and the keen, eager face, which I pered. had never thought to see again. In some

marks with him, therefore, and obtained dred times more difficult than getting up. manner he had learned of my own sad swered, staring through the dim window. his courteous permission to write the short. But I had no time to think of the danger, bereavement, and his sympathy was shown note which you afterward received. I left for another stone sang past me as I hung in his manner rather than in his words, which stands opposite to our own old quar-"Work is the best antidote to sorrow, my ters. I walked along the pathway, Moriarty still Half-way down I slipped, but, by the bles- dear Watson," said he; "and I have a at my heels. When I reached the end I sing of God, I landed, torn and bleeding, piece of work for us both tonight which, stood at bay. He drew no weapon, but upon the path. I took to my beels, did ten if we can bring it to a successful conview of that picturesque pile. Might I silence I heard that thin, sibilant note he rushed at me and threw his long miles over the mountains in the darkness, clusion, will in itself justify a man's life trouble you, my dear Watson, to draw a which speke of intense suppressed excitearms around me. He knew that his own and a week later I found myself lu Flor- on this planet." In vain I begged him to little nearer to the window, taking every ment. An instant later he pulled me back game was up, and was only anxious to ence, with the certainty that no one in the tell me more. "You will hear and see precaution not to show yourself, and then into the blackest corner of the room, and I enough before morning." he answered, look at our old rooms-the starting point felt his warning hand upon my lips. The gether upon the brink of the fall. I have "I had only one confident-my brother "We have three years of the past to dis- of so many of your little fairy tales? We fingers which clutched me were quivering. some knowledge, however, of baritsu, or Mycroft. I owe you many apologies, my cuss. Let that suffice until 9:30, when we will see if my three years of absence have Never had I known may friend more moved. the Japanese system of wrestling, which dear Watson, but it was all-important that start upon the notable adventure of the entirely taken away my power to sur- and yet the dark street still stretched lonely

It was indeed like old times when, at I crept forward and looked across at the But suddenly I was aware of that which with a horrible scream kicked madly for ten so convincing an account of my un-that hour, I found myself seated beside familiar window. As my eyes fell upon his keener senses had already distinguished, a few seconds, and clawed the air with happy end had you not yourself thought it him in a hansom, my revolver in my it. I gave a gasp and a cry of amaze- A low, stealthy sound came to my ears, not time, and any show of surprise and emotion London, but I was well assured, from the half round, and the effect was that of one ing upon the handle of my revolver. Peer-

Httle good for the object of our quest. Baker street, but Holmes stopped the cab ter. at the corner of Cavendish Square. I "Well?" he said, observed that as he stepped gut he gave a most searching glance to right and left, vellous." and at every subsequent corner he took the utmost pains to assure that he was custom stale my infinite variety," said he, not followed. Our route was certainly a and I recognized in his voice the joy and singular one. Holmes' knowledge of the pride which the artist takes in his own byways of London was extraordinary, and creation. "It really is rather like me, is on this occasion he passed rapidly and it not?" with an assured step through a network "I should be prepared to swear that it of mews and stables, the very existence was you." of which I had never known. We emerged at last into a small road, lined with old, Monsieur Oscar Meunier of Grenoble, who gloomy houses, which led us into Man. spent some days in doing the moulding. chester street, and so to Blanford street. It is a bust in wax. The rest I arranged Here he turned swiftly down a marrow myself during my visit to Baker street this passage, passed through a wooden gate afternoon." into a deserted yard, and then opened with a key the back door of a house. We entered together and he closed it behind us.

The place was pitch dark, but it was evident to me that it was an empty house. Our feet creaked and crackled over the bare planking and my outstretched hand touched a wall from which the paper was hanging in ribbons. Holmes' cold, thin fingers closed round my wrist and led me ing some tracks. I might, it is true, have that Mycroft had preserved my rooms and forwards down a long hall, until I dimly reversed my boots, as I have done on my papers exactly as they had always been, saw the murky fanlight over the door. sets of tracks in one direction would cer- o'clock today I found myself in my old right, and we found ourselves in a large. tainly have suggested a deception. On the armchair in my own old room, and only square, empty room, heavily shadowed in whole, then, it was best that I should wishing that I could have seen my old the corners, but faintly lit in the center risk the climb. It was not a pleasant friend Watson in the other chair which he from the lights of the street beyond. There was no lamp near, and the window Such was the marvetous narrative to thick with dust, so that we could only which I listened on that April evening-a just discern each other's fingers within. "Do you know where we are?" he whis-

"Surely that is Baker street," I an-

"Exactly. We are in Camden house,

"But why are we here?" prise you."

