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 بقلم
 آرثر كونان دويل

 دار البحار
المحتويات

الوجه الفضي
طقس موسغريف
النيل الأعزب
إيهام المهندس
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السير آرثر كونان دويل
(1859 – 1930)

طبيب، روائي وكاتب قصص بوليسية بريطاني، ولد في مدينة أنثى، ودرس الطب في جامعة أرستيوس. مارس مهنة الطب مدة ثمانية سنوات، ثم بدأ بكتابة القصص القصيرة للمجلات بهدف زيادة دخليه. ظهرت أولى قصصه الثمانية والسنتين: "دراسة في اللون القرمزى" سنة 1887، وفيها يبرز رجل التحري شيرلوك هولمز ذو البصرة الحادة. أصاب دويل نجاحاً سريعاً في مهنته الأدبية بحيث أنه تخلى عن ممارسة الطب ليكسر قلبه الكتابة. وقد جعلته قصصه هولمز مشهوراً عالمياً. ومن أبرزها: "علامته الأربعة" (1890)، "كلب باسكرفيل" (1902)، و"وادي الخوف" (1904). كما أن مقدراته الأدبية الفذة جعلت شهرة مماثلة لرواياته التاريخية الرومانسية، مثل: "ميكا كلارك" (1888)، "الشركة البيضاء" (1890) و"السير نيجيل" (1906).

تحقت دويل بمستشفى ميداني في جنوب أفريقيا خلال حرب البوير (1899-1902). ودُلَى عودته إلى إنجلترا، أعقب عليها بلقب "فارس".

وبعد مقتل ابنه الأكبر في الحرب العالمية الأولى، وخلال السنوات الأخيرة من حياته، أصبح دويل من القائلين بمخاطر الأرواح.
Silver Blaze

"I am afraid, Watson, that I shall have to go," said Holmes, as we sat down together to out breakfast one morning.

"Go! Where to?"

"To Dartmoor – to King’s Pyland."

I was not surprised. Indeed, my only wonder was that he had not already been mixed up in this extraordinary case, which was the one topic of conversation through the length and breadth of England. For a whole day my companion had rambled about the room. Fresh editions of every paper had been sent up by our newsagent. Yet, silent as he was, there was but one problem before the public which could challenge his powers of analysis, and that was the singular disappearance of the favorite for the Wessex Cup, and the tragic murder of its trainer. When, therefore, he suddenly announced his intention of setting out for the scene of the drama, it was only what I had both expected and hoped for.

"I should be most happy to go down with you if I should not be in the way," said I.
"My dear Watson, you would confer a great favor upon me by coming."

And so it happened that an hour or so later I found myself in the corner of a first-class carriage, flying alone, en route for Exeter.

"I presume that you have already looked into this matter of the murder of John Straker and the disappearance of Silver Blaze?"

"I have seen what the Telegraph and the Chronicle have to say."

"The tragedy has been so uncommon, so complete, and of such personal importance to so many people that we are suffering from a plethora of surmise, conjecture, and hypothesis. On Tuesday evening I received telegrams, both from Colonel Ross, the owner of the horse, and from Inspector Gregory, who is looking after the case, inviting my cooperation."

"Tuesday evening!" I exclaimed. "And this is Thursday morning. Why did you not go down yesterday?"

"The fact is that I could not believe it possible that the most remarkable horse in England could long remain concealed, especially in so sparsely inhabited a place as the north of Dartmoor. From hour to hour yesterday I expected to hear that he had been found, and that his abductor was the murderer.
of John Straker. Yet in some ways I feel that yesterday has not been wasted."

"You have formed a theory then?"

"At least I have a grip of the essential facts of the case. I shall enumerate them to you."

I lay back against the cushions, puffing at my cigar, while Holmes, leaning forward, with his long thin forefinger checking off the points upon the palm of his left hand, gave me a sketch of the events which had led to our journey.

"Silver Blaze," said he, "is from the Isonomy stock, and holds as brilliant a record as his famous ancestor. Up to the time of the catastrophe he was first favorite for the Wessex Cup, the betting being three to one on him. It is obvious, therefore, that there were many people who had the strongest interest in preventing Silver Blaze from being there at the fall of the flag next Tuesday.

This fact was, of course, appreciated at King’s Pyland, where the Colonel’s training stable is situated. Every precaution was taken to guard the favorite. The trainer, John Straker, is a retired jockey, who rode in Colonel Ross’ colors. He has served the Colonel for five years as jockey, and for..."
seven as trainer. Under him were three lads, for the establishment was a small one, containing only four horses in all. One of these lads sat up each night in the stable, while the others slept in the loft. John Straker, who is a married man, lived in a small villa about two hundred yards from the stables. About two miles distant, is the larger training establishment of Capleton, which belongs to Lord Backwater, and is managed by Silas Brown. In every other direction the moor is a complete wilderness, inhabited only by a few roaming gipsies. Such was the general situation last Monday night, when the catastrophe occurred.

On that evening the stables were locked up at nine o'clock. Two of the lads walked up to the trainer's house, where they had supper in the kitchen, while the third, Ned Hunter, remained on guard. At a few minutes after nine the maid, Edith Baxter, carried down to the stables his supper.

Edith Baxter was within thirty yards of the stables when a man appeared out of the darkness and called her to stop. As he stepped into the circle of yellow light thrown by the lantern, she was most impressed, however, by the extreme pallor of his face and by the nervousness of his manner. His age, she thought, would be rather over thirty than under it.

"Can you tell me where I am?" he asked. "I had almost made up my mind to sleep on the moor when I saw the light of your lantern."

سنوات كمدرب. وكان يشرف على ثلاثة فتيان نظرًا إلى صغر حجم الإسطبل الذي لا يضم إلا أربعة جياد. وقد اعتاد أحد الفتيان أن بيبت الليل في الإسطبل بينما ينام الآخران في العليّة. أما جون ستراتكير فتمتله ويجلس في فيلا على بعد مثلي باردة تقريباً مصنفة الإسطبل. ويعود على مسافة ميلين تقريباً أكبر إسطبل للتدرّب في كابلون لصاحب الورد باكراتر وإدارة سيلاس براون. أما ما تبقى من المساحة فأراضٍ غير مأهولة إلا من بعض الغجر الرخليّ.

هكذا كان الوضع عشبي وقوع الحادثة. أغلق الإسطبل في تلك الليلة في تمام التاسعة. وذهب إثنان من الفتيان إلى منزل المدرب لتتناول العشاء في المطبخ بينما بقي الثالث ويدعى نيد هانتر في الإسطبل. حضرت بعد فلل الخادمة لبيبّة بكستنير تحمل له العشاء.

