

THE EVENING TIMES, ST. JOHN, N. B., MONDAY, AUGUST 28, 1905.

MEMOIRS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES, BY A. CONAN DOYLE.

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THE ADVENTURE OF THE ENGINEER'S THUMB

Of all the problems which have been submitted to my friend, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, for solution during the years of our intimacy, there were only two which I was the means of introducing to his notice—that of Mr. Hatherley's thumb and that of Col. Warburton's madness. Of these the latter may be considered as a finer field for an acute and original observer, but the other was so strange in its inception and so dramatic in its details, that it may be the more worthy of being placed upon record, even if it gave my friend fewer openings for those deductive methods of reasoning by which he achieved such remarkable results. The story has, I believe, been told more than once in the newspapers, but like all such narratives, its effect is much less striking when set forth in prose than when it is slowly evolved before your eyes, and the mystery clears gradually away as each new discovery furnishes a step which leads on to the complete truth. At the time the circumstances made a deep impression upon me, and the lapse of two years has hardly served to weaken the effect.

It was in the summer of '98, not long after my marriage, that the events occurred which I am now about to summarize. I had returned to civil practice, and had finally abandoned Holmes in his Baker Street rooms, although I continually visited him, and occasionally even persuaded him to forego his Bohemian habits so far as to come and visit us. My practice had steadily increased, and I happened to live at no great distance from Paddington station, I got a few patients from among the officials. One of these, whom I had cured of a painful and lingering disease, was never weary of advertising my virtues, and of endeavoring to send me on every sufferer over whom he might have any influence.

One morning, at a little before seven o'clock, I was awakened by the maid tapping at the door, to announce that two men had come from Paddington, and were waiting in the consulting-room. I dressed hurriedly, for I knew by experience that railway cases were seldom trivial, and hastened downstairs. As I descended, my old ally, the guard, came out of the room and closed the door tightly behind him.

"I've got him here," he whispered, jerking his thumb over his shoulder; "he's all right."

"What is it, then?" I asked, for his manner suggested that it was some strange creature which he had caged up in my room.

"It's a new patient," he whispered. "I thought I'd bring him round myself; then he couldn't slip away. There he is, all safe and sound. I must go now, doctor; I have my doxies, just the same as you." And off he went, this trusty tout,

without even giving me time to thank him. I entered my consulting-room and found a gentleman seated by the table. He was quietly dressed in a suit of heather-tweed, with a soft cloth cap, which he had laid down upon my books. Round one of his hands he had a handkerchief which was mottled all over with blood-stains. He was young, not more than five-and-twenty I should say, with a strong masculine face, but he was exceedingly pale, and gave me the impression of a man who was suffering from some strong agitation, which it took all his strength of mind to control.

"I am sorry to knock you up so early, doctor," said he, "but I have had a very serious accident during the night. I came by train this morning, and on inquiring at Paddington as to where I might find a doctor, a worthy fellow very kindly escorted me here. I gave the maid a card, but I see she has left it upon the side-table."

I took it up and glanced at it. "Mr. Victor Hatherley, hydraulic engineer, 14A, Victoria street (3rd floor)." That was the name, style, and abode of my morning visitor. "I regret that I have kept you waiting," said I, sitting down in my library-chair. "You are fresh from a night journey, I understand, which in itself is a monotonous occupation."

"Oh! my night could not be called monotonous," said he, and laughed. He laughed very heartily, with a high, ringing note, leaning back in his chair and shaking his sides. All my medical instincts rose up against that laugh.

"Stop it!" I cried; "pull yourself together. I and I poured out some water from a can."

It was useless, however. He was off in one of those hysterical outbursts which come upon a strong nature when some great crisis is over and gone. Presently he came to himself once more, very weary and blushing hotly.

"I have been making a fool of myself," he gasped.

"Not at all. Drink this." I dashed some brandy into the water, and the color began to come back to his bloodless cheeks.

"That's better!" said he. "And now, doctor, perhaps you would kindly attend to my thumb, rather to the place where my thumb used to be."

He unwound the handkerchief and held out his hand. I gave even my hardened nerves a shudder to look at it. There were four protruding fingers and a hard red spongy surface where the thumb should have been. It had been hacked or torn right out from the roots.

"Good heavens!" I cried, "this is a terrible injury. It must have been done considerably."

"Yes, it did. I fainted when it was done, and I think that I must have been senseless for a long time. When I came

to I found that it was still bleeding, so I tied one end of my handkerchief very tightly round the wrist, and braced it up with a twig."

"Excellent! You should have been a surgeon!"

"It is a question of hydraulics, you see, and came within my own province."

"This has been done," said I, examining the wound, "by a very heavy and sharp instrument."

"A thing like a cleaver," said he.

"An accident, I presume?"

"By no means."

"What a murderous attack!"

"Very murderous indeed."

"You horrify me."

