

## The Return of Sherlock Holmes.

By S. Conan Doyle.

Author of "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes," "The Hound of the Baskin," "The Sign of the Four," "A Study in Scarlet," etc.

(Illustrated by F. D. Steele.)



Godfrey Stanton was much excited.

"That is unnecessary," said Holmes.

"The paper is thin, and the message will give the message. Here it is," he turned at once and we read:

Stand by us for  
Gordon Saker

"So that is the end of the telegram which Godfrey Stanton dispatched within a few hours of his disappearance. There are at least six words of the message which have escaped us, but what remains—stand by us for God's sake!—proves that this young man saw a formidable danger which approached him, and from which some one else could protect him. It is, mark you! Another person was involved. Who should it be but the pale-faced, bearded man, who seemed himself so nervous a state? What then is the connection between Godfrey Stanton and the bearded man? And what is the third source from which each of them sought help against pressing danger? Our inquiry has already narrowed down to that."

"We have only to find to whom that telegram is addressed," I suggested.

"Exactly, my dear Watson. Your reflection, though profound and already crossed my mind. But I dare say it may have come to your notice that if you walk into a post-office and demand to see the counterfoil of another man's message, there may be some disinclination on the part of the officials to oblige you. There is so much red tape in these matters. However, I have not doubt that with a little delicacy and finesse the end may be attained. Meanwhile, I should like in your presence, Mr. Overton, to go through those papers which have been left upon the table."

There were a number of letters, bills and notebooks, which Holmes turned over and examined with quick, nervous fingers and darting, penetrating eyes.

"Nothing here," he said at last.

"By the way, I suppose your friend was a healthy young fellow—nothing amiss with him?"

"Sound as a bell."

"Have you ever known him?"

"Not a day. He has been laid up with a back, and once he slipped his knee-cap, but that was nothing."

"Perhaps he was not so strong as you suppose. I should think he may have had some secret trouble. With your assent, I will put one or two of those papers in my pocket, in case they should bear upon our future inquiry."

"One moment—one moment!" cried a querulous voice, and we looked up to find a queer little old man jerking and twitching in the doorway. He was dressed in rusty black, with a very broad-brimmed top hat and a loose white necktie—the whole effect being that of a very rustic parson or of an undertaker's mute. Yet, in spite of his shabby and even absurd appearance, his voice had a sharp crackle and his manner a quick incisiveness which commanded attention.

"Who are you, sir, and by what right do you touch this gentleman's papers?" he asked.

"I am a private detective, and I am endeavoring to explain his disappearance."

"Oh, you are, are you? And who instructed you, eh?"

"This gentleman, Mr. Stanton's friend, was referred to me by Scotland Yard."

"Who are you, sir?"

"I am Cyril Overton."

"Then it is you who sent me a telegram. My name is Lord Mount-James. I came round as quickly as the Boyswater bus would bring me. So you have instructed a detective?"

"Yes, sir."

"And are you prepared to meet the cost?"

"I have no doubt, sir, that my friend Godfrey, when we find him, will be prepared to do that."

"But if he is never found, eh? Answer me that!"

"In that case no doubt his family!"

"Nothing of the sort, sir!" screamed the little man. "Don't look to me for a penny—not a penny! You understand that, Mr. Detective? I am all the family that this young man has got, and I tell you that I am not responsible. If he has any expectations it is due to the fact that I have never wasted money, and I do not propose to begin to do so now. As to those papers with which you are making so free, I may tell you that in case there should be anything of any value among them you will be held strictly to account for what you do with them."

"Very good, sir," said Sherlock Holmes. "May I ask in the meanwhile whether you have yourself any theory to account for this young man's disappearance?"

"No, sir, I have not. He is big enough and old enough to look after himself, and if he is as foolish as to

lose himself I entirely refuse to accept the responsibility of finding for him."

"I quite understand your position," said Holmes, with a mischievous twinkle in his eyes. "Perhaps you don't quite understand mine. Godfrey Stanton appears to have been a poor man. If he has been kidnapped it could not have been for anything which he himself possesses. The fame of your wealth has gone abroad, Lord Mount-James, and it is certainly possible that a gang of thieves have secured your nephew in order to gain from him some information as to your house, your habits and your treasure."