ولما وصلت إلى بعد ثلاثين باردة من الإسطبل، ظهر رجل في عمة الليل ونهرها أن توقف. وقد ذهبت لما رأته يقترب إلى مساحة الضوء الذي ألقاه المصباح لدرجة شعور وجهه، وتوتره.

وقدرت أنه يبلغ الثلاثين من العمر أو أكثر.

سألها: "هل قالت لي أين أنا الآن؟ كنت قد قررت أن أبيت ليالي هذا عندما رأيت نور مصباحك."
‘You are close to the King’s Pyland training stables,’ she said.

‘Oh, indeed! What a stroke of luck!’ he cried. ‘I understand that a stable boy sleeps there alone every night. Perhaps that is his supper which you are carrying to him.’ He took a piece of white paper folded up out of his waistcoat pocket. ‘See that the boy has those tonight, and you shall have the prettiest frock that money can buy.’

She was frightened by the earnestness of his manner, and ran past him to the window through which she was accustomed to hand the meals. It was already open, and Hunter was seated at the small table inside. She had begun to tell him of what had happened, when the stranger came up again.

‘Good evening,’ said he, looking through the window.

‘What business have you here?’ asked the lad.

‘It’s business that may put something into your pocket,’ said the other. ‘You’ve two horses in for the Wessex Cup – Silver Blaze and Bayard. Let me have the straight tip, and you won’t be a loser.

‘I’ll show you how we serve them in King’s Pyland.’ He sprang up and rushed across the stable to unloose the dog. The lad ran all round the buildings but he failed to find any trace of him.'
“One moment!” I asked. “Did the stable boy, when he ran out with the dog, leave the door unlocked behind him?”

“Excellent, Watson, excellent! The boy locked the door before he left it. The window, I may add, was not large enough for a man to get through.

Hunter waited until his fellow-grooms had returned, when he sent a message up to the trainer and told him what had occurred. Mrs. Straker, waking at one in the morning, found that he was dressing. He said that he could not sleep on account of his anxiety about the horses, and that he intended to walk down to the stables to see that all was well.

Mrs. Straker awoke at seven in the morning, to find that her husband had not yet returned. She dressed herself hastily, called the maid, and set off for the stables. The door was open; inside, huddled together upon a chair, Hunter was sunk in a state of absolute stupor, the favorite’s stall was empty, and there were no signs of his trainer.

The two lads had heard nothing during the night. Hunter was obviously under the influence of some powerful drug. They still had hopes that the trainer had for some reason taken out the horse for early exercise, but on ascending the knoll near the house, they perceived something which warned them that they were in the presence of a tragedy.
About a quarter of a mile from the stable John Straker’s overcoat was flapping from a furze bush. Immediately after this was found the dead body of the unfortunate trainer. His head had been shattered by a savage blow from some heavy weapon, and he was wounded in the thigh. It was clear, however, that Straker had defended himself vigorously against his assailants, for in his right hand he held a small knife, which was clotted with blood up to the handle, while in his left he grasped a red and black silk cravat, which was recognized by the maid as having been worn on the preceding evening by the stranger who had visited the stables.

As to the missing horse, from that morning he has disappeared; and although a large reward has been offered, and all the gipsies of Dartmoor are on the alert, no news has come of him. Finally an analysis has shown that the remains of his supper, left by the stable lad, contain an appreciable quantity of powdered opium.

Those are the main facts of the case. I shall now recapitulate what the police have done in the matter.

Inspector Gregory, to whom the case has been committed, is an extremely competent officer. On his arrival, he promptly found and arrested the man upon whom suspicion had naturally rested. His name, it appears, was Fitzroy Simpson. He was a man of excellent birth and education.

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He did not attempt to deny that he had acted as described upon the evening before, but declared that he had no sinister designs, and had simply wished to obtain first-hand information. When confronted with the cravat he turned very pale, and was utterly unable to account for its presence in the hand of the murdered man.

On the other hand, there was no wound upon his person, while the state of Straker’s knife would show that one, at least, of his assailants must bear his mark upon him. There you have it all in a nutshell, Watson, and if you can give me any light I shall be infinitely obliged to you.”

“Is it not possible,” I suggested, “that the incised wound upon Straker may have been caused by his own knife?”

“It is more than possible; it is probable,” said Holmes. “In that case, one of the main points in favor of the accused disappears.

I am afraid that whatever theory we state has very grave objections to it. However, I shall very quickly test the matter when I am once upon the spot, and until then I really cannot see how we can get much further than our present position.”

It was evening before we reached the little town of Tavistock. Two gentlemen were awaiting us at the station. One was Colonel Ross, the well-known
sportsman, the other Inspector Gregory, a man who was rapidly making his name in the English detective service.

"I am delighted that you have come down, Mr. Holmes," said the Colonel. "The Inspector here has done all that could possibly be suggested, but I wish to leave no stone unturned in trying to avenge poor Straker, and in recovering my horse."

"Have there been any fresh developments?" asked Holmes.

"I am sorry to say that we have made very little progress," said the Inspector. "The net is drawn pretty close round Fitzroy Simpson. At the same time, I recognize that the evidence is purely circumstantial, and that some new development may upset it."

"How about Straker's knife?"

"We have quite come to the conclusion that he wounded himself in his fall. Simpson had a great interest in the disappearance of the favorite, he lies under the suspicion of having poisoned the stable boy. He was armed with a heavy stick, and his cravat was found in the dead man's hand. I really think we have enough to go before a jury."

Holmes shook his head. "Why should he take the horse out of the stable? If he wished to injure it, why..."
could he not do it there? Has a duplicate key been found in his possession? What chemist sold him the powdered opium? Above all, where could he, a stranger to the district, hide a horse, and such a horse as this? What is his own explanation as to the paper which he wished the maid to give to the stable boy?"

"He says that it was a ten-pound note. One was found in his purse. The opium was probably brought from London. The key, having served its purpose, would be hurled away. The horse may lie at the bottom of one of the pits of the old mines upon the moor."

"What does he say about the cravat?"

"He acknowledges that it is his, and declares that he had lost it. But a new element has been introduced to the case which may account for his leading the horse from the stable."

Holmes pricked up his ears.

"We have found traces which show that a party of gipsies encamped on Monday night within a mile of the spot where the murder took place. On Tuesday they were gone. Now, presuming that there was some understanding between Simpson and these gipsies, might he not have been leading the horse to them when he was overtaken, and may they not have him now?"
“It is certainly possible. There is another training stable quite close, I understand?”

“Yes, and that is a factor which we must certainly not neglect. We have, however, examined the stables, and there is nothing to connect Silas Brown, the trainer, with the affair.”

“And nothing to connect this man Simpson with the interests of the Capleton stable?”