I sponged the wound, cleaned it, dressed it, and finally covered it with cotton wadding and carbolized bandage. He lay back without wincing, though he bit his lip from time to time.

"How is that?" I asked, when I had finished.

"Capital! Between your brandy and your bandage, I feel a new man. I was very weak, but I have had a good deal to go through."

"Perhaps you had better not speak of the matter. It is evidently trying on your nerves."

"Oh! no, not now. I shall have to tell my tale to the police; but, between ourselves, if it were not for the convincing evidence of this wound of mine, I should be surprised if they believed my statement; for it is a very extraordinary one, and I have not much in the way of proof with which to back it up; and, even if they believe me, the clues which I can give them are so vague that it is a question whether justice will be done."

"Hail!" cried I, "if it is anything in the nature of a problem which you desire to see solved, I should strongly recommend before you go to the official police."

"Oh! I have heard of that fellow," answered my visitor, "and I should be very glad if he would take the matter up, though, of course, I must use the official police as well. Would you give me an introduction to him?"

"I'll do better. I'll take you round to him myself."

"We'll call a cab and go together. We shall just be in time to have a little breakfast with him. Do you feel equal to it?"

"Yes; I shall not feel easy until I have told my story."

"Then my servant will call a cab, and I shall be with you in an instant."

I rushed upstairs, explained the matter to my wife, and in five minutes was inside a hansom, driving with my new acquaintance to Baker Street.

Sherlock Holmes was, as I expected, lounging about his sitting-room in his dressing-gown, reading the evening column of the Times, and smoking his before-breakfast pipe, which was composed of all the rings and dottle left from his smokers of the day before, all carefully dried and collected on the corner of the mantelpiece. He received us in his quietly genial fashion, ordered fresh mackerel and eggs, and joined us in a hearty meal. When it

was concluded he settled our new acquaintance upon the sofa, placed a pillow beneath his head, and laid a glass of brandy and water within his reach.

"It is easy to see your experience has been no common one, Mr. Hatherley," said he. "Pray, lie down there and make yourself absolutely at home. Tell us what you can, but stop when you are tired, and keep up your strength with a little stimulant."

"Thank you," said my patient, "but I felt another man since the doctor bandaged me, and I think that your breakfast has completed the cure. I shall take up as little of your valuable time as possible, so I will start at once upon my peculiar experiences."

Holmes sat in his big arm-chair with the weary, heavy-lidded expression which veiled his keen and eager nature, while I sat opposite him, and we listened in silence to the strange story which our visitor detailed to us.

"You must know," said he, "that I am an orphan and a bachelor, residing alone in lodgings in London. By profession, I am a hydraulic engineer, and I have had considerable experience of my work during the seven years that I was apprenticed to Venner & Matheson, the well-known firm of Greenwich. Two years ago, having served my time, and having also come into a fair sum of money through my poor father's death, I determined to start in business for myself, and took professional chambers in Victoria street."

"I suppose that every one finds his first independent start in business a dreary experience. To me it has been exceptionally so. During two years I have had three consultations and one small job, and that is absolutely all that my profession has brought me. My gross takings amounted to £27 10s. Every day from 9 in the morning until 4 in the afternoon, I waited in my little den, until at last my heart began to sink, and I came to believe that I should never have any practice at all."

"Yesterday, however, just as I was thinking of leaving the office my clerk entered to say there was a gentleman waiting who wished to see me upon business. He brought up a card, too, with the name of 'Col. Lyander Starke' engraved upon it. Close at his heels came the colonel himself, a man rather over the middle size, but of an extraordinary bearing. I do not think that I have ever seen so thin a man. His whole face disappeared away into nose and chin, and the skin of his cheeks was drawn quite taut over his outstanding bones. Yet this emaciated creature seemed to be his natural habit, and due to no disease, for his eye was bright, his step brisk, and his bearing assured. He was plainly but neatly dressed, and his age, I should judge, would be nearer forty than thirty."

"Mr. Hatherley," said he, with something of a German accent. "You have been recommended to me, Mr. Hatherley, as being a man who is not only proficient in his profession, but is also discreet and capable of preserving a secret."

"I bowed, feeling as flattered as any young man would at such an address."

"May I ask who it was that gave me so good a character?"

"Well, perhaps it is better that I should not tell you that just at this moment. I have it from the same source that you are both an orphan and a bachelor, and are residing alone in London."

"That is quite correct," I answered, "but you will excuse me if I cannot say how all this bears upon my professional qualifications. I understood that it was on a professional matter that you wished to speak to me?"

"Undoubtedly so. But you will find that all I say is really to the point. I have a professional commission for you, but absolute secrecy is quite essential—absolute secrecy, you understand, and of course we may expect that more from a man who is alone than from one who lives in the bosom of his family."

"If I promise to keep a secret," said I, "you may absolutely depend upon my doing so."