"The face of our impressionable little nephew turned as white as his necktie."

"However, sir, what an idea! I never thought of such a thing! What information requires there are in the world? But Godfrey is a fine lad—a staunch lad. Nothing would induce him to give his old uncle away. I'll have the plate moved over to the back this evening. In the meantime spare no pains, Mr. Detective. I beg you to leave no stone unturned to bring him safely back. As to money, well, so far as a liver or even a tumor goes, you can always look to me."

Even in his disordered frame of mind the noble master could give us no information which could help us, for he knew little of the private life of his nephew. Our only clue lay in the truncated telegram, and with a copy of this in his hand Holmes set forth in a second look for his chain. We had shaken off Lord Mount-James, and Overton had gone to consult with the other members of his team over the milestone which had befuddled them.

There was a telephone office at a short distance from the hotel. We waited outside it.

"It's worth trying, Watson," said Holmes. "Of course with a warrant we could demand to see the counterfoils, but we have not reached that stage yet. I don't suppose they remember faces in so busy a place. Let us venture it."

"I am sorry to trouble you," said he in his blandest manner to the young woman behind the grating; "there is some small mistake about a telegram I sent yesterday. I have had no answer, and I very much fear that I must have omitted to put my name at the end. Could you tell me if this was so?"

The young woman turned over a sheet of counterfoils.

"What o'clock was it?" she asked.

"A little after six."

"Whom was it to?"

Holmes put his finger to his lips and glanced at me. "The last words in it were 'for God's sake,'" he whispered confidentially. "I am very anxious at getting no answer."

The young woman separated one of the forms.

"This is it. There is no name," said she, smoothing it out upon the counter.

"Then that, of course, accounts for my getting no answer," said Holmes.

"Dear me, how very stupid of me, to be sure! Good morning, miss, and many thanks for having relieved my mind."

He checked and rubbed his hands when we found ourselves in the street once more.

"Well?" I asked.

"We progress, my dear Watson, we progress. I had seven different schemes for getting a glimpse of that telegram, but I could hardly hope to succeed the very first time."

"And what have you gained?"

"A starting point for our investigation," he hailed a cab. "King's Cross station," said he.

"Yes, I think we must run down to Cambridge together. All the indications seem to me to point in that direction."

"Tell me," I asked, as we rattled up Gray's Inn road, "have you any suspicion yet as to the cause of the disappearance? I don't think that among all our cases I have known one where the motives are more obscure. Surely you don't really imagine that he may be kidnapped in order to give information against his wealthy uncle?"

"I confess, my dear Watson, that that does not appeal to me as a very probable explanation. It struck me, however, as being the one which was most likely to interest that exceedingly unpleasant old person."

"It certainly did that, but what are your alternatives?"

"I could mention several. You must admit that it is curious and suggestive that this incident should occur on the eve of this important match and should involve the only man whose presence seems essential to the success of the side. It may, of course, be a coincidence, but it is interesting. Amateur sport is free from betting, but a good deal of outside betting goes on among the public, and it is possible that it might be worth some one's while to get at a player as the ruffians of the turf get at a race horse. There is one explanation. A second very obvious one is that this young man really is the heir of a great property, however modest his means may at present be, and it is not impossible that a plot to hold him for ransom might be concocted."

"These theories take no account of the telegram."

"Quite true, Watson. The telegram still remains the only solid thing which we have to deal, and we must not permit our attention to wander away from it. It is to gain from him some information as to your house, your habits and your treasure."

are now upon our way to Cambridge. The path of our investigation is at present obscure, but I shall be very much surprised if before evening we have not cleared it up or made a considerable advance along it."

It was already dark when we reached the old university city. Holmes took a cab at the station and ordered the man to drive to the house of Dr. Leslie Armstrong. A few minutes later we had stopped at a large mansion in the busiest thoroughfare. We were shown in and after a long wait were at last admitted into the consulting room, where we found the doctor seated behind his table.

