Exploits of Sherlock Holmes---The Mystery of the Yellow Face

How the Mystery of the Widow from America, Who Became the Wife of a Hop Grower, Was Solved to the Satisfaction of All Parties Concerned in the Incident

HERLOCK HOLMES was a man who seldom took exercise for exercise's sake. Few men were capable of greater muscular effort, and he was undoubtedly one of the finest boxers of his weight that I have ever seen; but he looked upon aimless bodily exertion as a waste of energy, and he seldom bestirred himself save where there was some professional object to be served. Then he was absolutely untiring and indefatigable. That he should have kept himself in training under such circumstances is remarkable, but his diet was usually of the sparest, and his habits were simple to the verge of austerity. Save for the occasional use of cocaine, he had no vices, and he only turned to the drug as a protest against the monotony of existence when cases were scanty and

One day in the early spring he had so far relaxed as to go for a walk with me in the park, where the first faint shoots of green were breaking out upon the elms, and the sticky spear heads of the chestnuts were just beginning to burst into their five-fold leaves. For two hours we rambled about together, in silence for the most part, as befits two men who know each other intimately. It was nearly 5 o'clock before we were back in Baker street once more.

"Beg pardon, sir," said our page boy, as he opened the door. "There's been a gentleman here asking for you, sir."

Holmes gianced reproachfully at me. "So much for afternoon walks!" said he. "Has the gentleman gone, then?"

"Yes, sir."

"Didn't you ask him in?"

"Yes, sir; he came in." "How long did he wait?"

"Half an hour, sir. He was a very restless gentleman, sir, have seen his death certificate. a-walkin' and a-stampin' all the time he was here. I was waitin' out- This sickened her of America, side the door, sir, and I could hear him. At last he out into the passage, and he cries, 'Is that man never goin' to come?' 'Those were his very words, sir. 'You'n only need to wait a little longer,' says I. Middlesex. I may mention that 'Then I'll wait in the open air, for I feel half choked,' says he. 'I'll be her husband had left her comback before long.' And with that he ups and he outs, and all I could fortably off, and that she had a say wouldn't hold him back."

"Well, well, you did your best," said Holmes, as we walked into had been so well invested by our room, "It's very annoying, though, Watson. I was badly in need him that it returned an average of a case, and this looks, from the man's impatience, as if it were of of 7 per cent. She had only been importance. Hullo! that's not your pipe on the table. He must have left his behind him. A nice old brier with a good long stem of what met her; we fell in love with the tobacconists call amber. I wonder how many real amber mouth- each other, and we married a pieces there are in London? Some people think that a fly in it is a few weeks afterwards. sign. Well, he must have been disturbed in his mind to leave a pipe behind him which he evidently values highly."

"How do your know that he values it highly?" I asked.

"Well. I should put the original cost of the pipe at 7 and 6 pence. found ourselves comfortably off, Now it has, you see, been twice mended, once in the wooden stem and and took a nice £80-a-year villa once in the amber. Each of these mends, done, as you observe, with at Norbury. Our little place silver bands, must have cost more than the pipe did originally. The was very countrified, considerman must value his pipe highly when he prefers to patch it up rather ing that it is so close to town. than buy a new one with the same money."

"Anything else?" I asked, for Holmes was turning the pipe about in his hand, and staring at it in his peculiar, pensive way.

He held it up and tapped on it with his long, thin forefuger, as a professor might who was lecturing on a bone.

"Pipes are occasionally of extraordinary interest," said he. "Nothing has more individuality, save perhaps watches and bootlaces. The station. My business took me indications here, however, are neither very marked nor very im- into town at certain seasons,

saw that he cocked his eye at me to see if I had followed his reasoning. we married my wife made over all her property to me-rather against pale and breathing fast, glancing furtively towards the bed as she fas- at my request only three months ago.

pipe," said I. "This is Grosvenor mixture at 8 pence an ounce," Holmes an- about six weeks ago she came to me. swered, knocking a little out on his palm. "As he might get an excel-

lent smoke for half the price, he has no need to practice economy." "And the other points?"

