MC2289

POOR DOCUMENT

THE ARNCLIFFE PUZZLE,

BY GORDON HOLMES

Author of "A MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE."

(Continued.)

"That's it, Alderney. 'Good cast, sir!'"

"Ah, hence the marquise," murmured Lester.

Jones was puzzled again. He laughed, in case there was a lurking joke. The word suggested a circus or a fair to him, but his guest went on:

"And who is Mr. Warren?"

"He's t' agent, Mrs. Warren's son. She's t' housekeeper at t' Hall. A nice fat job she's gotten him. A bonny agent to be sure! He doesn't know wute (oats) frae turnips till they're cooked. By gum! Farmer Brown tell't me t'other day—"

Any further gossip was cut short by the rapid clatter of a horse up the village street. The rider, a groom, dismounted in great haste outside a house with a brass plate on the door.

"What's wrong noo?" said the landlord. "Yon's one o' Lord Arncliffe's men. Somebody's ill, I'll be bound, as sure as my name's J. J.!"

Lester, of course, was in a position to hazard a guess on the point, but he said nothing. A consultation between the messenger and a serving maid caused the former to turn away, mopping his head in perplexity. A glass of beer is the usual resource of such a man if his brains are

"His lordship dyin'? S'welp me!" gasp-bridle under his arm, led his horse toward the "Fisherman's Rest."

"Here's a nice thing!" he cried, in response to Jones's inquiry. "Lord Arncliffe at death's door, an' Dr. Smalley gone off on a round the Lord knows where! What's best to be done—ride to Moseley or telegraph to Alnwick?"

"'His lordship dyin'? S'welp me!" wasped the innkeeper.

"So Mrs. Warren said. She told me to ride like—well, as fast as I could, for Dr. Smalley, an' now I'm in a fix."

"Did you say mixed ale?" was all Jones was able to ask, for he was dazed by the news.

"Can I be of any service?" interposed Lester. "I am a doctor."

"Are you, sir?" cried the groom. "Can you ride?"

"Yes."

"Well, sir, take my mare. It's a godsend to have met you. Tell Mrs. Warren how it happened, an' say I am following. I have left word for Dr. Smalley."

"Has Lord Arncliffe had a sudden seizure? Is he an old man?"

"He is very old, sir, but, though ailing, he has had nothing like this before."

"Is he stout?"

"Bless you, sir, he's thin as a herring!"

George Lester quickly ran up-stairs, grabbed a small instrument case from his portmanteau, obtained some directions from the groom as he swung into the saddle, and was gone before Jones appeared with a brimming tankard.

The inn-keeper had earned his nickname because he could laugh on any pretext. He grinned now vacuously.

"So he's a doother, is he," was his comment. "Dang me, I thowt he was a gentleman!"

"Anyhow, he can ride," said the groom.

A pleasant country road, a lodge, a well-kept drive through a fine park sheltered by woods glorious in their June boscage, whirled past Lester during that strenuous gallop. The mare was a good one, and her head was turned toward the stables; so not many minutes elapsed ere he was breathlessly asking for Mrs. Warren at the spacious entrance to the fine mansion he had already seen amid the trees.

To avoid delay, he told the footman why he was there, and he was surprised when the man returned, white faced, with a stammering message from Mr., not Mrs., Warren that he was too late. Lord Arncliffe was dead. Yet the footman was obviously startled by the news.

"Take my compliments to Mr. Warren," said Lester with some emphasis, "and tell him that he has arrived at a serious decision. None except a medical man can decide that question."

The passive resistance apparently offered to professional aid was astonishing. It tended to throw George Lester into a critical, if not hostile, frame of mind. A gardener offered to hold his horse, so he advanced a few steps into the wide hall. That Lord Arncliffe, when living, was a dilettante of exquisite taste and far-reaching knowledge was evident at a glance. Here were Saracen and old Spanish coats of mail, steel inlaid with gold, shields of Japanese lacquer, bossed with carved dragons in oxidized silver, portraits by Lely and Gainsborough, porcelain from Sevres and Dresden, statuettes from Pompeii, squat figures of long-forgotten gods from Southern India. Quaintly varied as were the trappings of hall and splendid oak staircase, each object was a gem in itself. Wealth alone could not have gathered the display. The soul of a collector, the cunning eye of a connoisseur, must have commanded the purse of a millionaire, if the remainder of the house was decked with an artistic hoard to match this first sample of its treasures.