It struck the degree in which I had lost touch with my profession that the name of Leslie Armstrong was unknown to me. Now I am aware that he is not only one of the heads of the medical school of the university, but a first-class reputation in more than one branch of science. Yet even without knowing his brilliant record one could not fail to be impressed by a mere glance at the man—the square, massive face, the hooding eyes under the thick-lashed brows, and the granite molting of the inflexible jaw, a man of deep character, a man with an alert mind, grim, ascetic, self-contained, formidable—as I read Dr. Leslie Armstrong.

He held my friend's card in his hand, and he looked up with no very pleasant expression upon his dark features.

"I have heard your name, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, and I am aware of your profession—one of which I have no means approve."

"In that case, you will find yourself in a quandary when you pry into the country," said my friend quickly.

"So far as your efforts are directed toward the suppression of crime, sir, they must have the support of every reasonable member of the community, though I cannot doubt that the official machinery is amply sufficient for the purpose. Where your calling is more open to criticism is when you pry into the secrets of private individuals, when you take up family matters which are

better hidden, and when you incidentally waste the time of men who are more busy than yourself. At the present moment, for example, I should be writing a treatise instead of conversing with you."

"No doubt, doctor, and yet the conversation may prove more important than the treatise. Incidentally I may tell you that we are doing the reverse of what you very justly blame, and that we are endeavoring to prevent anything like public exposure of private matters which must necessarily follow when once the case is fairly in the hands of the official police. You may look upon me simply as an irregular pioneer, who goes in front of the regular forces of the country. I have come to ask you about Mr. Godfrey Stanton."

"What about him?"

"You know him, do you not?"

"He is an intimate friend of mine."

"You are aware that he has disappeared?"

"Ah, indeed? There was no change of expression in the rugged features of the doctor.

"He left his hotel last night—he has not been heard of."

"No doubt he will return."

"Tomorrow is the varsity football match."

"I have no sympathy with these childish games. The young man's fate interests me deeply, since I know him and like him. The football match does not come within my horizon at all."

"I claim your sympathy, then, in my investigation of Mr. Stanton's fate. Do you know where he is?"

"Certainly not."

"You have not seen him since yesterday?"

"No, I have not."

"Was Mr. Stanton a healthy man?"

"Absolutely."

"Did you ever know him ill?"

"Never."

Holmes popped a sheet of paper before the doctor's eyes. "Then perhaps you will explain this receipted bill for 13 guineas paid by Mr. Godfrey Stanton last month to Dr. Leslie Armstrong of Cambridge. I picked it out from among the papers upon his desk."

The doctor flushed with anger.

"I do not feel that there is any reason why I should render an explanation to you, Mr. Holmes."

Holmes replaced the bill in his notebook. "If you prefer a public explanation, it must come sooner or later," said he. "I have already told you that I can hush up that which others will be bound to publish, and you would really be wiser to take me into your complete confidence."

"I know nothing about it."

"Did you hear from Mr. Stanton in London?"

"Certainly not."

"Dear me, dear me—the postoffice again!" Holmes sighed wearily. "A most urgent telegram was dispatched to you from London by Godfrey Stanton at 3.15 yesterday evening—a

telegram which is undoubtedly associated with his disappearance—and yet you have not had a single line from him. I shall therefore go down to the office here and register a complaint."

"I'll trouble you to wait out of my house, sir," said he. "You can tell your employer, Lord Mount-James, that I do not wish to have anything to do either with him or with his agents. No, sir—not another word!" He rang the bell loudly. "John, show these gentlemen out."

A pompous butler ushered us severely to the door, and we found ourselves in the street. Holmes burst out laughing.

"The Leslie Armstrong is certainly a man of energy and character," said he. "I have met some men who, if he turns his talents that way, was more calculated to fill the gap left by the illustrious Moriarty. And now, my dear Watson, here we are, stranded and friendless in this inhospitable town, which we cannot leave without abandoning our case. This little inn just opposite Armstrong's house is singularly adapted to our needs. If you would engage a front room and purchase the necessities for the night, I may have time to make a few inquiries."