"He has been in the habit of lighting his pipe at lamps and gas jets. You can see that it is quite charred all down one side. Of course a match could not have done that. Why should a man hold a match new dress or something of the kind that she was after. to the side of his pipe? But you cannot light it at a lamp without getting the bowl charred. And it is all on the right side of the pipe. From that I gathered that he is a left-banded man. You hold your my banker, and bankers never ask questions, you know.' own pipe to the lamp, and see how naturally you, being right-handed. hold the left side to the flame. You might do it once the other way, said I. but not as a constancy. This has always been held so. Then he has bitten through his amber. It takes a muscular, energetic fellow, and one with a good set of teeth, to do that. But if I am not mistaken I hear him upon the stair, so we shall have something more interesting than his pipe to study."

the room. He was well but quietly dressed in a dark gray suit, and with what came afterwards, but I thought it only right to mention it. own husband spoke to her. carried a brown wideawake in his hand. I should have put him at about 30, though he was really some years older.

dazed, and then fell rather more than sat down upon a chair.

"I can see that you have not slept for a night or two," Holmes, in his easy, genial way. "That tries a man's nerves more a neat little homestead it would make. than work, and more even than pleasure. May I ask how I can help

"I wanted your advice, sir. I don't know what to do, and my

whole life seems to have gone to pieces." "You wish to employ me as a consulting detective?"

man of the world. I want to know what I ought to do next. I hope I looked I suddenly became aware that a face was watching me out

to God you'll be able to tell me." He spoke in little, sharp, jerky outbursts, and it seemed to me

through was overriding his inclinations. of one's domestic affairs to strangers. It seems dreadful to discuss the that I had, and I moved quickly forward to get a nearer view of the conduct of one's wife with two men whom I have never seen before, person who was watching me. But as I did so the face suddenly dis-It's horrible to have to do it But I've got to the end of my tether, and appeared, so suddenly that it seemed to have been plucked away into

"My dear Mr. Grant Munro," began Holmes,

would suggest that you cease to write your name upon the lining of your hat, or else that you turn the crown towards the person whom you are addressing. I was about to say that my friend and I have knocked at the door, which was instantly opened by a tall, gaunt listened to a good many strange secrets in this room and that we have woman, with a harsh, forbidding face. had the good fortune to bring peace to many troubled souls. I trust that we may do as much for you. Might I beg you, as time may prove to be of importance, to furnish me with the facts of your case without house. 'I see that you have only just moved in, so I thought that if I

Our visitor again passed his hand over his forehead, as if he

reserve to the winds, he began.

"The facts are these, Mr. Holmes," said he. "I am a married man. ever were joined. We have not had a difference, not one, in thought or no reply. word, or deed. And now, since last Monday, there has suddenly want to know why.

Thrilling Chapters from the Life Story of the World's Greatest Detective Character

easily enough when a woman loves him. But there's this secret between us, and we can never be the same until it is

"Kindly let me have the facts, Mr. Munro," said Holmes, with some impatience.

"I'll tel you what I know about Effle's history. She was a widow when I met her first, though quite young-only 25. Her name then was Mrs. Hebron. She went to America when she was young, lived in the town of Atlanta, married this Hebrou, who was a lawyer with a good practice. They had one child, but the yellow fever troke out badly in the place, and both husband and child died of it. I and she came back to live with a maiden aunt at Pinner, in capital of about £4,500, which six months at Pinner when I

"I am a hop merchant myself, and as I have an income of seven or eight hundred, we We had an inn and two houses a little above us, and a single cottage at the other side of the field which faces us, and except those there were no houses until you got half way to the

never was a shadow between us until this accursed affair began.

I wanted any I was to ask you for it.'

'Certainly,' said I. 'It's all your own,'

"'Well,' said she, 'I want £100." "I was a bit staggered at this, for I had imagined it was simply a morning?

"'What on earth for?' I asked.

"'Oh,' said she, in her playful way, 'you said that you were only

"'If you really mean it, of course you shall have the money,

"'Oh, yes, I really mean it."

"'And you won't tell me what you want it for?' "'Some day, perhaps, but not just at present, Jack."

"So I had to be content with that, though it was the first time that there had ever been any secret between us. I gave her a check, and

"Well, I told you just now that there is a cottage not far from our house. There is just a field between us, but to reach it you have "I beg your pardon," said he, with some embarrassment; "I sup- to go along the road and then turn down a lane. Just beyond it is a pose I should have knocked. Yes, of course, I should have knocked. nice little grove of Scotch firs, and I used to be very fond of strolling The fact is that I am a little upset, and you must put it all down to down there, for trees are always neighborly kind of things. The cotthat." He passed his hand over his forehead like a man who is half tage had been standing empty this eight months, and it was a pity, for

