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MIRAMICHI ADVANCE

Vol. 24. No. 16. CHATHAM, NEW BRUNSWICK, MARCH 2, 1899. D. G. SMITH, EDITOR & PROPRIETOR TERMS—$1.00 a Year. in Advance

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The "MIRAMICHI ADVANCE" is published at Chatham, Miramichi, N. B., every THURSDAY morning in time for despatch by the earliest mails of that day.

It is sent to any address in Canada, or the United States (Postage prepaid by the publisher) at ONE DOLLAR A YEAR, payable invariably in advance.

Advertisements, other than yearly or by the season are inserted at eight cents per line nonpareil, for 1st insertion, and three cents per line for each continuation.

Yearly, or season advertisements, are taken at the rate of $5.00 an inch per year. The matter, if space is secured by the year, or season, may be changed under arrangement made therefore with the publisher.

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IT WILL OUT
OR,
A GREAT MYSTERY.

(Continued.)

The little man's eyes sparkled as he spoke, and he was evidently in a state of suppressed exultation at having scored a point against his colleague.

"Come here," he said, bustling back into the room, the atmosphere of which felt cleaner since the removal of its ghastly inmate. "Now stand there!"

He struck a match on his boot and held it up against the wall.

"Look at that!" he said, triumphantly."

I have remarked that the paper had fallen away in parts. In this particular corner of the room a large piece had peeled off, leaving a yellow square of coarse plastering. Across this bare space there was scrawled in blood-red letters a single word:

RACHE.

"What do you think of that?" cried the detective, with the air of a showman exhibiting his show. "This was overlooked because it was in the darkest corner of the room, and no one thought of looking there. The murderer has written it with his or her own blood. See this smear where it has trickled down the wall! That disposes of the idea of suicide, anyhow. Why was that corner chosen to write it on? I will tell you. See that candle on the mantel-piece. It was lighted at the time, and if it was lighted this corner would be the brightest instead of the darkest portion of the wall."

"And what does it mean, now that you have found it?" asked Gregson, in a depreciatory voice.

"Mean? Why, it means that the writer was going to put the female name Rachel, but was disturbed before he or she had time to finish. You mark my words, when this case comes to be cleared up you will find that a woman named Rachel has something to do with it. It's all very well for you to laugh, Mr. Sherlock Holmes. You may be very smart and clever, but the old hound is the best, when all is said and done."

"I really beg your pardon!" said my companion, who had ruffled the little man's temper by bursting into an explosion of laughter. "You certainly have the credit of being the first of us to find this out, and, as you say, it bears every mark of having been written by the other participant in last night's mystery. I have not had time to examine this room yet, but with your permission I shall do so now."

As he spoke, he whipped a tape-measure and a large, round magnifying-glass from his pocket. With these two implements he trotted noiselessly about the room, sometimes stopping, occasionally kneeling, and once lying flat upon his face. So engrossed was he with his occupation that he appeared to have forgotten our presence, for he chattered away to himself under his breath the whole time, keeping up a running fire of exclamations, groans, whistles, and little cries suggestive of encouragement and of hope. As I watched him I was irresistibly reminded of a pure-blooded, well-trained, fox-hound as it dashes backwards and forward through the covert, whining in its eagerness, until it comes across the lost scent. For twenty minutes or more he continued his researches, measuring with the most exact care the distance between marks which were entirely invisible to me, and occasionally applying his tape to the walls in an equally incomprehensible manner. In one place he gathered very carefully a little pile of gray dust from the floor, and packed it away in an envelope. Finally he examined with his glass the word upon the wall, going over every letter of it with the most minute exactness. This done, he appeared to be satisfied, for he replaced his tape and his glass in his pocket.

"They say that genuis is an infinite capacity for taking pains," he remarked, with a smile. "It's a very bad definition, but it does apply to detective work."

Gregson and Lestrade had watched the maneuvers of their amateur companion with considerable curiosity and some contempt. They evidently failed to appreciate the fact, which I had begun to realize, that Sherlock Holmes's smallest actions were all directed toward some definite and practical end.

"What do you think of it, sir?" they both asked.

"It would be robbing you of the credit of the case if I were to presume to help you," remarked my friend. "You are doing so well now that it would be a pity for any one to interfere." There was a world of sarcasm in his voice as he spoke. "If you will let me know how your investigations go," he continued, "I shall be happy to give you any help I can. In the meantime, I should like to speak to the constable who found the body. Can you give me his name and address?"