“Nothing at all.”

Holmes leaned back in the carriage and the conversation ceased. Some distance off, lay a long grey-tiled outbuilding. A cluster of houses away to the westward marked the Capleton stables. We all sprang out with the exception of Holmes, who continued to lean back with his eyes fixed upon the sky in front of him, entirely absorbed in his own thoughts. It was only when I touched his arm that he roused himself with a violent start and stepped out of the carriage.

“Excuse me,” said he, turning to Colonel Ross, who had looked at him in some surprise. “I was day-dreaming.” There was a gleam in his eyes and a suppressed excitement in his manner which convinced me, used as I was to his ways, that his hand was upon a clue, though I could not imagine where he had found it.
"Perhaps you would prefer at once to go on to the scene of the crime, Mr. Holmes?" said Gregory.

"I think that I should prefer to stay here a little and go into one or two questions of detail. Straker was brought back here, I presume?"

"Yes, he lies upstairs. The inquest is tomorrow."

"I presume that you have made an inventory of what he had in his pockets at the time of his death, Inspector?"

"I have the things themselves in the sitting-room, if you would care to see them."

"I should be very glad.

We all filed into the front room, and sat round the central table, while the Inspector unlocked a square tin box and laid a small heap of things before us.

"This is a very singular knife," said Holmes, lifting it up and examining it minutely. "I presume, as I see blood-stains upon it, that it is the one which was found in the dead man's grasp. Watson, this knife is surely in your line."

"It is what we call a cataract knife," said I.

"قال غريغوري: أفضل أن تذهب إلى مكان الجريمة مباشرة.
"سيد هولمز؟"

"أفضل أن أبقى هنا قليلاً لأساعد في بعض التفاصيل. لقد أعيد ستراتير إلى هنا على ما أظن?"

"نعم، إنه في الطابق العلوي وسيبدأ الاستجواب غداً.
"أعتقد أنكم أجريتم جردة لكل ما وجد في جيبه عند حصول الجريمة؟"

"كل الأغراض موجودة الآن في غرفة الجلوس إذا شئت أن تراها.
"يسريني هذا.

توجهنا إلى الغرفة الأمامية وتحلَّقنا حول طاولة وضعت فسي الوسط بينما فتح المفتش علبة حديدية وأقرر منها مجموعة من الأغراض.

تناول هولمز منها سكيناً وفحصه بدقة، "إنه سكين مميز جداً.
على الأرجح أنه السكين الذي وجد في حوزة المغدور نظراً إلى السبب.
بقع الدم عليه. لا شك أنك تعرف هذا السكين جيداً يا واتسون."

"أجبته: "يسمى سكين السد."

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"A strange thing for a man to carry with him upon a rough expedition, especially as it would not shut in his pocket. How about these papers?"

"They are receipted accounts."

"We may now go down to the scene of the crime."

As we emerged from the sitting-room, a woman who had been waiting in the passage took a step forward and laid her hand upon the Inspector's sleeve. Her face was haggard, and thin, and eager, stamped with the print of a recent horror.

"Have you got them? Have you found them?" she panted.

"No, Mrs. Straker; but Mr. Holmes, here, has come from London to help us, and we shall do all that is possible."

"Surely I met you in Plymouth, at a garden-party, some little time ago, Mrs. Straker," said Holmes.

"No, sir; you are mistaken."

"Dear me; why, I could have sworn to it. You wore a costume of dove-colored silk with ostrich feather trimming."

"I never had such a dress, sir," answered the lady.
“Ah, that quite settles it,” said Holmes; and, with an apology, he followed the Inspector outside. A short walk across the moor took us to the hollow in which the body had been found.

“There was no wind that night, I understand,” said Holmes.

“None, but very heavy rain.”

“In that case the overcoat was not blown against the furze bushes, but placed there.”

“Yes, it was laid across the bush.”

“I perceive that the ground has been trampled up a good deal. No doubt many feet have been there since Monday night.”

Holmes took a bag in which the shoes were present, and descending into the hollow, he stretched himself upon his face and leaning his chin upon his hands, he made a careful study of the trampled mud in front of him.

“Halloa!” said he, suddenly, “what’s this?”

It was a wax vesta, half burned, which was so coated with mud that it looked at first like a little chip of wood.

“It was invisible, buried in the mud.”
He took the boots from the bag and compared the impressions of each of them with marks upon the ground. Then he clambered up to the rim of the hollow and crawled about among the ferns and bushes.

"I am afraid that there are no more tracks," said the Inspector.

"Indeed!" said Holmes, rising, "but I should like to take a little walk over the moors before it grows dark, that I may know my ground tomorrow, and I think that I shall put this horseshoe into my pocket for luck."

Colonel Ross, who had shown some signs of impatience at my companion's quiet and systematic method of work, glanced at his watch.

"I wish you would come back with me, Inspector," said he. "There are several points on which I should like your advice, and especially as to whether we do not owe it to the public to remove our horse's name from the entries for the Cup."

"Certainly not," cried Holmes, with decision; "I should let the name stand."

The Colonel bowed. "I am very glad to have had your opinion, sir," said he. "You will find us at poor Straker's house when you have finished your walk, and we can drive together into Tavistock."

نظر الكولونيل روس إلى ساعته بعدما نفد صبره لطريقة عمل صديقي الصامتة والنظامية. قال: "لنتدعي معي، هناك عدة نقاط أود أن أعرف رأيك في شأنها لا سما هل يتوجب علينا احتراماً للجمهور، إزالة اسم الجواد من لائحة الأحصنة المشاركة في السباق. "صرخ الكولونيل بصوت عازم: "ياك أن تفعل، أبقى الآية على حاله."

فأذعن الكولونيل لتصيحته: "يسرني هذا سيد، سنكون بانتظارك في منزل المسكن ستراكير بعدما تنفيذنا نزهتك وربما نذهب معًا إلى تافستوك."

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He turned back with the Inspector, while Holmes and I walked slowly across the moor. The sun was beginning to sink behind the stables of Capleton. But the glories of the landscape were all wasted upon my companion, who was sunk in the deepest thought.

"It's this way, Watson," he said, at last. "We may leave the question of who killed John Straker for the instant, and confine ourselves to finding out what has become of the horse."

"Where is he?"

"I have already said that he must have gone to King's Pyland or to Capleton. He is not at King's Pyland; therefore he is at Capleton. Let us take that as a working hypothesis, and see what it leads us to."

We had been walking briskly during this conversation, and a few more minutes brought us to the hollow. At Holmes' request I walked down the bank to the right, and he to the left, but I had not taken fifty paces before I heard him give a shout, and saw him waving his hand to me. The track of a horse was plainly outlined in the soft earth in front of him, and the shoe which he took from his pocket exactly fitted the impression.

