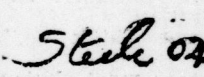


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go any farther."

The landlord pricked up his ears. "What do you want to go?" "To Homebush!" "Pals of the Dook, I suppose?" said the landlord, surveying our mud-stained faces with a frown. Holmes laughed good-naturedly. "He'll be glad to see us, anyhow," "Thank you," "Because we bring him news of his lost son." The landlord gave a very visible start. "What, you're on his track?" "He has been heard of in Liverpool. They expect to get him every hour." At this I drew forth my paper and gave the heavy, unshaven face. His manner was suddenly genial. "I've less reason to wish the Dook was dead than most men," he said. "I was his coachman once, and cruel bad he treated me. It was him that sacked the living corn-character on the world of us." "You mean the young lord was heard of in Liverpool, and I'll help you to take him back to the Dook?" "Thank you," said Holmes. "We've have some food first. Then you can bring round the bicycle." "All right," said the landlord, and Holmes held up a sovereign. "I tell you, man, that I haven't got a horse," said I, "but you have two horses at your place?" "Well, well," said Holmes, "we'll talk about it when we've had some food." When we were left alone in the stone-flagged kitchen it was astonishing how rapidly that sprained ankle healed. It was nearly nightfall and we had eaten nothing since early in the morning, so that we spent some time over our meal. Holmes was lost in a reverie once or twice, and I looked once to the window and stared earnestly out. It opened on to a square courtyard. In the far corner was a filthy, brown, grimy wall, at the top of the other side were the stable doors. Holmes had sat down again after our first repast, and when he suddenly sprang out of his chair with a loud exclamation. "By heaven, Watson, I believe that I've got it!" he cried. "Yes, yes, you must be so. Watson, do you remember seeing any cow-tracks today?" "I don't recall."

"Where?"

so unapparently interrupted."

"That also I have arranged," said Holmes, "and I have written to the Duchess this morning."

"In that case," said Holmes, rising, "I think that my friends and I, having secured the best of the season, should have the most happy results from our several visits to the North. There is one point on which I desire some advice from you. I have a pair of iron shoes with spurs, and a pair of iron horses with shoes which counterfeited the tracks of cows. Was it from them that you have learned so extraordinary a deception?"

The Duke stood in thoughtful moment, with a look of intense solicitude on his face. Then he opened a door and showed us a large room furnished as a museum. He led way to a glass case in a corner, and pointed to a pair of iron shoes.

"These shoes," he ran, "were dug up in the moat of Holderness Hall. They are for the use of horses, but they are made of iron, and have a grooved sole for iron, so as to throw a false track. They are supposed to have belonged to some of the marauding bands which held Holderness in the Middle Ages."

Holmes opened the case, and moving his finger he passed it along the edge of the sole of the shoe, which he left upon his skin.

"Thank you," said he, as he replaced the shoe in its notebook.

"The glowing object I have seen in the North."

"And the first?"

Holmes folded up his cheek book and placed it in his notebook.

"I am a poor man," said he, as he put it affectionately, and thrust it into the depths of his inner pocket.

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