He was admiring a jade vase, embellished with scrollwork in red gold, when the rustle of a dress came from a corridor leading into the broad landing of the stairs. Followed by the footman, an elderly woman appeared. Her attire, a black gown of stiff silk, her lace cap, a bunch of shining keys at her waist, the lines in her pallid face expressing discipline and order, showed that this could be none other than the housekeeper, Mrs. Warren. Lester, prone to idle musings, wondered if she would object to the dust on his garments, so prim was she, and so spick and span the polished oak and tessellated floor of the mansion she ruled.

But her somewhat harsh features softened into a mechanical affability when Lester advanced to meet her. She had been observing him narrowly as she descended the stairs, and a woman of her position might be trusted to sum up a stranger with exceeding accuracy.

"My son did not quite understand the footman's message," she said in measured accents, though her natural emotion was betrayed by the effort to speak without constraint. "Of course we are only too glad that a doctor should see his lordship. May I ask your name, sir?"

"George Lester. Although not practising now, I have recently been medical officer to the Associated Gold-Fields Company on the West Coast of Africa."

"Are you staying in the village?"

She turned to usher him to the upper floor, and he briefly accounted for his presence as they went on together. They traversed a long passage, adorned throughout with rare pictures, ancient arms, and fine china, with here and there a wonderful buhl cabinet or marquetry table. Pausing at the end door on the right, Mrs. Warren stepped aside.

"Lord Arncliffe's bedroom," she whispered. "We brought him there from the library when—when Simpson found him."

Lester asked no questions. The time for explanation was not yet. Some one, seemingly Lord Arncliffe's agent, had spoken of death. Let that all-important verdict be ratified first.

The room was dim. Green blinds shut out the afternoon sun. On a narrow bed lay a diminutive figure, fully dressed. Near a window stood the man with the red gaiters. Near the still form on the bed was a liveried servant, aged and bent, gulping back his grief. Lester almost expected to find Miss Holt there too, but the large room held no other occupant. He noticed, but paid no heed to, the surprised air of the agent when he entered the room.

His first action was to raise the blind of the window nearest the bed. Then he stooped over the shrunken form stretched so stiffly on the coverlet. Waistcoat and shirt had been disarranged at the breast. He lifted an eyelid, and a glance sufficed. The cornea was opaque. Though this sign is practically infallible, Lester applied a stethoscope to the region of the heart. He listened intently for a period that must have seemed long to the watchers. Then he straightened himself.

"Yes, he is dead," he said.

There was a pause of tense silence. Even the weeping domestic withheld his sobs. Lester leaned over the bed again. Clearly, his attention was drawn by a slight irritation of the neck and scalp.

"He has been dead for more than an hour," volunteered Warren, speaking in the sharp, suspicious tone of one who resents, but cannot prevent, an intrusion.

"Has Dr. Smalley been in regular attendance on Lord Arncliffe?" inquired Lester, still examining the dead man's face.

Mrs. Warren answered. "Yes, in a sense," she said. "Dr. Smalley saw him two days ago."

"Did the doctor prescribe any medicine?"

"'Lord Arncliffe would not touch any drug or alcoholic stimulant.'"

"Did he appear to be in his usual health today?"

"Oh, yes. He was at work in the library with Miss Holt until five o'clock. Then, as was her usual habit, she brought him a cup of beef tea and some biscuits, and left him with his papers."

"Did the beef tea and biscuits constitute his last meal?"

"Yes, sir. Simpson went in soon after six. His lordship was lying back in his chair, dead, to all appearance."

"He had — taken—the beef tea—but only one — biscuit," said Simpson, brokenly. George Lester assumed that the man was the trusted attendant of the deceased peer.

"Can you let me see the vessel that contained the beef tea?"

Mrs. Warren hesitated. The question was unexpected. Then she said: "Simpson, go and bring the tray from the table, if it is still in the library."

The servant, faithful to his training, at once recovered his self-possession when given an order. He left the room. No word was received until he returned with the message: A housemaid took the things to the kitchen, ma'am."