"See the value of imagination," said Holmes. "It is the one quality which Gregory lacks. We imagined what might have happened, acted upon the
supposition, and find ourselves justified. Let us proceed."

The ground sloped and again we came on the tracks. Then we lost them for half a mile, but only to pick them up once more quite close to Capleton. It was Holmes who saw them first, and he stood pointing with a look of triumph upon his face. A man's track was visible beside the horse's.

"The horse was alone before," I cried.

"Quite so. It was alone before. Halloa! What is this?"

The double track turned sharp off and took the direction of King's Pyland. Holmes whistled, and we both followed along after it.

Holmes said, "Let us follow the return track."

We had not to go far. It ended at the paving of asphalt which led up to the gates of the Capleton tables. As we approached a groom ran out from them.

"We don't want any loiterers about here," said he.

"I only wished to ask a question. Should I be too early to see your master, Mr. Silas Brown, if I were to call at five o'clock tomorrow morning?"

"Here he is, sir, to answer your questions for himself."
A fierce-looking elderly man strode out from the gate with a hunting-crop swinging in his hand.

"What's this, Dawson?" he cried. "No gossiping! Go about your business! And you - what the devil do you want here?"

"Ten minutes' talk with you, my good sir," said Holmes, in the sweetest of voices.

"I've no time to talk to every gadabout. We want no strangers here. Be off, or you may find a dog at your heels."

Holmes leaned forward and whispered something in the trainer's ear. He started violently and flushed to the temples.

"It's a lie!" he shouted. "An infernal lie!"

"Very good! Shall we argue about it here in public, or talk it over in your parlor?"

"Oh, come in if you wish to."

When we left, I asked Holmes, "He has the horse, then?"

"He tried to bluster out of it, but I described to him so exactly what his actions had been upon that morning, that he is convinced that I was watching him. I described to him how when, according to his
custom, he was the first down, he perceived a strange horse wandering over the moor; how he went out to it, and his astonishment at recognizing from the white forehead which has given the favorite its name that chance had put in his power the only horse which could beat the one upon which he had put his money. Then I described how his first impulse had been to lead him back to King’s Pyland, and how the devil had shown him how he could hide the horse until the race was over, and how he had led it back and concealed it at Capleton. When I told him every detail he gave it up, and thought only of saving his own skin.

"But are you not afraid to leave the horse in his power now, since he has every interest in injuring it?"

"My dear fellow, he will guard it as the apple of his eye. He knows that his only hope of mercy is to produce it safe. Say nothing to the Colonel about the horse."

"Certainly not without your permission."

"And, of course, this is all quite a minor case compared with the question of who killed John Straker."

"And will you devote yourself to that?"

"On the contrary, we both go back to London by the night train."
I was thunderstruck by my friend’s words. We had only been a few hours in Devonshire, and that he should give up an investigation which he had begun so brilliantly was quite incomprehensible to me. Not a word more could I draw from him until we were back at the trainer’s house. The Colonel and the Inspector were awaiting us in the parlor.

“My friend and I return to town by the midnight express,” said Holmes. “We have had a charming little breath of your beautiful Dartmoor air.”

The Inspector opened his eyes, and the Colonel’s lips curled in a sneer.

“So you despair of arresting the murderer of poor Straker,” said he.

Holmes shrugged his shoulders. “There are certainly grave difficulties in the way,” said he. “I have every hope, however, that your horse will start upon Tuesday, and I beg that you will have your jockey in readiness. Might I ask for a photograph of Mr. John Straker?”

The Inspector took one from an envelope in his pocket and handed it to him.

“My dear Gregory. If I might ask you to wait here for an instant, I have a question which I would like to put to the maid.”

I must say that I am rather disappointed in our...
London consultant," said Colonel Ross, bluntly, as my friend left the room.

I was about to make some reply in defense of my friend, when he entered the room again.

"Now, gentlemen," said he, "I am quite ready for Tavistock."

As we stepped into the carriage, one of the stable lads held the door open for us. A sudden idea seemed to occur to Holmes, for he leaned forward and touched the lad upon the sleeve.

"You have a few sheep in the paddock," he said.

"Who attends to them?"

"I do, sir."

"Have you noticed anything amiss with them of late?"

"Well, sir, not of much account; but three of them have gone lame, sir."

I could see that Holmes was extremely pleased, for he chuckled and rubbed his hands together.

"Gregory, let me recommend to your attention this singular epidemic among the sheep. Drive on, coachman!"

Colonel Ross still wore an expression which showed the poor opinion which he had formed of my companion's ability, but I saw by the Inspector's face that his attention had been keenly aroused.

"Is there any other point to which you would wish to draw my attention?"
The Colonel said, "Why, what is there Silver?"

Blaze favored. "Why, you can see the entire
Grandstand. I glanced at the grandiose near the
as the drag drew up in the enclosure near the
three to one now."

How is the belonging?"

know Silver Blaze with his white forehead."
The Colonel was very angry. "A child would
say him? asked Holmes.
I suppose that you would know him when you
have seen nothing of my horse," said he.

grave and his manner was cold in the extreme.
Wessex Cup, Colonel Ross met us and his face was
Fort days later Holmes and I were again in the
That was the curious incident."
The dog did nothing in the night-time."
The curious incident of the dog in the night-
The numbers started to rise.

"Then my horse is running," cried the Colonel, in great agitation. "But I don't see him. My colors have not passed. This must be he."

As I spoke, a powerful bay horse swept out from the weighing enclosure and cantered past us, bearing on its back the well-known black and red of the Colonel.

"It's my race anyhow," gasped the Colonel, passing his hand over his eyes. Don't you think that you have kept up your mystery long enough, Mr. Holmes?"

"Certainly, Colonel. I found him in the hands of a faker, and took the liberty of running him just as he was sent over."

"My dear sir, you have done wonders. The horse looks very fit and well. It never went better in its life. I owe you a thousand apologies for having doubted your ability. You have done me a great service by recovering my horse. You would do me a greater still if you could lay your hands on the murderer of John Straker."

"I have done so," said Holmes, quietly. The Colonel and I stared at him in amazement. "You have got him! Where is he, then?"

"He is here."

"Here! Where?"
"In my company at the present moment."

The Colonel flushed angrily. "I quite recognize that I am under obligations to you, Mr. Holmes," said he, "but I must regard what you have just said as either a very bad joke or an insult."

Sherlock Holmes laughed. "I assure you that I have not associated you with the crime, Colonel," said he; "the real murderer is standing immediately behind you!"

He stepped past and laid his hand upon the glossy neck of the thoroughbred.