said honeysuckle about it. I have stood many a time and thought what "Well, last Monday evening I was taking a stroll down that way, when I met an empty van coming up the lane, and saw a pile of carpets and things lying about on the grass plot beside the porch. It was clear that the cottage had at last been let. I walked past it, and then stopping, as an idle man might, I ran my eye over it, and wondered "Not that only. I want your opinion as a judicious man-as a what sort of folk they were who had come to live so near us. And as

of one of the upper windows. "I don't know what there was about that face, Mr. Holmes, but that to speak at all was very painful to him, and that his will all it seemed to send a chill right down my back. I was some little way off, so that I could not make out the features, but there was something "It's a very delicate thing." said he. "One does not like to speak unnatural and inhuman about the face. That was the impression the darkness of the room. I stood for five minutes thinking the business over, and trying to analyze my impressions. I could not tell if Our visitor sprang from his chair. "What?" he cried, "you know the face were that of a man or a woman. It had been too far from me for that. But its color was what impressed me most. It was of a "If you wish to preserve your incognito," said Holmes, smiling, "I livid chalky white, and with something set and rigid about which was shockingly unnatural. So disturbed was I that I determined to see a little more of the new inmates of the cottage. I approached and

"'What may you be wantin'?' she asked, in a northern ascent,

"I am your neighbor over yonder,' said I, nodding towards my could be of any help to you in any-'

"'Ay, we'll just ask ye when we want ye,' said she, and shut the found it bitterly hard. From every gesture and expression I could see door in my face. Annoyed at the churlish rebuff, I turned my back my emotions were nothing to those which showed themselves upon her business." that he was a reserved, self-contained man, with a dash of pride in his and walked home. All evening, though I tried to think of other face when our eyes met. She seemed for an instant to wish to shrink nature, more likely to hide his wounds than to expose them. Then things, my mind would still turn to the apparition at me window and back inside the house again; and then, seeing how useless all concealsuddenly, with a fierce gesture of his clased hand, like one who throws the rudeness of the woman. I determined to say nothing about the ment must be, she came forward, with a very white face and frightformer to my wife, for she is a nervous, highly strung woman, and I ened eyes, which belied the smile upon her lips. had no wish that she should share the unpleasant impression which have loved each other as fondly and lived as happily as any two that I fell asleep, that the cottage was now occupied, to which she returned Jack? You are not angry with me?

"I am usually an extremely sound sleeper. It has been a standsprung up a barrier betweer us, and I find that there is something in ing jest in the family that nothing could ever wake me during the her life and in her thoughts of which I know as little as if she were the night. And yet somehow on that particular night, whether it may you should visit them at such an hour?" woman who brushes by me in the street. We are estranged, and I have been the slight excitement produced by my little adventure or not, I know not, but I slept much more lightly than usual. Half in mistake about that. She loves me with her whole heart and soul, and and was slipping on her mantle and her bonnet. My lips were parted bottom. never more than now. I know it. I feel it. I don't want to argue to mormur out some sleepy words of surprise or remonstrance at this



portant. The owner is obviously a muscular man, left-handed, with an but in summer I had less to do, and then in our country home my wife untimely preparation, when suddenly my half-opened eyes fell upon save in the one chamber at the window of which I had seen the strange excellent set of teeth, careless in his habits, and with no need to prac- and I were just as happy as could be wished. I tell you that there her face, illuminated by the candle light, and astonishment held me face. That was comfortable and elegant, and all my suspicions rose dumb. She wore an expression such as I had never seen before-such into a fierce, bitter flame when I saw that on the mantelpiece stood a My friend threw out the information in a very offhand way, but I "There's one thing I ought to tell you before I go further. When as I should have thought her incapable of assuming. She was deadly copy of a full length photograph of my wife, which had been taken my will, for I saw how awkward it would be if my business affairs tened her mantle, to see if she had disturbed me. Then, thinking that went wrong. However, she would have it so, and it was done. Well, I was still asleep, she slipped noiselessly from the room, and an instant later I heard a sharp creaking which could only come from the "'Jack,' said she, 'when you took my money you said that if ever hinges of the front door. I sat up in bed and rapped my knuckles my watch from under the pillow. It was 3 in the morning. What on earth could my wife be doing out on the country road at 3 in the

"I had sat for about twenty minutes turning the thing over in my mind and trying to find some possible explanation. The more I thought the more extraordinary and inexplicable did it appear. I was still footsteps coming up the stairs.

"'You awake, Jack!' she cried, with a nervous laugh. 'Why, I for this misery is more than I can bear."

thought that nothing could awake you.' "'Where have you been? I asked, more sternly.