"You heard this gentleman's request. Ask if they have gone to the scullery," said Mrs. Warren sharply. Lester, listening, recalled his fleeting thought about the dust. Not even the tragedy of her master's sudden death could deprive the housekeeper of her authoritative air. Yet she spoke as if her social rank was far above her son's. When she uttered a command there could be no disputing it.

Simpson came back quickly. Meanwhile, Lester had peered again into both eyes of the dead man, and had tested the rigidity of the arm.

The servant carried a tray containing a silver biscuit box, a small covered jug, and a cup and saucer.

Lester glanced at the various articles. "They have been washed," he commented.

"Yes, sir. A house in order."

"Well," admitted Mrs. Warren, "that is so, of course. I thought that in the excitement of his lordship's seizure the maids might not have been so prompt. But do you think the beef tea was harmful, Dr. Lester? It was prepared by the same cook who has made it for several years almost without exception."

"It is hard to say," was the non-committal answer.

"Dr. Smalley believed his lordship's heart was affected. He told me so many a time," growled Harry Warren.

"I am sure of it," said Lester. "No doubt Lord Arncliffe suffered from occasional sickness, perhaps fainting fits?"

"Not that I know of," replied Warren.

"Oh yes, he did!" broke in Simpson. "I told you, Mrs. Warren, didn't I, ma'am?"

"Certainly. Dr. Smalley was anxious about these symptoms, though they were very slight and far from frequent. Lord Arncliffe was sensitive about such matters, so they were never discussed."

There was a knock at the door. A tubby, baldheaded little man, balancing gold-rimmed pince nez on his nose, with drops of perspiration glistening on his forehead, entered precipitately.

"Bless my soul! what is this I hear?" he cried.

"I am grieved to tell you that his lordship is dead, Dr. Smalley," said Mrs. Warren in her quiet well bred way. "This gentleman is Dr. Lester, who, fortunately, met one of the grooms near your house in the village."

Dr. Smalley nodded with marked coolness. In such wise did interlopers pry into a new practise!

But Lester paid no heed to his fellow-practitioner's hauteur. He waited until Dr. Smalley had concluded an examination on his own part. Then he touched the village doctor's arm.

"Will you oblige me by coming into the corridor a moment?" he asked.

"There's nothing—" began the other stiffly.

"Exactly. I only wish a word in private with you."

"Pooh! Why this air of mystery, my good sir? Lord Arncliffe died from aortic regurgitation. I have warned him repeatedly."

Lester was nettled by the little man's absurd introduction of professional rivalry into the affair. Yet his demeanor was unruffled.

"I am an utter stranger in Arncliffe," he explained. "Even his lordship's name was unknown to me before today. Therefore—"

"Pre-cisely, my dear sir. Lord Arncliffe's illness and its sad conclusion are entirely within my province."

Dr. Smalley placed his hands behind his back and glared up at Lester defiantly. More than once had he frightened away possible competators by similar tactics. There was nothing else for it; Lester must speak openly.

"I was going to tell you," he said with cold distinctness, "that Lord Arncliffe's heart failure was not due to natural causes. It arose from the administration of arsenic in one of its many forms. Lord Arncliffe has been poisoned!"

CHAPTER II.

LORD ARNCLIFFE CONTINUES THE DISPUTE.

"Poisoned?" cried Harry Warren, with the loud scorn of a man asked to credit the incredible.

"Poisoned?" echoed his mother, gazing affrightedly at Lester. Her thin face blanched and she clutched at the steel chain which held the bunch of jangling keys as though the suggestion conveyed a sinister imputation against her household management.

And Dr. Smalley became angry indeed. "Stuff and nonsense!" he almost shouted. "How dare you come here, sir, and make such ridiculous statements? His lordship has been my patient for years. There is not the slightest ground for your opinion. It is grotesque and untenable. It amounts to a positive outrage. I absolutely refuse to accept it."

Lester looked the enraged little man straight in the eyes. The wrathful obstinacy he found therein would have amused him under different conditions. As it was, he declined the threatened argument.

"I have warned you, and I consider that my duty ends there," he said quietly. "I came to Arncliffe in search of peace. Believe me, I have no wish to be drawn into a distasteful controversy."

But Dr. Smalley was not to be pacified.