"The horse!" cried both the Colonel and myself.

"Yes, the horse. And it may lessen his guilt if I say that it was done in self-defense, and that John Straker was a man who was entirely worthy of your confidence."

We had the corner of a Pullman car to ourselves that evening as we whirled back to London, and I fancy that the journey was a short one to Colonel Ross as well as to myself, as we listened to our companion's narrative of the events which had occurred at the Dartmoor training stables upon that Monday night, and the means by which he had unravelled them.

I went there with the conviction that Fitzroy Simpson was the true culprit, although, of course, I
saw that the evidence against him was by no means complete. It was while I was in the carriage, just as we reached the trainer's house, that I was marvelling in my own mind how I could possibly have overlooked so obvious a clue.

"I confess," said the Colonel, "that even now I cannot see how it helps us."

Powdered opium is by no means tasteless. Were it mixed with any ordinary dish, the eater would undoubtedly detect it. A curry was exactly the medium which would disguise this taste. Therefore Simpson becomes eliminated from the case, and our attention centers upon Straker and his wife. The opium was added after the dish was set aside for the stable boy, for the others had the same for supper with no ill effects.

Before deciding that question, I had grasped the significance of the silence of the dog. The Simpson incident had shown me that a dog was kept in the stables, and yet, though someone had been in and had fetched out a horse, he had not barked enough to arouse the two lads on the loft. Obviously the midnight visitor was someone whom the dog knew well.

I was already convinced that John Straker went down to the stables in the dead of the night and took
out Silver Blaze. For what purpose? For a dishonest one, obviously, or why should he drug his own stable boy? There have been cases before now where trainers have made sure of great sums of money by laying against their own horses, through agents, and then prevented them from winning by fraud. What was it here?

You cannot have forgotten the singular knife which was found in the dead man’s hand, a knife which certainly no sane man would choose for a weapon. It was, as Dr. Watson told us, a form of knife which is used for the most delicate operations known in surgery. And it was to be used for a delicate operation that night. You must know, with your wide experience of turf matters, Colonel Ross, that it is possible to make a slight nick upon the tendon’s of a horse’s ham, and to do it subcutaneously so as to leave absolutely no trace. A horse so treated would develop a slight lameness which would be put down to a strain in exercise or a touch of rheumatism."

"Villain! Scoundrel!" cried the Colonel. "I have been blind! Of course, that was why he needed the candle, and struck the match."

"Undoubtedly. But in examining his belongings, I was fortunate enough to discover, not only the method of the crime, but even its motives. As a man of the world, Colonel, you know that men do not

Chapter 4: The Crime

The method of the crime was as follows: The horses were drugged with sleep-inducing substances, and the horses were then laid against each other in a manner that ensured their loss. The trainer then placed large bets against his own horses, and then prevented them from winning by fraud.

Colonel Ross, with his experience in turf matters, was able to explain the method of the crime. He told us that it is possible to make a slight nick upon the tendon’s of a horse’s ham, and to do it subcutaneously so as to leave absolutely no trace. A horse so treated would develop a slight lameness which would be put down to a strain in exercise or a touch of rheumatism."

"Villain! Scoundrel!" cried the Colonel. "I have been blind! Of course, that was why he needed the candle, and struck the match."

"Undoubtedly. But in examining his belongings, I was fortunate enough to discover, not only the method of the crime, but even its motives. As a man of the world, Colonel, you know that men do not
carry other people’s bills about in their pockets. I at once concluded that Straker was leading a double life, and keeping a second establishment. The nature of the bill showed that there was a lady in the case, and one who had expensive tastes.

From that time on all was plain. Straker had led out the horse to a hollow where his light would be invisible. Simpson, in his flight, had dropped his cravat, and Straker had picked it up with some idea, perhaps, that he might use it in securing the horse’s leg. Once in the hollow he had got behind the horse, and had struck a light, but the creature, frightened at the sudden glare, and with the strange instinct of animals feeling that some mischief was intended, had lashed out, and the steel shoe had struck Straker full on the forehead. He had already, in spite of the rain, taken off his overcoat in order to do this delicate task, and so, as he fell, his knife gashed his thigh. Do I make it clear?"

“Wonderful!” cried the Colonel. “Wonderful! You might have been there.”

“My final shot was, I confess, a very long one. It struck me that so astute a man as Straker would not undertake this delicate tendon nicking without a little practice. What could he practice on? My eyes fell upon the sheep, and I asked a question which, rather to my surprise, showed that my surmise was correct.”
“You have made it perfectly clear, Mr. Holmes.”

“I have no doubt that this woman had plunged him over head and ears in debt, and so led him into this miserable plot.”

“You have explained all but one thing,” cried the Colonel. “Where was the horse?”

“Ah, it bolted and was cared for by one of your neighbors. We must have an amnesty in that direction, I think. This is Clapham Junction, if I am not mistaken, and we shall be in Victoria in less than ten minutes. Colonel, I shall be happy to give you any other details which might interest you.”
The Musgrave Ritual

An anomaly which often struck me in the character of my friend Sherlock Holmes was that, although in his methods of thought he was the neatest and most methodical of mankind. He was, none the less, in his personal habits one of the most untidy men that ever drove a fellow-lodger to distraction.

Our chambers were always full of chemicals and of criminal relics. But his papers were my great crux. He had a horror of destroying documents, especially those which were connected with his past cases, and yet it was only once in every year or two that he would muster energy to docket and arrange them. Thus month after month his papers accumulated, until every corner of the room was stacked with bundles of manuscripts which were on no account to be burned, and which could not be put away save by their owner.

One winter's night, as we sat together by the fire, I ventured to suggest to him that as he had finished pasting extras into his commonplace book, he might employ the next two hours in making our room a little more habitable. He could not deny the justice of...
my request, so with a rather rueful face he went off to his bedroom, from which he returned presently pulling a large tin box behind him.

"There are cases enough here, Watson," said he, looking at me with mischievous eyes.

"Those are the records of your early work, then?" I asked. "I have often wished that I had notes of those cases."

"Yes, my boy; these were all done prematurely. They are not all successes, Watson," said he, "but there are some pretty little problems among them. Here's the record of the Tarleton murders, and the case of Vamberry, the wine merchant, and the adventure of the old Russian woman, and the singular affair of the aluminum crutch, as well as a full account of Ricoletti of the club foot and his abominable wife. And there—ah, now! This really is something a little recherche."

He dived his arm down to the bedroom of the chest, and brought up a small wooden box. From within he produced a crumpled piece of paper, an old-fashioned brass key, a peg of wood with a ball of string attached to it, and three rusty old discs of metal.

"Well, my boy, what do you make of this lot?" he asked, smiling at my expression.
“It’s a curious collection.”