"'I don't wonder that you are surprised,' said she, and I could see mantle. 'Why, I never remember having done such a thing in my it was a pretty two-storied place, with an old-fashioned porch and life before. The fact is that I felt as though I were choking, and had a perfect longing for a breath of fresh air. I really think that I should face which you saw at the window?" have fainted if I had not gone out. I stood at the door for a few minutes, and now I am quite myself again.'

"All the time that she was telling me this story she never once looked in my direction, and her voice was quite unlike her usual tones. It was evident to me that she was saying what was false. I said nothing in reply, but turned my face to the wall, sick at heart, with my mind filled with a thousand venomous doubts and suspicions. What was it that my wife was concealing from me? Where had she been during that strange, expedition? I felt that I should have no peace until I knew, and yet I shrank from asking her again after once she had told me what was false. All the rest of the night I tossed and tumbled, framing theory after theory, each more unlikely than the

"I should have gone to the city that day, but I was too disturbed in my mind to be able to pay attention to business matters. My wife seemed to be as upset as myself, and I could see from the little questioning glances which she kept shooting at me that she understood that I disbelieved her statement, and that she was at her wits' end what to do. We hardly exchanged a word during breakfast, and immediately afterwards I went out for a walk, that I might think the matter out in the fresh morning air.

"I went as far as the Crystal palace, spent an hour in the grounds, and back to Norbury by 1 o'clock. It happened that my way mates were warned of your coming, and left before you entered took me past the cottage, and I stopped for an instant to look at the windows, and to see if I could catch a glimpse of the strange face which had looked out at me on the day before. As I stood there, imagine my surprise, Mr. Holmes, when the door suddenly opened and my wife walked out.

"'Ah, Jack,' she said, 'I have just been in to see if I can be of any

"'So,' said I 'this is where you went during the night.' "'What do you mean?' she cried.

"You came here. I am sure of it. Who are these people, that

"'I have not been here before."

"Now there is one thing that I want to impress upon you before I my dreams I was dimly conscious that something was going on in the very voice changes as you speak. When have I ever had a secret from that livid face at the window, and I would not have missed the case go any further, Mr. Holmes Effie loves me. Don't let there be any room, and gradually became aware that my wife had dressed herself you? I shall enter that cottage, and I shall probe the matter to the for worlds."

"'No, no, Jack, for God's sake!' she gasped, in incontrollable emo-

tion. Then, as I approached the door, she seized my sleeve and pulled me back with convuisive strength.

" I implore you not to do this, Jack,' she cried. 'I swear that I will tell you everything some day, but nothing but misery can come of it if you enter that cottage.' Then, as I tried to shake her off, she clung to me in a frenzy of entreaty.

"'Trust me, Jack!" she cried. "Trust me only this once. You will never have cause to regret it. You know that I would not have a secret from you if it were not for your own sake. Our whole lives are at stake in this. If you come home with me, all will be well. If you force your way into that cottage, all is over between us."

"There was such earnestness, such despair in her manner, that her words arrested me, and I stood irresolute before the door.

"'I will trust you on one condition, and on one condition only," said I at last. 'It is that this mystery comes to an end from now. You are at liberty to preserve your secret, but you must promise me that there shall be no more nightly visits, no more doings which are kept from my knowledge. I am wiling to forget those which are passed if you will promise that there shall be no more in the future."

"'I was sure that you would trust me,' she cried, with a great sigh of relief. 'It shall be just as you wish. Come away-oh, come away up to the house,"

"Still pulling at my sleeve, she led me away from the cottage. As we went I glanced back, and there was the yellow, livid face watching us out of the upper window. What link could there be between that creature and my wife? Or how could the coarse, rough woman whom I had seen the day before be connected with her? It was a strange puzzle, and yet I knew that my mind could never know ease again until I had solved it.

"For two days after this I stayed at home, and my wife appeared to abide loyally by our engagement, for, as far as I know, she never stirred out of the house. On the third day, however, I had ample evidence that her solemn promise was not enough to hold her back from this secret influence which drew her away from her husband and her

"I had gone into town on that day, but I returned by the 2:40 instead of the 3:36, which is my usual train. As I entered the house the maid ran into the hall with a startled face.

"'Where is your mistress?' I asked.