"You seem to forget, sir," he vociferated, "that your idiotic charge contains a grave reflection on my treatment of his lordship, and implies either that he was killed himself or that some member of his household has committed murder. Let me tell you sir—"

Lester waved a deprecating hand to stay the torrent of words. He went out, closing the door behind him. None of the others offered to stay his departure. It was only natural that they should take Dr. Smalley's view of the dispute.

At the door, he told the waiting gardener to lead the horse to the stables. Dr. Smalley's gig was standing there, too. For the second time within an hour he walked slowly back to the village.

Half-way he met the groom, who seemed to be surprised.

"Is his lordship better, sir?" inquired the man.

"He is dead," was the answer. Ere the groom could gurgle forth his amazement, Lester asked him if he had seen Dr. Smalley.

"No sir," he replied.

"Then the doctor must have heard of Lord Arncliffe's illness from some other source; he is at the Hall now."

"He may have come into the park by the West Lodge, sir. It is possible he drove through on his way home. But for goodness' sake, sir, what did his lordship die of?"

"Dr. Smalley has been in attendance on your master he will assign the cause of death." was the guarded answer. If Lester could help it, no hint of a difference between doctors should pass beyond the confines of the dimly lighted room where lay the mortal remains of the owner of Arncliffe.

Before he reached the "Fisherman's Rest," he had made up his mind to pursue a definite course. His assumption that Lord Arncliffe had been poisoned, either by design or accident, rested on no firmer basis than a guess, a scientific guess, it is true, but without the essential warrant of thorough investigation. Perhaps he was mistaken. An old man, possibly somewhat eccentric in his ways, and with dogmatic views anent food and medicine, might easily have acquired symptoms calculated to deceive the eye of even an experinced investigator like George Lester.

The village doctor did not know that his imaginary rival was one of the most eminent toxicologists of the day. Passing out of Edinburgh University, after taking the highest honors in materia medica and chemistry, Lester was at once appointed lecturer in the first of these sciences; but no sooner had he laid the foundations of a most successful career than he imperiled his future by accepting a trivial appointment on the staff of a West African exploration company. In reality he enhanced his reputation. His studies in plant and insect poison, carried on in the Ashanti bush, earned him a world-wide reputation. Before he was thirty he was famous.

Such credentials do not render a man bumptious or intolerant. Only he who climbs the tree of knowledge can tell how wary must be each upward step, and George Lester, the brilliant investigator, honored by his own government, a recognized authority in the medical schools of the Continent, was in a curiously humble frame of mind as he entered the village. He already regretted the momentary resentment of Dr. Smalley's pompous air which induced him to utter the drastic opinion. The little doctor might have been profoundly amazed were he able to read Lester's thoughts at that moment. Conviction was rapidly yielding to doubt. There was some chance that, ere night fell the author of "Toxic Analysis" would seek the fiery-eyed Smalley and apologize to him.

But the circumstances which conspire against human happiness wing their unseen flight from the most unlikely quarters. "Jolly Jim" Jones noted only for his laugh and his taste in beer, was the unconscious agent who quickened a lulled suspicion into fresh activity.

Although genuinely sorry to hear that the Earl was dead, Jones soon recovered his wonted buoyancy and proceeded to entertain his guest with reminiscences of the deceased peer.

"by gum! said he, "I thowt this lo'dship 'ud live till he wur a hundred. He wur tiard as nails, teuf as a bit o' seasoned yak." (Anglice, oak.) "An' he wur a clever owd bird, too. He knew sommat about everythink. One day he chaffed me wi' more ways o' thoussing spirits than I'd ivver heard tell of afore. Gosh! he med me roar."

And Jones showed how he roared.

"Another time," he went on, after regaining his breath; "his lo'dship walked around my bit o' garden, an' he nearly skeered me into a fit. By gum! he said as how honey could be poisoned by bees feedin' on rhodydendrums and henbane or water dropwart mistaken for parsnips. As for mushrooms, he called 'em sike neams I've nivver had one i' t' house since."

Lester suddenly found the garrulous landlord's talk exceedingly interesting.

"Did Lord Arncliffe really show much knowledge of poisons" he asked.

"Poisons" repeated Jones, grinning widely.

(To be continued.)

ARE YOU LOSING LOOKS OR STRENGTH?

Once you were robust, bright and happy.

Today you are dull, worried, failing in vitality and appearance.

