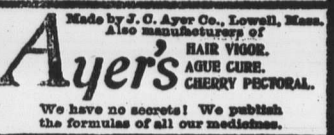


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THE DETECTIVE STORY

Origin and Growth of the Clever Amateur Sleuth.

VOLTAIRE WAS HIS CREATOR.

The Great French Writer introduced Him to the World of Fiction—The Genius of Poe and Gaboriau and Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes.

Most persons who read detective stories, and most literary critics, too, believe that this very popular form of fiction was invented by Edgar Allan Poe. They point to his story of "The Purloined Letter" as being the first of its kind—the first in which is introduced the man of keen mind, of close reasoning and of constructive imagination, who is able to piece together certain facts that are known and then by brilliant deduction to pass from them to other facts which are not known, but the truth of which he is able to establish beyond a doubt.

Poe himself had a mind precisely of this character—the mind of a mathematician, subtle, logical and capable of searching analysis. He once gave a remarkable illustration of what he could do as an investigator of mysterious crime. A young shopgirl named Mary Rogers was found murdered under circumstances which excited the great public interest in New York. The police were completely baffled, though they advanced a theory which was plausible in part. Poe, taking the facts that were admitted, wove them into a story, the scene of which he laid in Paris and which he called "The Mystery of Marie Rogot." Then from what was known he passed by deductive reasoning to what was quite unknown and worked out a solution to the puzzle which no professional detective had been able to explain. Years afterward the confession of a dying man afforded proof that Poe was right and that he had reconstructed accurately the whole series of events which led to the death of Mary Rogers.

This remarkable achievement fixed in the public mind the notion that this use of logic blended with imagination was original with Poe. As a matter of fact, it is almost certain that Poe, who was deeply versed in French literature, got the suggestion of the method from reading certain passages in the excellent tale called "Zadig" by Voltaire. In this book a young man is questioned as to whether he had seen a stray dog and horse that might have passed him on his journey. In reply he describes very accurately the peculiarities of both, though he had not seen them. He had deduced his knowledge from observing certain indications along the way—the nature of the footprints and many other signs which the ordinary person would either not have noticed or would have been too dull to understand. Here is really the germ of the conception which Poe so brilliantly elaborated in the story of "The Purloined Letter," where we find the working of a usual mind and the achievements of a mind of exceptional power and training.

Poe's central figure, the amateur detective, was afterward caught up and elaborated with great effect by several French writers, of whom the chief was Emile Gaboriau. Gaboriau gave the world the character of M. Lecoq in the remarkable novel of that name. Lecoq is a professional detective, but appears in that book as a novice, inexperienced, but full of intelligence and enthusiasm and obliged to work out his clues against the secret opposition of his official chief, Gerrot, who is just one of the young detectives. In the background is the interesting figure of the real amateur detective, old Father Tire-au-Chair ("Bring-to-light"), a retired tradesman who studies crime from sheer love of the intellectual puzzle which it affords him and which he solves by purely scientific deduction.

Sir Conan Doyle in creating Sherlock Holmes openly acknowledged his great indebtedness to Poe. Like Poe's hero Holmes works apart from the official police and is consulted by them when they are wholly at a loss. Many of the incidents in the Holmes cycle of stories were suggested by the inventions of Poe. Yet it is only fair to say that Doyle has gone one step further than his master. Poe's characters are abstractions. They are like chessmen on the board and excite interest only because of the complexity of the problem which they are made to solve. Doyle's characters, on the other hand, are drawn with sympathy and a shrewd insight into human nature. They entertain us by their whims and individual traits no less than by the adventures through which they pass. Thus Holmes' addiction to the cocaine habit, his trick of smoking great quantities of shag tobacco when thinking out a problem, his dislike of women, his skill as a boxer—in fact, a score of traits all give him individuality and make us think of him as a fascinating character quite apart from his powers as a deductive reasoner. And it is so with the minor personages as well. Watson, the somewhat obtuse companion of the adventures; Lestrade and Gregson of the official police and Moriarty, the arch criminal.