Lestrade glanced at his note-book.

"John Rance," he said. "He's off duty now. You will find him at 46 Audley Court, Kennington Park Gate." Holmes took a note of the address.

"Come along, doctor," he said; "we shall go and look him up. I'll tell you one thing which may help you in the case," he continued, turning to the two detectives. "There has been murder done, and the murderer was a man. He was more than six feet high, was in the prime of life, had small feet for his height, wore coarse, square-toed boots, and smoked a Trichinopoly cigar. He came here with his victim in a four-wheeled cab, which was drawn by a horse with three old shoes and one new one on his off foreleg. In all probability the murderer had a florid face, and the finger-nails of his right hand were remarkably long. These are only a few indications, but they may assist you."

Lestrade and Gregson glanced at each other with an incredulous smile.

"If this man was murdered, how was it done?" asked the former.

"Poison," said Sherlock Holmes, curtly, and strode off. "One other thing, Lestrade," he added, turning round at the door: "'Rache' is the German for 'revenge'; so don't lose your time looking for Miss Rachel."

With which Parthian shot he walked away, leaving the two rivals open-mouthed behind him.

CHAPTER IV.

It was one o'clock when we left No. 3 Lauriston Gardens. Sherlock Holmes led me to the nearest telegraph office, whence he dispatched a long telegram. He then hailed a cab, and ordered the driver to take us to the address given us by Lestrade.

"There is nothing like first-hand evidence," he remarked; "as a matter of fact, my mind is entirely made up upon the case, but still we may as well learn all that is to be learned."

"You amaze me, Holmes," said I. "Surely you are not as sure as you pretend to be of all those particulars which you gave."

"There's no room for a mistake," he answered. "The very first thing which I observed on arriving there was that a cab had made two ruts with its wheels close to the curb. Now, up to last night, we have had no rain for a week, so that those wheels, which left such a deep impression, must have been there during the night. There were marks of a horse's hoofs, too, the outline of one of which was far more clearly cut than that of the other three, showing that that was a new shoe. Since the cab was there after the rain began, and was not there at any time during the morning—I have Gregson's word for that—it follows that it must have been there during the night, and, therefore, that it brought those two individuals to the house."

"That seems simple enough," said I; "but how about the other man's height?"

"Why, the height of a man, in nine cases out of ten, can be told from the length of his stride. It is a simple calculation enough, though there is no use my boring you with figures. I had this fellow's stride, both on the clay outside and on the dust within. Then I had a way of checking my calculation. When a man writes on a wall, his instinct leads him to write about the level of his own eyes. Now, that writing was just over six feet from the ground. It was child's play."

"And his age?" I asked.

"Well, if a man can stride four and a half feet without the smallest effort, he can't be quite in the sere and yellow. That was the breadth of a puddle on the garden-walk which he had evidently walked across. Patent-leather boots had gone round and Square-toes had hopped over. There is no mystery about it at all. I am simply applying to ordinary life a few of those precepts of observation and deduction which I advocated in that article. Is there anything else that puzzles you?"

"The finger-nails and the Trichinopoly," I suggested.

"The writing on the wall was done with a man's forefinger dipped in blood. My glass allowed me to observe that the plaster was slightly scratched in doing it, which would not have been the case if the man's nail had been trimmed. I gathered up some scattered ash from the floor. It was dark in color and flaky—such an ash as is only made by a Trichinopoly. I have made a special study of cigar-ashes—in fact, I have written a monograph upon the subject. I flatter myself that I can distinguish at a glance the ash of any known brand either of cigar or of tobacco. It is just in such details that the skilled detective differs from the Gregson and Lestrade type."

"And the florid face?" I asked.

"Ah, that was a more daring shot, though I have no doubt that I was right. You must not ask me that at the present state of the affair."

I passed my hand over my brow.

"My head is in a whirl," I remarked; "the more one thinks of it, the more mysterious it grows. How came these two men—if they were two men—into an empty house? What has become of the cabman who drove them? How could one man compel another to take poison? Where did the blood come from? What was the object of the murder, since robbery had no part in it? How came the woman's ring there? Above all, why should the second man write up the German word Rache, before decamping? I confess that I cannot see any possible way of reconciling all these facts."