"Good heavens!" I cried. "It is mar-

"The credit of the execution is due to

"Because, my dear Watson, I had the strongest possible reason for wishing certain people to think that I was there when I was really elsewhere. "And you thought the rooms

watched?" "I knew that they were watched."

"By whom?" "By my old enemies, Watson. By the charming society whose leader lies in the Reichenbach fall. You must remember that they knew, and only they knew, that I was still alive. Sooner or later they believed that I should come back to my rooms. They watched them continuously, and this morning they saw me arrive."

"How do you know?" "Because I recognized their sentinel when glanced out of my window. He is a harmless enough fellow. Parker by name, Moriarty's voice acreaming at me out of narrative which would have been utterly. My companion put his hand upon my a garroter by trade, and a remarkable the abyss. A mistake would have been incredible to me had it not been con-shoulder and his lips close to my ear.

performer on the jewsharp. I cared nothing for him. But I cared a great deal for much more formidable person who was behind him, the bosom friend of

Moriarty, the man who dropped the rocks over the cliff, the most cunning and dangerous criminal in London. This is the man who is after me tonight, Watson, and that is the man who is quite unaware that we are after him."

My friend's plans were gradually revealing themselves. From this convenient retreat the watchers were being watched and the trackers tracked. That angular shadow up yonder was a balt and we were the hunters. In slience we stood together in the darkness and watched the hurrying figures who passed and repassed in front of us. Holmes was silent and motionless; but I could tell that he was keenly alert and that his eyes were fixed intently upon the stream of passers-by. It was a bleak and bolsterous night, and the wind whistled shrilly down the long street. Many people were moving to and fro, most of them muffled in their coats and cra-Once or twice it seemed to me that I had seen the same figure before, and I especially noticed two men who appeared to be sheltering themselves from the wind in the doorway of a house some distance up the street. I tried to draw my companion's attention to them, but he gave a little ejaculation of impatience, and continued to stare into the street. More than once he fidgeted with his feet and tapped rapidly with his fingers upon the wall. It was evident to me that he was becoming uneasy, and that his plans were not working out altogether as he had hoped. At last, as midnight approached and the street gradually cleared, he paced up and down the room in uncontrollable agitation. I was about to make some remark to him, when I raised my eyes to the lighted window, and again experienced almost as great a surprise as before. I clutched Holmes' arm and pointed up-

"The shadow has moved!" I cried. It was indeed no longer the profile, but the back, which was turned toward us. Three years had certainly not smoothed

the asperities of his temper or his fmpatience with a less active intelligence than his own. "Of course it has moved," said he. "Am I

such a farcical bungler, Watson, that I should erect an obvious dummy, and expect that some of the sharpest men in Europe would be deceived by it? We have been in this room two hours and Mrs. Hudson has made some change in that figure eight times, or once in every quarter of an hour. She works it from the front, so that her shadow may never be seen. Ah!" He drew in his breath with a shrill, excited intake. In the dim light I saw his head thrown forward, his whole attitude rigid with attention. Outside the street was absolutely deserted. Those two men might still be crouching in the doorway, but I could no longer see them. All was still and dark, save only that brilliant yellow screen in front of us with the black figure out-"Because it commands so excellent a lined upon its center. Again in the utter and motionless before us.