But, however brilliant Poe may have been, or however ingeniously Gaboriau may have spun his plots, or however ably Conan Doyle may have given life and reality to the central figure of his stories, they all derive their inspiration, whether consciously or not, from the clever tale told by the famous Frenchman before Poe saw the light—Scrup Book.

District News

GREENBUSH

Mar. 18.—Misses Dora Hewitt and Cora Langton visited friends in Athens last week.

The Greenbush Choir spent a very pleasant evening at Mr. Curtus' on Monday evening last.

We are pleased to learn that Mr. Wm. Gifford is recovering from a serious attack of pleurisy.

We are sorry to hear of the removal of Mr. Malcolm McCorday from here to Seeley's Corners.

Mr. Dorman has purchased a fine roadster.

Preparations are being made for sugar making.

Miss Bertha Webster left Saturday for an extended visit to friends in Smith's Falls.

A. Root's Mill is again running on full time.

Miss Stella Webster of Bellamy's returned home on Saturday last after spending a few days guest of her cousin, Miss Bertha Webster.

A number of young people were very pleasantly entertained by Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Connell at a surprise party given Mr. Connell on his fifty-second birthday. He has for many years been Sunday School teacher for the young men's class and they showed their appreciation for his services by presenting him with an address and a large bible.

DELTA

Miss Maud Card of Plevna is visiting her uncle and family, Mr. Eli Wood and her aunt, Mrs. Thomas Connors.

Mr. Rufus Stevens is home visiting his family.

Mrs. Thomas Connors is sick. Dr. Chipman is attending her.

Mr. and Mrs. Bequeth of Plevna are visiting her sister, Mrs. George Morris.

Mrs. William Wood has returned to her home in Morton after visiting relatives here for a week.

A horse owned by Mr. Harry Brown of Elgin ran away and broke the cutter and out the horse quite badly.

Mr. and Mrs. Eli Wood were visiting in Athens at Mr. Nathaniel Benedict last week.

A dance and social time was held at Will Morris' on Wednesday evening.

Mrs. W. Denaut is here visiting friends.

Miss Claude Wilson is back to her place at Mr. Omer Brown's in the millinery shop.

Miss Maud Card of Plevna has returned home after visiting her cousins here and at Daytown for two weeks.

Miss Edith Davison is expected home soon from Cornwall where she has been visiting for a while.

Mr. Thomas Chant had the misfortune to lose one of his horses last week.

Mrs. James Sexton has come home after visiting friends at Elgin.

Assist Nature

You have been told to "hitch your wagon to a star"—that Nature will assist you. That's all right. There are times, however, when you should assist nature, and the spring is one of these times.

Nature is now undertaking to cleanse your system—if you take Hood's Sarsaparilla the undertaking will be successful, and your complexion bright and clear.

PSYCHINE

(PRONOUNCED SI-KLEN)
for sale at all druggists at 50c. and \$1.00 per bottle, or at Dr. T. A. Sloucum Limited, Laboratory, 179 King St. West, Toronto.

Dr. Root's Kidney Pills are a sure and permanent cure for Rheumatism, Bright's Disease, Pain in the Back and all forms of Kidney Trouble. 25c per box, at all dealers.

The Old Reliable

Your New Suit

If bought from
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Will look well and wear well—Please both yourself and friends. New stock just received, includes latest patterns in Tweeds, Twills, and Worsteds—imported goods. Call and make your selection now.

FANCY WEAVING—No gentleman's wardrobe is complete without one of these stylish garments.

RAIN COATS—The Premier brand—suitable for all seasons.

New stock of hats and caps—see these stylish goods.

A. M. Chassels

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"The People's Column" for small adv's affords the public a cheap and effective means of buying, selling, renting or changing. If you have any unsatisfied want or if you want to satisfy the want of some want, make the fact known through this column. It will do you good.

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New stock of hats and caps—see these stylish goods.

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CASTORIA

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The Athens Hardware Store.



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