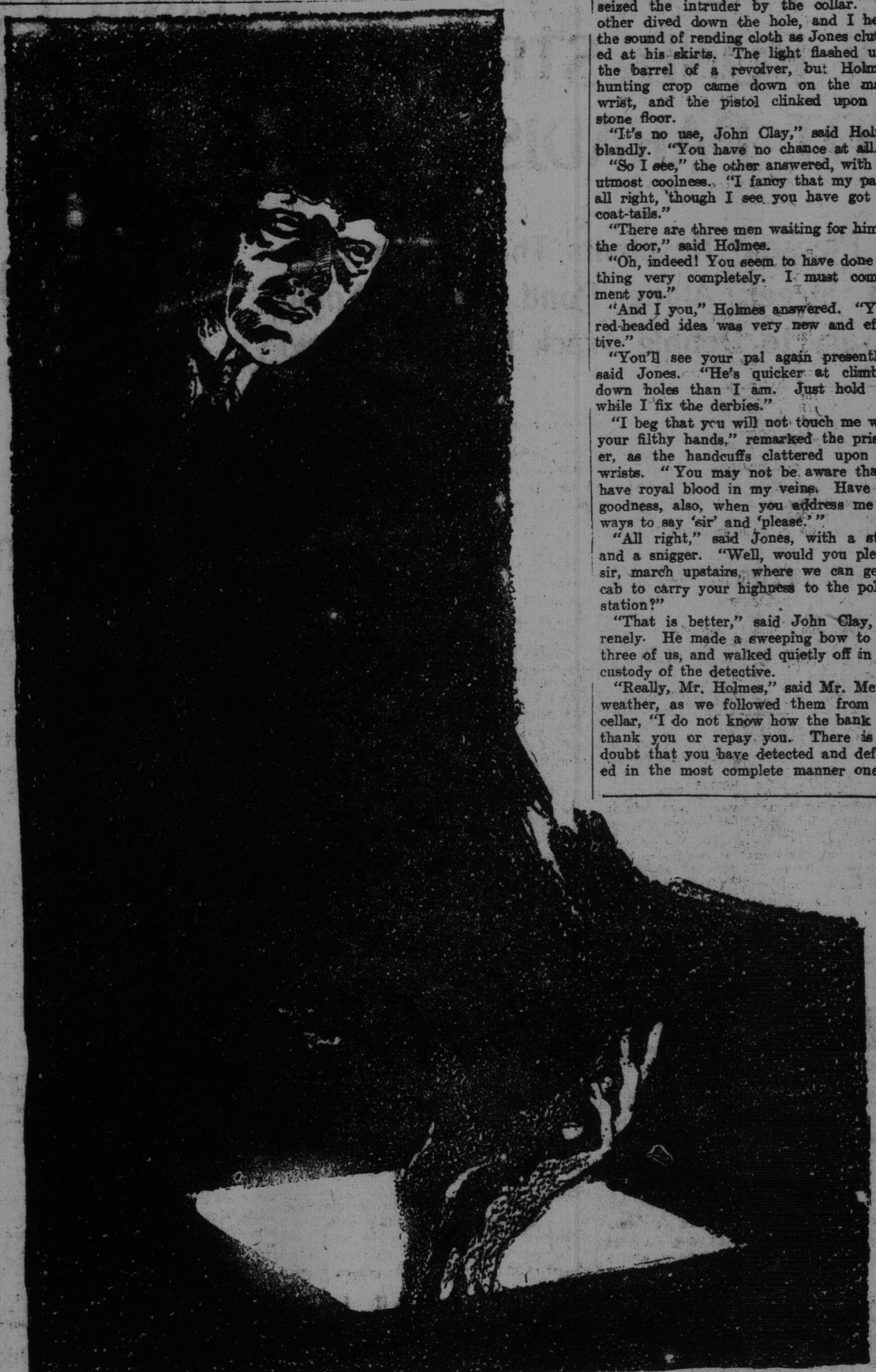


THE EVENING TIMES, ST. JOHN, N. B. FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 1905.