"You sum up the difficulties of the situation succinctly and well," he said. "There is much that is still obscure, though I have quite made up my mind on the main facts. As to poor Lestrade's discovery, it was simply a blind intended to put the police upon a wrong track, by suggesting socialism and secret societies. It was not done by a German. The A, if you noticed, was printed somewhat after the German fashion. Now a real German invariably prints in the Latin character, so that we may safely say that this was not written by one, but by a clumsy imitator, who overdid his part. It was simply a ruse, to divert inquiry into a wrong channel. I'm not going to tell you much more of the case, doctor. You know a conjurer gets no credit when once he has explained his trick, and if I show you too much of my method of working, you will come to the conclusion that I am a very ordinary individual after all."

"I shall never do that," I answered; "you have brought detection as near an exact science as it ever will be brought in this world."

My companion flushed up with pleasure at my words and the earnest way in which I uttered them. I had already observed that he was as sensitive to flattery on the score of his art as any girl could be of her beauty.

"I'll tell you one thing," he said. "Patent-leathers and Square-toes came in the same cab, and they walked down the pathway together as friendly as possible—arm in arm, in all probability. When they got inside they walked up and down the room—or, rather, Patent-leathers stood still, while Square-toes walked up and down. I could read all that in the dust; and I could read that, as he walked, he grew more and more excited. That is shown by the increased length of his strides. He was walking all the while, and working himself up, no doubt, into a fury. Then the tragedy occurred. I've told you all I know myself, now, for the rest is mere surmise and conjecture. We have a good working basis, however, on which to start. We must hurry up, for I want to go to Halle's concert, to hear Norman Neruda, this afternoon.

This conversation had occurred while our cab had been threading its way through a long succession of dingy streets and dreary by-ways. In the dingiest and dreariest of them our driver suddenly came to a stand.

"That's Audley Court in there," he said, pointing to a narrow slit in the line of a dead-colored brick. "You'll find me here when you come back."

Audley Court was not an attractive locality. The narrow passage led us into a quadrangle paved with flags and lined by sordid dwellings. We picked our way among groups of dirty children and through lines of discolored linen until we came to No. 46, the door of which was decorated with a small slip of brass, on which the name Rance was engraved. On inquiry we found that the constable was in bed, and we were shown into a little front parlor to await his coming.

He appeared presently, looking a little irritable at being disturbed in his slumbers."

"I made my report at the office," he said.

Holmes took a half-sovereign from his pocket, and played with it pensively.

"We thought that we should like to hear it all from your own lips," he said.

"I shall be most happy to tell you anything I can," the constable answered, with his eyes upon the little golden disk.

"Just let me hear it all in your own way, as it occurred."

Rance sat down on the horse-hair sofa and knitted his brows, as though determined not to omit anything in his narrative.

"I'll tell it ye from the beginning," he said. "My time is from ten at night to six in the morning. At eleven there was a fight at the White Hart; but, bar that, all was quiet enough on the beat. At one o'clock it began to rain, and I met Herry Murcher—him who has the Holland Grove beat—and we stood together at the corner of Henrietta Street a-talkin'. Presently—maybe about two, or a little after—I thought I would take a look round, and see that all was right down the Brixton Road. It was precious dirty and lonely. Not a soul did I meet all the way down, though a cab or two went past me. I was a-strollin' down, thinkin' between ourselves how uncommon handy a four of gin hot would be, when suddenly a glint of a light caught my eye in the window of that same house. Now, I knew that them two houses in Lauriston Gardens was empty on account of him that owns them, who won't have the drains seed to, though the very last tenant what lived in one of them died o' typhoid fever. I was knocked all in a heap, therefore, at seeing a light in the window, and I suspected as something was wrong. When I got to the door—"

"You stopped and then walked back to the garden gate," my companion interrupted. "What did you do that for?"

Rance gave a violent jump, and stared at Sherlock Holmes with the utmost amazement upon his features.

"Why, that's true, sir," he said; "though how you come to know it, Heaven only knows. Ye see, when I got up to the door, it was so still and so lonesome that I thought I'd be none the worse for some one with me. I ain't afeared of anything on this side o' the grave; but I thought that maybe it was him that died o' the typhoid inspecting the drains what killed him. The thought gave me a kind o' turn, and I walked back to the gate to see if I could see Murcher's lantern, but there wasn't no sign of him nor of any one else."