“Very curious, and the story that hangs round it will strike you as being more curious still.”

“These relics have a history, then?”

“So much so that they are history.”

“What do you mean by that?”

Sherlock Holmes picked them up one by one, and laid them along the edge of the table. Then he reseated himself in his chair, and looked them over with a gleam of satisfaction in his eyes.

“These,” said he, “are all that I have left to remind me of the episode of the Musgrave Ritual.”

I had heard him mention the case more than once, though I had never been able to gather the details.

“I should be so glad,” said I, “if you would give me an account of it.”

“And leave the litter as it is?” he cried, mischievously. “I should be glad that you should add this case to your annals, for there are points in it which make it quite unique in the criminal records of this or, I believe, of any other country.

When I first came to London I had rooms in
Montague Street, just round the corner from the British Museum, and there I waited, filling in my too abundant leisure time by studying all those branches of science which might make me more efficient. Now and again cases came in my way, principally through the introduction of old fellow-students, for during my last years at the university there was a good deal of talk there about myself and my methods. The third of these cases was that of the Musgrave Ritual, and it is to the interest which was aroused by that singular chain of events, and the large issues which proved to be at stake, that I trace my first stride towards the position which I now hold.

Reginald Musgrave had been in the same college as myself, as I had some slight acquaintance with him. He was not generally popular among the undergraduates, though it always seemed to me that what was set down as pride was really an attempt to cover extreme natural diffidence. In appearance he was a man of exceedingly aristocratic type. He was indeed a scion of one of the very oldest families in the kingdom, though his branch was a cadet one which had separated from the Northern Musgraves some time in the sixteenth century, and had established itself in Western Sussex.

For four years I had seen nothing of him, until one morning he walked into my room in Montague Wheel.
Street. He had changed little, was dressed like a young man of fashion — he was always a bit of a dandy — and preserved the same quiet, suave manner which had formerly distinguished him.

"How has all gone with you, Musgrave?" I asked, after we had cordially shaken hands.

"You probably heard of my poor father's death," said he. "Since then I have, of course, had the Hurststone estates to manage, but I understand, Holmes, that you are turning to practical ends those powers with which you used to amaze us."

"Yes," said I, "I have taken to living by my wits."

"I am delighted to hear it, for your advice at present would be exceedingly valuable to me. We have had some very strange doings at Hurststone, and the police have been able to throw no light upon the matter. It is really the most extraordinary and inexplicable business."

You can imagine with what eagerness I listened to him, Watson.

"Pray let me have the details," I cried.

"You must know," said he, "that though I am a bachelor, I have to keep up a considerable staff of servants at Hurststone. Altogether there are eight maids."

"Of these servants the one who had been longest in our service was Brunton, the butler. He was a man..."
of great energy and character, and he soon became quite invaluable in the household. He was a well-grown, handsome man, and though he has been with us for twenty years, he cannot be more than forty now. With his personal advantages and his extraordinary gifts, for he can speak several languages and play nearly every musical instrument, it is wonderful that he should have been satisfied so long in such a position, but I suppose that he was comfortable and lacked energy to make any change. The butler of Hurlstone is always a thing that is remembered by all who visit us.

‘But this paragon has one fault. He is a bit of a Don Juan.

‘When he was married it was all right, but since he has been a widower, we have had no end of trouble with him. A few months ago we were in hopes that he was about to settle down again, for he became engaged to Rachel Howells, our second housemaid, but he has thrown her over since then and taken up with Janet Tregellis, the daughter of the head gamekeeper. Rachel, who is a very good girl, had a sharp touch of brain fever. That was our first drama at Hurlstone, but a second one came to drive it from our minds.

‘This is how it came about. I have said that the man was intelligent, and this very intelligence has
caused his ruin, for it seems to have led to an insatiable curiosity about things which did not in the least concern him.

‘The house is a rambling one. One night last week — on Thursday night, to be more exact — I found that I could not sleep, having foolishly taken a cup of strong café noir after my dinner. After struggling against it until two in the morning, I felt that it was quite hopeless, so I rose and lit the candle with the intention of continuing a novel which I was reading. The book, however, had been left in the billiard-room, so I pulled on my dressing-gown and started off to get it.

‘You can imagine my surprise when, as I looked down the corridor, I saw a glimmer of light coming from the open door of the library. My first thought was of burglars. I crept on tiptoe down the passage and peeped in at the open door.

‘Brunton, the butler, was in the library. He was sitting, fully dressed, in an easy chair, with a slip of paper, which looked like a map, upon his knee, and his forehead sunk forward upon his hand in deep thought. I stood, dumb with astonishment, watching him from the darkness. My indignation at this calm examination of our family documents overcame me so far that I took a step forward, and Brunton looking up, saw me standing in the doorway.

كانت السبب في هلاكه لشتة فضوله المفرط في كل ما يدور حوله.

منزلنا مترهل، لذا، ذات ليلة، نهار الخميس تحديداً، لم أستطيع النوم بعدما تسناولت فنجان قهوة مزدة بعد العشاء، صارت الأرق حتى الثانية فجراً إلى أن قررت أخذ السهوش، فافضعت شمعة كي أكمل الرواية التي أطالعتها، لكنني نسيت الكتاب في صالة البار، فتسناولت عبءتي وخرجت من الغرفة.

تصور دهشتي عندما نظرت إلى أسفل الممر ورأيت وهج نور مسلل عبر باب المكتبة. تبادر هالياً إلى ذهن أنهم لصوص، تقدمت على رأس أصابعي في الرواق واسترقت النظر عبر الباب.

كان كبير الخدم برنتون جالساً على الكرسي في المكتبة بكامل ثقالة وقد وضع في حضنه ورقة أشبه بخريطة. مكشوف هناك مذهولاً أرقيه عبر الظلمة، ولعل أكثر ما أثار حفيظتي، تفجسـه وثائق العائلة بكل برودة أعصاب، وما أن خلطت بضع خطوات نحوه، حتى رأيت برنتون ورفع عينيه صوبي.
‘So!’ said I, ‘this is how you repay the trust which we have reposed in you!’

‘He bowed with the look of a man who is utterly crushed, and slunk past me without a word. I glanced to see what the paper was which Brunton had taken from the bureau. To my surprise, it was nothing of any importance at all, but simply a copy of the questions and answers in the singular old observance called the Musgrave Ritual. It is a sort of ceremony peculiar to our family, which each Musgrave for centuries past has gone through upon his coming of age.

‘I relocked the bureau, using the key which Brunton had left, and I had turned to go, when I was surprised to find that the butler had returned and was standing before me.