THE ADVENTURE OF THE RED HEADED LEAGUE, BY A. C. NAN DOYLE.

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(Continued.) "Yes. We had occasion, some months ago, to strengthen our resources, and borrowed for that purpose, 30,000 napoleons from the bank of France. It has become known that we have never had occasion to unpeck the money, and that it is still lying in our cellar. The crate upon which I sit contains 2,000 napoleons packed between layers of lead foil. Our reserve of bullion is much larger at present than it usually is in a single branch office, and the directors have had misgivings upon the subject. "Which were very well justified," observed Holmes. "And now it is time that we arranged our little plans. I expect that within an hour matters will come to a head. In the meantime, Mr. Merryweather, we must put the screen over that dark lantern."



"For a minute or more the hand protruded out of the floor."

mentary. With a reading, tearing sound, hole, through which streamed the light of one of the broad white stones turned over a lantern. Over the edge there peeped upon its side, and left a square, gaping clean-cut boyish face, which looked keenly about it, and then, with a hand on either side of the aperture, drew itself shoulder high and waist-high, until one knee rested upon the edge. In another instant he stood at the side of the hole, and was hauling after him a companion, lithe and small like himself, with a pale face and a shock of very red hair. "It's all clear," he whispered. "Have you the chisel and the bag. Great Scott! Jump, Archie, jump, and I'll swing for it!" Sherlock Holmes had sprung out and seized the intruder by the collar. The other dived down the hole, and I heard the sound of rending cloth as Jones clutched at his skirts. The light flashed upon the barrel of a revolver, but Holmes's hunting crop came down on the man's wrist, and the pistol clinked upon the stone floor. "It's no use, John Clay," said Holmes blandly. "You have no chance at all." "So I see," the other answered, with the utmost coolness. "I fancy that my pal is all right, though I see you have got his coat-bill."

"There are three men waiting for him at the door," said Holmes. "Oh, indeed! You seem to have done this thing very completely. I must compliment you." "And I you," Holmes answered. "Your red-headed idea was very new and effective." "You'll see your pal again presently," said Jones. "He's quicker at climbing down holes than I am. Just hold out while I fix the deskies." "I beg that you will not touch me with your filthy hands," remarked the prisoner, as the handcuffs clattered upon his wrists. "You may not be aware that I have royal blood in my veins. Have the goodness, also, when you address me always to say 'sir' and 'please'."

"That how could you guess what the motive was?" "Had there been women in the house, I should have suspected a mere vulgar intrigue. That, however, was out of the question. The man's business was a small one, and there was nothing in his house which could account for such elaborate preparations, and such an expenditure as they were at. It must, then, be something out of the house. What could it be? I thought of the assistant's fondness for photography, and his trick of vanishing into the cellar. The cellar! There was the end of this tangled one. Then I made enquiries as to this mysterious assistant, and found that I had to deal with one of the coolest and most daring criminals in London. He was doing something in the cellar—something which took many hours a day for months on end. What could it be, once more? I could think of nothing save that he was running a tunnel to some other building. "So far I had got when we went to visit the scene of action. I surprised you by beating upon the pavement with my stick. I was ascertaining whether the cellar stretched out in front or behind. It was not in front. Then I rang the bell, and, as I hoped, the assistant answered it. We had had some skirmishes, but we had never set eyes upon each other before. I hardly looked at his face. His knees were what I wished to see. You must yourself have remarked how worn, wrinkled, and stained they were. They spoke of those hours of burrowing. The only remaining point was what they were burrowing for. I walked round the corner, saw that the City and Suburban Bank abutted on our friend's premises, and felt that I had solved my problem. When you drove home after the concert I called upon Scotland Yard, and upon the chairman of the bank directors, with the result that you have seen."

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