"There was no one in the street?"

"Not a livin' soul, sir, nor as much as a dog. Then I pulled myself together and went back and pushed the door open. All was quiet inside, so I went into the room where the light was a-burnin'. There was a candle flickerin' on the mantel-piece—a red wax one—and by its light I saw—"

"Yes, I know all that you saw. You walked round the room several times, and you knelt down by the body, and then you walked through and tried the kitchen door, and then—"

"John Rance sprang to his feet with a frightened face and suspicion in his eyes.

"Where was you hid to see all that?" he cried. "It seems to me that you know a deal more than you should."

Holmes laughed, and threw his card across the table to the constable.

"Don't get arresting me for the murder," he said. "I am one of the hounds, and not the wolf; Mr. Gregson or Mr. Lestrade will answer for that. Go on, though. What did you do next?"

Rance resumed his seat, without, however, losing his mystified expression.

"I went back to the gate and sounded my whistle. That brought Murcher and two more to the spot."

"Was the street empty, then?"

"Well, it was, as far as anybody that could be of any good goes."

"What do you mean?"

The constable's features broadened into a grin.

"I've seen many a drunk chap in my time," he said, "but never any one so cry in" drunk as that cove. He was at the gate when I came out, a-leanin' up agin the railin's and a-singin' at the pitch of his lungs about Columbine's New-fangled Banner, or some such stuff. He couldn't stand, far less help."

"What sort of a man was he?" asked Sherlock Holmes.

John Rance appeared to be somewhat irritated at this digression.

"He was an uncommon drunk sort o' man," he said. "He'd ha' found himself in the station if we hadn't been so took up."

"His face—his dress—didn't you notice them?" Holmes broke in impatiently.

"I should think I did notice them, seeing that I had to prop him up—me and Murcher between us. He was a long chap, with a red face, the lower part muffled round—"

"That will do," cried Holmes. "What became of him?"

"We'd enough to do without lookin' after him," the policeman said, in an aggrieved voice. "I'll wager he found his way home all right."

"How was he dressed?"

"A brown overcoat."

"Had he a whip in his hand?"

"A whip—no."

"He must have left it behind," muttered my companion, "You didn't happen to see or hear a cab after that?"

"No."

"There's a half-sovereign for you," my companion said, standing up and taking his hat. "I am afraid, Rance, that you will never rise in the force. That head of yours should be for use as well as ornament. You might have gained your sergeant's stripes last night. The man whom you held in your hands is the man who holds the clue of this mystery, and whom we are seeking. There is no use of arguing about it now; I tell you that it is so. Come along, doctor."

We started off for the cab together, leaving our informant incredulous, but obviously uncomfortable.

"The blundering fool!" Holmes said, bitterly, as we drove back to our lodgings. "Just to think of his having such an incomparable bit of good luck, and not taking advantage of it."

"I am rather in the dark still. It is true that the description of this man tallies with your idea of the second party in this mystery. But why should he come back to the house after leaving it? This is not the way of criminals."

"The ring, man, the ring; that was what he came back for. If we have no other way of catching him, we can always bait our line with the ring. I shall have him, doctor—I'll lay you two to one that I have him. I must thank you for it all. I might not have gone but for you, and so have missed the finest study I ever came across; a study in scarlet, eh? Why shouldn't we use a little art jargon? There's the scarlet thread of murder running through the colorless skein of life, and our duty is to unravel it, and isolate it, and expose every inch of it. And now for lunch, and then for Norman Neruda. Her attack and her bowing are splendid. What's that little thing of Chopin's she plays so magnificently: Tra-la-la-lira-lira-lay."

Leaning back in the cab, this amateur blood-hound caroled away like a lark; while I meditated upon the many-sidedness of the human mind.

(To Be Continued.)

THE WAY OF A WOMAN.

She—Then I got right mad and told him what I thought of him.

He—What did you say?

She—I don't remember.

That's queer. You ought to know what you think of him.

Oh, I know what I think of him now, but I do not remember what I thought of him just then.

The salaries of burgomasters in Prussia are $7,500 in Berlin, $6,000 in Breslau, and Cologne, $5,000 in Eberfeld and Kassel, and so on down to Erfurt, $2,500.