‘Mr. Musgrave, sir,’ he cried, in a voice which was hoarse with emotion, ‘I can’t bear disgrace, sir! If you cannot keep me after what has passed, then for God’s sake let me give you notice and leave in a month, as of my own free will. I could stand that, Mr. Musgrave, but not to be cast out before all the folk that I know so well.

‘I have no wish to bring public disgrace upon you. A month, however, is too long. Take yourself away in a week, and give what reason you like for going.'
‘Only a week, sir?’ he cried in a despairing voice.
‘A fortnight – say at least a fortnight.

‘A week,’ I repeated, ‘and you may consider yourself to have been very leniently dealt with.

‘For two days after this Brunton was most assiduous in his attention to his duties. I made no allusion to what had passed, and waited with some curiosity to see how he would cover his disgrace. On the third morning, however, he did not appear, as was his custom, after breakfast to receive any instructions for the day. As I left the dining-room, I happened to meet Rachel Howells, the maid. I have told you that she had only recently recovered from an illness, and was looking so wretchedly pale and wan that I remonstrated with her for being at work.

‘You should be in bed,’ I said. ‘Come back to your duties when you are stronger.

‘She looked at me with so strange an expression that I began to suspect that her brain was affected.

‘I am strong enough, Mr. Musgrave,’ said she.

‘We will see what the doctor says,’ I answered. ‘You must stop work now, and when you go downstairs just say that I wish to see Brunton.

‘The butler is gone,’ said she.

‘Gone! Gone where?
He is gone. No one has seen him. His is not in his room. Oh, yes, he is gone—he is gone!' She fell back against the wall with shriek after shriek of laughter, while I, horrified at this sudden hysterical attack, rushed to the bell to summon help. The girl was taken to her room, still screaming and sobbing, while I made inquiries about Brunton. There was no doubt about it that he had disappeared. His bed had not been slept in; he had been seen by no one since he had retired to his room the night before; and yet it was difficult to see how he could have left his house, as both windows and doors were found to be fastened in the morning. His clothes, his watch, and even his money were in his room—but the black suit which he usually wore was missing. His slippers, too, were gone, but his boots were left behind. Where, then, could butler Brunton have gone in the night, and what could have become of him now?

'I called in the local police, but without success. Rain had fallen on the night before, and we examined the lawn and the paths all round the house, but in vain.

For two days Rachel Howells had been so ill, sometimes delirious, sometimes hysterical, that a nurse had been employed to sit up with her at night. On the third night after Brunton's disappearance, the nurse woke in the early morning to find the bed empty, the window open, and no signs of the invalid.
It was not difficult to tell the direction which she had taken, for, starting from under her window, we could follow her footmarks easily across the lawn to the edge of the mere, where they vanished, close to the gravel path which leads out of the grounds.

'We set to work to recover the remains; but no trace of the body could we find. On the other hand, we brought to the surface an object of a most unexpected kind. It was a linen bag, which contained within it a mass of old rusted and discolored metal and several dull-colored pieces of pebble or glass. I have come up to you as a last resource.'

You can imagine, Watson, with what eagerness I listened to this extraordinary sequence of events, and endeavoured to piece them together, and to devise some common thread upon which they might all hang.

'I must see that paper, Musgrave,' said I, 'which this butler of yours thought it worth his while to consult, even at the risk of the loss of his place.

'I have a copy of the questions and answers here, if you care to run your eye over them.'

He handed me the very paper which I have here, Watson, and this is the strange catechism to which...
each Musgrave had to submit when he came to man’s estate. I will read you the questions and answers as they stand:

‘Who was it?’
‘His who is gone.’
‘Who shall have it?’
‘He who will come.’
‘What was the month?’
‘The sixth from the first.’
‘Where was the sun?’
‘Over the oak.’
‘Where was the shadow?’
‘Under the elm.’
‘How was it stepped?’

‘North by ten and by ten, east by five and by five, south by two and by two, west by one and by one, and so under.

‘The original has no date, but is in the spelling of the middle of the seventeenth century,’ remarked

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Musgrave. 'I am afraid, however, that it can be of little help to you in solving this mystery.

'It may be that the solution of the one may prove to be the solution of the other. You will excuse me, Musgrave, if I say that your butler appears to me to have been a very clever man, and to have had a clearer insight than ten generations of his masters.

'I hardly follow you,' said Musgrave. 'The paper seems to me of no practical importance.'

'But to me it seems immensely practical, and I fancy that Brunton took the same view. He had probably seen it before that night on which you caught him. He simply wished, I should imagine, to refresh his memory upon that last occasion. He had, as I understand, some sort of map or chart which he was comparing with the manuscript, and which he thrust into his pocket when you appeared?'

'That is true.'

'With your permission we will take the first train down to Sussex and go a little more deeply into the matter upon the spot.'

The same afternoon saw us both at Hurlstone. A splendid park, with fine old timber, surrounded the house, and the lake, to which my client had referred, lay close to the avenue, about two hundred yards from the building.
I was already firmly convinced, Watson, that there were not three separate mysteries here, but one only, and that if I could read the Musgrave Ritual aright, I should hold in my hand the clue which would lead me to the truth.

It was perfectly obvious to me on reading the Ritual that the measurements must refer to some spot to which the rest of the document alluded. There were two guides given us to start with, an oak and an elm. As to the oak, there could be no question at all. Right in front of the house, upon the left-hand side of the drive, there stood a patriarch among oaks, one of the most magnificent trees that I have ever seen.

‘Have you any old elms?’ I asked.

‘There used to be a very old one over yonder, but it was struck by lightening ten years ago, and we cut down the stump.

‘You can see where it used to be?

‘Oh, yes.

‘There are no other elms?

‘No old ones, but plenty of beeches.

‘I should like to see where it grew.’

My client led me away at once, without our entering the house, to the scar on the lawn where the
elm had stood. It was nearly midway between the oak and the house. My investigation seemed to be progressing.

'I suppose it is impossible to find out how high the elm was?' I asked.

'I can give you at once. It was 64 feet.

'How do you come to know it?' I asked in surprise.

'When my old tutor used to give me an exercise in trigonometry, it always took the shape of measuring heights. When I was a lad, I worked out every tree and building on the estate.

'Tell me,' I asked, 'did your butler ever ask you such a question?'

Reginald Musgrave looked at me in astonishment. 'Now that you call it to my mind,' he answered, 'Brunton did ask me about the height of the tree some months ago, in connection with some little argument with the groom.'

This was excellent news, Watson, for it showed me that I was on the right road. I looked up at the sun. It was low in the heavens, and I calculated that in less than an hour it would lie just above the topmost branches of the old oak. One condition mentioned in the Ritual would then be fulfilled. I had
then to find where the far end of the shadow would fall when the sun was just clear of the oak.