"He looked very hard at me as I spoke, and it seemed to me that I had never seen so suspicious and questioning an eye."

"Do you promise, then?" said he, at last.

"Yes, I promise."

"Absolute and complete silence before, during, and after? No reference to the matter at all, either in word or writing?"

"(To be continued.)"

THE END IS NEAR

Peaceless Peace Conference Expected to Adjourn Without Accomplishing Anything.

Portsmouth, N. H., Aug. 27.—Unless the Russians surrender between now and 3 o'clock Tuesday afternoon, the war in the far east is mighty apt to go on. Indications tonight are that neither side will concede another inch or acre, or even a lagoon.

The Japanese positively declare that their position as at present outlined is fixed.

They have made all the compromises they can make. The Russians are in the same fix. Unless Witte gets word from St. Petersburg that the Czar gives up, the peaceless peace conference will probably end Tuesday, and possibly as early as tomorrow afternoon or evening.

There is but one rift in the clouds. It is said Baron Kaneko will arrive here from Oyster Bay in the morning with a proposition, or perhaps it would be nearer the truth to say a suggestion, from President Roosevelt. If this is true, the conference may last several days longer, but hardly the most optimistic prophet here is hopeful that the result will be anything but a delaying of the inevitable break up. Without a treaty or a new prospect for treaty, there is no denying that the outlook for peace is as gloomy as it has been at any time since the envoys met—and perhaps gloomier.

Tokio, Aug. 28, 1905. A specially summoned council of the cabinet and elder statesmen is now in session discussing the latest phases of the peace conference at Portsmouth.

Portsmouth, N. H., Aug. 28, 1905. A. M. There is a persistent report that President Roosevelt has made a new appeal to the emperor of Japan.

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DIED AT CHATHAM

Capt. John McMann Became Weak and Fell Overboard From His Steamer.

Chatham, N. B., Aug. 27.—(Special)—About 6 o'clock last evening, when the steamer "Laura" was about opposite Point Aux Carrs, on her return trip down river, the captain, John McMann, of Millerton, seemed to take a weak turn and fell overboard.

George Miller jumped into the water and caught him before he sank and held him until a small boat, which had been lowered from the Laura reached the spot.

Both men had just been pulled into the boat, Captain McMann helping himself, when she was sent by the waves against the Laura, which was turning, and was upset. When the captain was again taken into the boat life was extinct.

The deceased was about fifty-five years old and had been captain of the Laura, owned by J. C. Miller, Millerton, for twenty-three years. He married Miss Wilson of Nappan, who died several years ago. It is thought death was due to heart failure.

The body was brought to town about 7 o'clock last evening and taken to the home of William Jardine of Nappan.

SHOT WHILE BERRYING

Sydney, N. S., Aug. 27.—(Special)—A little girl named Katie McPherson, twelve years of age, was shot in the forearm in Glace Bay Saturday, while picking blueberries near the house of a woman named Mrs. Charles Adams. The shooting, it is alleged, was done by the Adams woman.

There is a persistent report that President Roosevelt has made a new appeal to the emperor of Japan.

The wound is a painful one and the girl is in a serious condition. The woman, it is said, fired from an upstairs window of the house. A day or two before, it is said, she fired a couple of shots in the air to scare some little boys who were picking berries in the same field.

Mrs. Adams was arrested soon after the shooting and a preliminary hearing will take place tomorrow. She came from Windsor (N.S.) about three years ago.

A MYSTERY SOLVED

South African Veteran Admits He Shot Two Children, but Says 'Twas Accidental.

Norwood, Ont., Aug. 27.—(Special)—The mystery connected with the Dummer township shooting tragedy was cleared to-day, when Chas. Gow, a South African veteran and crack rifle shot, gave himself up. Gow admitted having fired three shots at the Hill homestead Thursday night.

He explained he was at John Dewar's that night and on return it was arranged to give the Hills a scare. Gow declares he had no motive for killing young Hill.

Stewart and Edward Murphy rode in a buggy in front and their yelling attracted the Hill children to the window. With Gow in the rig behind was Edward Dewar, who brought his Winchester rifle. As they drove past Gow says he fired at the house.

Gow is twenty-four years old. It was his intention to take part in the Dominion Association rifle matches at Ottawa.

At the inquest Robert Hill, father of the boy who was killed, told how he had been awakened by the cheering of the mob, had come down stairs, and had been welcomed by a bullet which just missed him.

A second bullet had entered the upstairs window, wounding little Mabel and killing the boy, Tommy.

The jury brought in a verdict of accidental death by shooting, Charles Gow being exonerated.

Consternation reigned in the Hill family when the verdict was announced.

TO JOIN B. Y. P. U. FORCES.

Toronto, Aug. 27.—(Special)—Rev. Geo. T. Webb has resigned his pastorate here to accept the general secretaryship of the International Baptist Young People's Union, with headquarters in Chicago.

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