PECULIARITIES OF ESQUIMAUX.

They Will Not Drink Whiskey, but a Husky Thinks Little of Killing His Family.

D. Hanbury, Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, London, Eng., and an explorer of some renown, spent a part of last summer on the west side of Hudson Bay, leaving Winnipeg in June and going as far north as Marble Island, a little south of Chesterfield Inlet. Mr. Hanbury is thoroughly conversant with the manners and customs of the Indians in the great Canadian Northland. He spent seven months with the Yellow Knife Indians, around the great water stretches of the north, and when he left them was able to speak a good deal of their language and understand considerable that was said in the same tongue.

Nothing can induce the Yellow Knives, or the Dog Rib Indians, the explorer states, to come over to the Hudson Bay basin, as they are in mortal dread of the Esquimaux. It appears that they were at war formerly, and the Indians received a severe drubbing, hence their fear of the Esquimaux. Mr. Hanbury, however, is delighted with the Esquimaux, saying that they are first-rate people to travel with, and are as loyal and true as steel to the white man. He points out that there is a difference between the Esquimaux and Indian character. The first are gay, while the latter are morose and sullen. The Esquimaux, although quite ignorant, are absolutely happy, and will always be found laughing and in the best of humor. As for their religion, Mr. Hanbury said, they have none. When a Husky dies that is the end of him, according to their belief; so the missions at Churchill and elsewhere have been unable to make even very little out of the Esquimaux. If they get plenty of tea and tobacco, the Esquimaux are all right, although it is only of late that the Husky drinks tea.

Mr. Hanbury says life is just as safe in those remote wilds as in any Canadian city, although he has a photograph of a Husky who broke all his family ties by killing his wife and all her relatives. This, however, is an isolated case, and the affair would be called a family trouble in civilized countries. The murderer still lives up there, and his crime does not appear to rest very heavily upon his conscience.

The explorer says the Esquimaux are exactly in the same condition as in the days of Franklin, and their number does not seem to have either diminished or increased. They are total abstainers in spite of the stories afloat about these people getting liquor from the American whalers and becoming drunkards. He has seen them refuse to taste liquor time and again, and for some reason they hold it in the greatest horror. They will follow the white man anywhere.

BIRDS OF ILL OMEN.

They Have Returned to France at a Critical Period.

The gay ladies of France, and, indeed, many of the sober-minded statesmen, have lately been greatly upset by the appearance of the fatal crow, which has appeared only three times before, and each time just before some dreadful calamity has swept over the country.

Its first appearance occurred one October morning at the Petit Trianon, at Versailles, in 1785, and that time it flew right up on to the window from which Marie Antoinette was leaning, and seemed to ask for food. The Queen had a biscuit in her hand, and gave it to her sinister visitor. It then flew away crying, "Caw! caw!"

From that day a dark shadow seemed to rest over the formerly spritely and gay Marie Antoinette, and was only swept out of her life by the guillotine.

The same bird is said to have flown wheeling around Napoleon just before the battle of Waterloo, and when the Emperor saw it he turned pale and seemed to lose his nerve. Again it appeared just before the seige of Paris by the Germans in 1870-71, and swept down and gorged itself on the carrion in the city.

Having always appeared prior to some calamity, and appearing again after some twenty odd years, when the whole of France seems on the eve of a national upheaval, it naturally seems to forebode a dark future, and, in order not to add more distrust and confusion to the present situation, the authorities have ordered that no mention of it shall appear in any of the papers.

MEND YOUR BIRD'S LEGS.

Young chickens and other birds frequently break the bones of their legs, and if properly attended to these fractures can be easily cured with very little trouble. As soon as the injury is noticed the fracture must be carefully cleaned and washed with warm water, and then wrapped with a bit of antiseptic cotton. Splints are then prepared for the fractured limb, preferably of split elderwood, the pith of which is taken out. These splints are fastened to the cotton with a drop of glue, and held tightly in place by being wound with linen thread. The bandage and dressing are left undisturbed for from three to four weeks; then the leg is soaked in tepid water until the bandage comes off easily. The fracture will have completely healed in that time. Canaries and other pet birds can be similarly treated in case of a fracture of a leg, only the elder splints are substituted by pieces of cardboard, and the bandage is left but two weeks on the little winged patients.

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