These few inquiries proved, however, to be a more lengthy proceeding than Holmes had imagined. For we all returned to the inn much weary and much hungry, and exhausted with hunger and fatigue. A cold supper was ready upon the table, and when his needs were satisfied and his pipe alight he was ready to take that half-cold and weary philosophic view which was natural to him when his affairs were going awry. The sound of carriage wheels came from the street, and a pair of grays stood before the doctor's door.

"It's been out three hours," said Holmes. "Started at 6.30, and here it is back again. That gives a radius of ten or twelve miles, and he does it once or sometimes twice a day."

"No unusual thing for a doctor in practice."

"But Armstrong is not really a doctor in practice. He is a lecturer and a consultant, but he does not care for general practice, which distracts him from his literary work. Why, then, does he make these long journeys, which must be exceedingly irksome to him, and who is it that he visits?"

"His coachman."

"My dear Watson, can you doubt that it was to him that I first applied? I do not know whether it came from his own innate depravity or from the prospect of his master, but he was rude enough to set a dog at me. Neither dog nor man liked the look of my stick, however, and the matter fell through. All that I have learned is the yard of our own inn. It was he who told me of the doctor's habits and of his daily journey. At that instant, to give point to his words, the carriage came round to the door."

"Could you not follow it?"

"Excellent, Watson! You are acclimating this evening. The idea did cross my mind. There is, as you may have observed, a bicycle shop next to our inn. Into this I rushed, engaged a bicycle and was able to get started before the carriage was quite out of sight. I rapidly overtook it, and then, keeping at a discreet distance of a hundred yards or so, I followed its lights until we were clear of the town. We had got well out on the country road when a somewhat mortifying incident occurred. The carriage stopped, the doctor alighted, walked swiftly back to where I had halted and told me in an excellent rustic fashion that the feared road was narrow and that he hoped his carriage did not impede the passage of my bicycle. Nothing could have been more admirable than his way of putting it. I at once rode past the carriage, and, keeping to the main road, I went on for a few miles and then halted in a convenient place to see if the carriage passed. There was no sign of it, however, and so it became evident that it had turned down one of several side roads which I had observed. I rode back, but again saw nothing of the carriage, and now, as you perceive, it has returned after me. Of course I had at the outset no particular reason to connect these journeys with the disappearance of Godfrey Stanton, and was only inclined to investigate them on the general grounds that everything which concerns Dr. Armstrong is at present of interest to us, but now that I find he keeps so keen a lookout upon any one who may follow him on these excursions the affair appears more important, and I shall not be satisfied until I have made the matter clear."

"We can follow him tomorrow."

"Can we? It is not so easy as you seem to think. You are not familiar with Cambridgeshire, are you? It does not lend itself to concealment. All this country that I passed over tonight is as flat as the palm of your hand, and the man we are following is no fool, as he very clearly showed tonight. I have wired to Overton to let us know any fresh London developments at this address, and in the meantime we can only concentrate our attention upon Dr. Armstrong, whose name the obliging young lady at the office allowed me to read upon the counterfoil of Stanton's urgent message. He knows where the

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### Weak Kidneys.

A change in the weather—the slightest impudence—and O! what excruciating pain in the back. A cold flies to the weakest spot. And kidneys that take cold easily, prove weakness—perhaps disease. A slight weakness soon becomes a serious disease in such vital organs as the kidneys. Heed Nature's

warning. Make the kidneys well and strong, so they can perform their proper duties.

### CIN PILLS

make the kidneys well and strong, so they can perform their proper duties. They strengthen weak kidneys—clean, purify and heal the affected parts—get rid of the poisons in the blood, and thus prevent the formation of kidney trouble. Try CIN PILLS. If they don't completely cure you, we authorize your druggist to refund the money. That shows our confidence in CIN PILLS. One per box, a dozen for \$2.50 at your druggist or THE SOLE DRUG CO., WINNIPEG, MAN.

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