Just when you should be at your best you're played out and need a cleansing, bracing tonic. Your blood will soon redden, your vivacious spirit will soon return, you'll be yourself again if you regulate the system with Dr. Hamilton's Pills. A truly wonderful medicine. It searches out disease, positively drives away headache, weariness and lack of vital force. Give yourself a chance. Use Dr. Hamilton's Pills and watch the result. Sold everywhere, 25c. per box or by mail from N. C. Polson & Co., Kingston, Ont., or Hartford, Con.

HOUSEHOLD RECIPES

Little Savory Potato Cakes—Twelve tablespoonfuls of floury potatoes, eight tablespoonfuls of white flour, two tablespoonfuls of grated cheese, one tablespoonful of cream, the yolks of two eggs, one teaspoonful of baking powder, salt and cayenne to taste. Boil the potatoes and rub through a fine sieve. Add the butter, flour, cheese, baking powder and seasoning and blend thoroughly. Mix into a light dough with the cream and the yolks of the eggs. Roll out about half an inch thick, cut into little rounds and brush over with the beaten egg. Bake in a rather quick oven until a nice brown. Split in two, butter and sprinkle with a very little finely chopped parsley.

Egg Savories.—Pass the yolks of three or four hard boiled eggs through a sieve and pound them with an ounce of butter and a tablespoonful of grated cheese. Season with celery salt, pepper and a little cayenne. Add a teaspoonful of warm butter. When it is hot, spread it on some triangular-shaped pieces of toasted bread. Heat carefully in the oven and serve sprinkled with chopped parsley.

Indian Toast.—Take all the bones and the skin from the remains of some cooked, smoked haddock. Weigh four ounces (this is sufficient to cover six pieces of toast) and pound it in a bowl with a dessertspoonful of fresh butter. Then add a teaspoonful of mustard, a teaspoonful of curry powder and a few drops of vinegar. Pass the fish through a wire sieve and make it hot in a small saucepan containing about a teaspoonful of warm butter. Have ready some carefully toasted pieces of bread of medium size, minus the crust. Place a little heap of the prepared fish on them. Then sprinkle over this some hard boiled white of egg which has been passed through a sieve, and after placing in the oven for a minute, send to the table topped by a stuffed olive.

Tomato Ramikins.—Cut some ripe tomatoes of medium size in half. Remove the seeds and the hard portion from the middle and place fruit on a sieve to drain for about an hour. Put a tablespoonful of soft breadcrumbs into a small saucepan, pour in just enough milk to cover and let it cook very gently, stirring frequently until a stiff paste is formed. Then turn the paste into a basin, add a tablespoonful of butter and the yolks of two eggs, beating one into the ingredients before adding the second. When the eggs are mixed, stir in three tablespoonfuls of grated cheese and season with celery, salt, pepper and a little grated nutmeg. Add a pinch of salt to the white of the eggs and whisk them to a very stiff froth. Fill the hollow pieces of tomato as expeditiously as possible with the cheese mixture. Place them at once in a well-buttered tin and cook them in a quick oven until the ramikin is evenly browned, which should take about a quarter of an hour. Half the above quantity would be sufficient if only six small portions of tomato were to be filled.

Curried Beans.—Soak half a pint of butter beans for a couple of hours and then boil them in salted water until they are tender. After draining them well, season with salt and pepper and put them aside until they are required. Cut a large onion into slices, chop it coarsely and put into a stewpan containing three tablespoonfuls of butter. Add two tomatoes, sliced and cut into small pieces, and as soon as the onion begins to acquire a golden color, sprinkle in a tablespoonful of curry powder and let it cook very gently for ten minutes. Pour in three cups of boiling water, and when the sauce has boiled draw the pan to the side of the stove and let it simmer gently for a quarter of an hour. Then add a tablespoonful of tomato catsup, a teaspoonful of vinegar, two teaspoonsfuls of lemon juice and the beans. Cover with buttered paper and place the stewpan in a moderately hot oven for an hour. The curry should be carefully stirred once or twice during the time and the heat should not be allowed to increase, or the curry will be too dry when done.