"'I think that she has gone out for a walk,' she answered. "My mind was instantly filled with suspicion. I rushed upstairs to make sure that she was not in the house. As I did so I happened to glance out of one of the upper windows, and I saw the maid with whom I had just been speaking running across the field in the direction of the cottage. Then, of course, I saw exactly what it all meant. My wife had gone over there, and had asked the servant to call her if I should return. Tingling with anger, I rushed down and hurried across, determined to end the matter once and forever. I saw my wife and the maid hurrying back along the lane, but I did not stop to speak with them. In the cottage lay the secret which was casting a shadow over my life, and I vowed that come what might, it should be a secret no longer. I did not even knock when I reached it, but turned the

handle and rushed into the passage. "It was all still and quiet upon the ground floor. In the kitchen a kettle was singing on the fire, and a large black cat lay coiled up in the basket; but there was no sign of the woman whom I had seen before. I ran into the other room, but it was equally deserted. Then I rushed up the stairs, only to find two other rooms empty and deserted at the top. There was no one at all in the whole house. The furniture and pictures were of the most common and vulgar description,

"I stayed long enogh to make certain that the house was absolutely empty. Then I left it, feeling a weight at my heart such as I had never had before. My wife came out into the hall as I entered my house; but I was too hurt and angry to speak to her, and, pushagainst the rail to make certain that I was truly awake. Then I took ing past her, I made my way into my study. She followed me, however, before I could close the door.

"I am sorry that I broke my promise. Under the circumstances I am sure that you would forgive me."

"Tell me everything, then,' said I.

"'I cannot, Jack, I cannot' she cried. "'Until you tell me who it is that has been living in that cottage, puzzling over it when I heard the door gently close again, and her and who it is to whom you have given that photograph, there can never be any confidence between us,' said I, and breaking away from "'Where in the world have you been, Effie?' I asked as she en- her I left the house. That was yesterday, Mr. Holmes, and I have not seen her since, nor do I know anything more about this strange "She gave a violent start and a kind of gasping cry when I spoke, business. It is the first shadow that has come between us, and it has and that cry and start troubled me more than all the rest, for there so shaken me that I do not know what I should do for the best. Sudwas something indescribably guilty about them. My wife had always denly this morning it occurred to me that you were the man to advise been a woman of a frank, open nature, and it gave me a chill to see me, so I have hurried to you now, and I place myself unreservedly in An instant later our door opened, and a tall young man entered I never thought any more of the matter. It may have nothing to do her slinking into her own room, and crying out and wincing when her your hands. If there is any point which I have not made clear, pray question me about it. But, above all, tell me quickly what I am to do,

Holmes and I had listened with the utmost interest to this extraordinary statement, which had been delivered in the jerky, broken fashion of a man who is under the influence of extreme emotion. My lost in thought.

"Tell me," said he at lost, "could you swear that this was a man's "Each time that I saw it I was some distance away from it, so

that it is impossible for me to say." "You appear, however, to have been disagreeably impressed by it."

"It seemed to be of an unnatural color, and to have a strange rigidity about the features. When I approached it vanished with a

"How long is it since your wife asked you for £100?" "Nearly two months."

"Have you ever seen a photograph of her first husband?" "No; there was a great fire at Atlanta very shortly after his death,

and all her papers were destroyed." "And yet she had a certificate of death. You say that you saw,

"Yes; she got a duplicate after the fire." "Did you ever meet any one who knew her in America?"

"Did she ever talk of revisiting the place?"

"Or get letters from it?"

"Thank you. I should like to think over the matter a little now. If the cottage is now permanently deserted we may have some difficulty. If, on the other hand, as I fancy it more likely, the inyesterday, then they may be back now, and we should clear it all up easily. Let me advise you, then, to return to Norbury, and to examine the windows of the cottage again. If you have reason to believe that it is inhabited, do not force your way in, but send a wire to my friend and me. We shall be with you within an hour of re-"I was struck dumb with astonishment at the sight of her; but ceiving it, and we shall then very soon get to the bottom of the

"And if it is still empty?"

"In that case I shall come out tomorrow and talk it over with you. Goodby; and, above all, do not fret until you know that you really have a cause for it "

"I am afraid that this is a bad business, Watson," said my comand have been so for three years. During that time my wife and I had been produced upon myself. I remarked to her, however, before assistance to our new neighbors. Why do you look at me like that, panion, as he returned after accompanying Mr. Grant Munro to the door. "What do you make of it?"

"It had an ugly sound," I answered.

"Yes. There's blackmail in it, or I am much mistaken."

"And who is the blackmailer?"

"Well, it must be the creature who lives in the only comfortable room in the place, and has her photograph above his fireplace. "'How can you tell me what you know is false?' I cried. 'Your Upon my word, Watson, there is something very attractive about

"You have a theory?" "Yes, a provisional one. But I shall be surprised if