both his hands. But for all his efforts he was true. Several times during the last pocket and the thrill of adventure in my ment. The blind was down, and a strong from the direction of Baker street, but from could not get his balance, and over he three years I have taken up my pen to heart. Holmes was cold and stern and light was burning in the room. The shadow the back of the very house in which we lay With my face over the brink, I write to you, but always I feared lest your silent. As the gleam of the street lamps of a man who was seated in a chair within concealed. A door opened and shut. An saw him fall for a long way. Then he affectionate regard for me should tempt flashed upon his austere features I saw was thrown in hard, black outline upon instant later steps crep down the passagestruck a rock, bounded off and splashed you to some indiscretion which would be- that his brows were drawn down in the luminous screen of the window. There steps which were meant to be silent, but tray my secret. For that reason I turned thought and his thin lips compressed. I was no mistaking the poise of the head, which reverberated harshly through the I listened with amazement to this ex- away from you this evening when you up- knew not what wild beast we were about to the squareness of the shoulders, the sharp- empty house. Holmes crouched back against planation, which Holmes delivered between set my books, for I was in danger at the hunt down in the dark jungle of criminal ness of the features. The face was turned the wall and I did the same, my hand clos-"But the tracks!" I cried. "I saw, with upon your part might have drawn attention bearing of this master huntsman, that of those black silhouettes which our grand- ing through the gloom I saw the vague outthe adventure was a most grave one- parents loved to frame. It was a perfect line of a man, a shade blacker than the while the sardonic smile which occasion- reproduction of Holmes. So amazed was blackness of the open door. He stood for ally broke through his ascetic gloom boded I that I threw out my hand to make sure an instant, and then he crept forward, that the man himself was standing beside crouching, menacing, into the room. He I had imagined that we were bound for me. He was quivering with silent laugh- was within three yards of us, this sinister figure, and I had braced myself to meet his spring, before I realized that he had no idea of our presence. He passed close beside us, stole over to the window, and very softy and noiselessly raised it for half a "I trust that age doth not wither nor foot. As he sank to the level of this opening, the light of the street, no longer dimmed by the dusty glass, fell full upon his face. The man seemed to be beside bimzelf with excitement. His two eyes shone like stars, and his features were working convulsively. He was an elderly man, with a thin, projecting nose, a high, baid forehead and a huge grizzled moustache. An opera hat was pushed to the back of his head, and an evening dress shirt-front gleamed out through his open overcoat. His face was gaunt and swarthy, scored, with deep, savage lines. In his hand he carried what appeared to be a stick, but as he laid it down upon the floor it gave a metallic clang. Then from the pocket of his overcoat he drew a bulky object, and he busied himself in some task which ended with a loud, sharp click, as if a spring or bolt had fallen into its place. Still kneeling upon the floor he bent forward and threw all his weight and strength upon some lever, with the result that there came a long, whirling, grinding noise, ending once more in a powerful click. He straightened himself then, and I saw that what he held in his hand was a sort of gun, with a curiously misshapen butt. He opened it at the breech, put something in and snapped the breech block. Then, crouching down, be rested the end of the barrel upon the ledge of the open window, and saw his long moustache droop over the stock and his eye gleam as it peered along the sights. I heard a little sigh of satisfaction as he cuddled the butt into his shoulder, and saw that amazing target, the black man on the yellow ground, standing clear at the end of his foresight. For an instant he was rigid and motionless. Then his finger tightened on the trigger. There was a strange, loud whiz and a long, silvery tinkle of broken glass, At that instant Holmes sprang like a tiger on to the marksman's back and hurled him flat upon his face. He was up again in a moment, and with convulsive strength he seized Holmes by the throat, but I struck him on the head with the butt of my revolver, and he dropped again upon the floor. I fell upon him, and as I held him my comrade blew a shrill call upon a whistle. There was the clatter of running feet upon the pavement, and two policemen in uniform, with one plain clothes detective, rushed through the front entrance and into the room.

"That you, Lestrade?" said Holmes, "Yes, Mr. Holmes. I took the job myself. It's good to see you back in London,

"I think you want a little unofficial help. Three undetected murders in one year won't do, Lestrade. But you handled the Molesey mystery with less than your usual -that's to say, you handled it fairly well." We had all risen to our feet, our prisoner breathing hard, with a stalwart constable on each side of him. Already a few lotterers had begun to collect in the street. Holmes stepped up to the window, closed it and dropped the blinds. Lestrade had produced two candles, and the policeman had uncovered their lanterns. I was able at last to have a good look at our

It was a tremendously virile and yet (Continued on Page Eightage

HE TURNED OVER THE PAGES LAZILY, LEANING BACK IN HIS CHAIR.