Curried Rissoles—Mince some cooked chicken (not too finely) and let it simmer very gently for half an hour in a rich thick curry sauce, which should be nearly absorbed at the end of the time. Then stir in a raw egg (which has been mixed but not beaten) and remove the stewpan from the stove. Spread the curry out on a flat dish, and when it is cold, make it up into little balls on a floured board. Make a little hollow in the middle of each and insert a small quantity of well cooked rice. Shape them as before, and after dipping them into beaten egg and covering the pan, fry the rissoles quickly in a wire basket, taking care that they do not acquire more than a deep golden color.

Savory Cutlets—Put six tablespoonfuls of white breadcrumbs which have been passed through a sieve into a basin, and add a teaspoonful of finely minced onion, a tablespoonful of chopped parsley, some salt, pepper and nutmeg. Mix the ingredients to a paste with some raw egg and mask some neatly trimmed mutton cutlets with the forcemeat. Then flour them lightly, brush them over with beaten egg and cover them thickly with fine white breadcrumbs. Put the cutlets aside for about a quarter of an hour for the breadcrumbs to set, and then fry them in a bath of boiling fat. Drain them on taking them from the fat and allow plenty of time for them to get cold.

Rev. Arthur Dunn and his fiancee, Miss Hunter, who have been visiting his sister, Mrs. Dicker, have returned to their home in Quebec.

PACKARD'S

That most shoe dressings are fatal to leather is as generally knowu as is the fact that

Packard's Special Combination Leather Dressing . . .

RUSSET, TAN, BROWN--ALL COLORS.

is entirely free from destructive ingredients.

A perfect cleaner, a perfect dresser, a perfect preservative.

PACKARD MAKES IT.

25 CENTS AT ALL SHOE STORES. PACKARD, OF MONTREAL.

L. H. PACKARD & CO.

Local Merchants and Manufacturers, Attention!

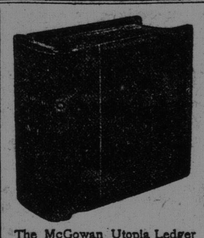
The McGowan Manufacturing Company is controlled solely by St. John capital. We solicit your patronage and support, because we are a local concern and for the reason that our devices are the very latest ideas and consequently more up-to-date than older firms are able to furnish.

Our prices are lower because the perfect simplicity of our system permits of a substantial saving in the cost of manufacture. We can deliver orders for Binders or printing without delay or restrictive conditions.

If you are using an old system and are dissatisfied, ask our representative to call and explain why the "Utopia" is the best Loose Leaf system for you to have.

Our work is all done in St. John, the money spent in wages here comes back to you in purchases from employees.

Patronize Home Industry and Keep Your Money Circulating Where it Will Do Your Business the Greatest Good.



The McGowan Utopia Ledger Is a Perfect Ledger

CARD INDEX SYSTEMS and OFFICE SUPPLIES

—THE—

McGOWAN UTOPIA Loose Leaf Ledger

has few equals and no superiors. Has points found in no other loose leaf ledger now on the market, because it is the latest ledger made, and is an improvement on all other makes.

We are Makers of

Round Back Ledger Binders
"C" Clamp Transfer Binders
Automatic Order Binders
Delinquent Current Binders
Loose Sheet Holders
Ring Books, Price Books
Ledger Sheets
Invoice Forms
Order Forms
Shipping Forms
Binders, and Printers of High Grade Goods only.

LOOSE LEAF DEVICES

are our specialty. Our Workmanship is the Best and our Prices are Reasonable

UTOPIA LOOSE LEAF DEVICES

for the office are money savers, because they save time and labor, thereby increase the efficiency of your help.

The McGowan Manufacturing Co.,

ST. JOHN.

SEND FOR CATALOGUE.

—The—

EVENING TIMES

"The Enterprising Paper."

Read this popular afternoon journal. It publishes all the news as, well as special features, from day to day to make it interesting reading.

25c. a Month

Brings this up-to-date paper to your door. You will crave the TIMES regularly once you become acquainted with it.

'Phone 705 TODAY and order THE TIMES sent direct to your home every afternoon.

All the local, Telegraphic, commercial and sporting news of the day.

Twelve pages on Saturday.

SOUR STOMACH: One dose of DR. SCOTT'S CATHARTIC AND LIVER PILLS, will give you relief. Price 25c. Put up by DR. SCOTT'S WHITE LINIMENT COMPANY, LTD.