"That must have been difficult, Holmes, when the elm was no longer there."

"Well, I went with Musgrave to his study and whittled myself this peg, to which I tied this long string, with a knot at each yard. Then I took two lengths of a fishing-rod, which came to just 6 feet, and I went back with my client to where the elm had been. The sun was just grazing the top of the oak. I fastened the rod on end, marked out the direction of the shadow, and measured it. It was 9 feet in length.

Of course, the calculation was now a simple one. You can imagine my exultation, Watson, when within 2 inches of my peg I saw a conical depression in the ground. I knew that it was the mark made by Brunton in his measurements. This was the place indicated by the Ritual.

Never have I felt such a cold chill of disappointment, Watson. For a moment it seemed to me that there must be some radical mistake in my calculations. The setting sun shone ful upon the passage floor, and I could see that the old foot-worn grey stones, with which it was paved, were firmly cemented together, and had certainly not been moved.

المكان الذي سيقع فيه أقصى طرف الظل عندما يغيب عن شجرة الدردار.

لكنه أمر صعب يا مولمز في ظل غياب الشجرة.

"سأجري، لكنني ذهبت برقة موسرريف إلى مكتبته وصنعته بنفس هذا الوتد الذي ربطته فيه هذا الخط الطويل، عاذا إياه كل باردة، ثم تناولت طلوع من قصة صيد بوازيان 6 أقدام وعند ذلك إلى زبونى إلى حيث كانت شجرة الدردار. كانت الشمس تلامس أعلى الشجرة. تثبت القصة جيدا عند الطرف وحدثت اتجاه الظل وقعته. فيبلغ طوله 9 أقدام.

أصبحت العملية الحسابية سهلة عندها. تصور مدى سروري يا واتسون عندما رأيت على بعد إنشين من الوتد انحفاظا مخروطيا، على الأرض، أدرك أن هذه المعلومة التي وضعها برنتون بحساباته، وهكذا توصلت إلى المكان المحدد في الطقس.

لكني لم أشعر أبدا بخيبة أمل كهذه يا واتسون، إذ يبدا لي لبيرة أنه ثمة خطأ، فاجد في حساباتي. فشم المغيف تصريح الممر ورأت على ضوئها أن الحجارات الرمادية التي تأكلها الأقدام، ونرى رصف بها الممر، محكمة التثبيت ولم يتعرزها أحد منذ سنين طويلة. لحسن الحظ أن موسرريف، الذي بدأ يقتتال بتصريفاتي.
for many a long year. But fortunately Musgrave, who had begun to appreciate the meaning of my proceedings, and who was now as excited as myself, took out his manuscript to check my calculations.

"And under," he cried: "you have omitted the "and under.""

I had thought that it meant that we were to dig, but now, of course, I saw at once that I was wrong. "There is a cellar under this, then?" I cried.

"Yes, and as old as the house. Down here, through this door."

We went down a winding stone stair, and my companion, striking a match, lit a large lantern which stood on a barrel in the corner. In an instant it was obvious that we had at last come upon the true place.

There lay a large and heavy flagstone, with a rusted iron ring in the center, to which a thick muffler was attached.

"By Jove!" cried my client, "that's Brunton's muffler. I have seen it on him, and could swear to it. What has the villain been doing here?"

At my suggestion a couple of the county police were summoned to be present, and I then endeavoured to raise the stone by pulling on the cravat. I could only move it slightly. I succeeded at last in carrying it to one side. A black hole yawned
beneath, into which we all peered, while Musgrave, kneeling at the side, pushed down the lantern.

A small chamber about 7 feet deep and 4 feet square lay open to us. At one side of this was a wooden box. It was furred outside by a thick layer of dust, and damp and worms had eaten through the wood so that a crop of living fungi was growing on the inside of it. Several discs of metal—old coins apparently—such as I hold here, were scattered over the bottom of the box, but it contained nothing else.

At the moment, however, our eyes were riveted upon it. It was the figure of a man, clad in a suit of black upon the edge of the box and his two arms thrown out on each side of it. The attitude had drawn all the stagnant blood to his face. His height, his dress, and his hair were all sufficient to show my client, when we had drawn the body up, that it was indeed his missing butler. He had been dead some days, but there was no wound or bruise upon his person to show how he had met his dreadful end. When his body had been carried from the cellar, we found ourselves still confronted with a problem which was almost as formidable as that with which we had started.

I confess that so far, Watson, I had been
disappointed in my investigation. I had reckoned upon solving the matter when once I had found the place referred to in the Ritual. It is true that I had thrown a light upon the fate of Brunton, but now I had to ascertain how that fate had come upon him, and what part had been played in the matter by the woman who had disappeared. I sat down upon a keg in the corner and thought the whole matter carefully over.

You know my methods in such cases, Watson: I put myself in the man’s place, I try to imagine how I should myself have proceeded in the same circumstances. He knew that something valuable was concealed. He had spotted the place. He found that the stone which covered it was just too heavy for a man to move unaided. What would he do next? He could not get help from outside, even if he had someone whom he could trust. But whom could he ask? This girl had been devoted to him. He would try by a few attentions to make his peace with the girl Howells, and then would engage her as his accomplice. Together they would come at night to the cellar, and their united force would suffice to raise the stone. So far I could follow their actions as if I had actually seen them.

But for two of them, it must have been heavy work, the raising of that stone. What would they do to assist them? Almost at once I came upon what I
expected. Evidently, as they had dragged the stone up, they had thrust the chunks of wood into the chink, until at last, the opening was large enough to crawl through.

And now, how was I to proceed to reconstruct this midnight drama? Clearly only one could get into the hole, and that one was Brunton. The girl must have waited above. Brunton then unlocked the box, handed up the contents, presumably — since they were not to be found — and then — and then what happened?

What smouldering fire of vengeance had suddenly sprung into flame in this passionate Celtic woman’s soul when she saw the man who had wronged her — wronged her perhaps far more than we suspected — in her power? Was it a chance that the wood had slipped and that the stone had shut Brunton into what had become his sepulchre? Had she only been guilty of his silence as to his fate? Or had some sudden blow from her hand dashed the support away and sent the slab crashing down into its place?

Here was the secret of her blanched face, her shaken nerves, her peals of hysterical laughter on the next morning. But what had been in the box? What had she done with that? Of course, it must have been the old metal and pebbles which my client had dragged from the mere. She had thrown them in

"لتأكدت شكوكي، لقد رفعا الحجر قليلاً وأدخلا عبر الفتحة قطعاً من الخشب إلى أصبحت تكفي ليبلس أخذهما عبرها. ماذا حصل بعدها في تلك المدينة الليلة؟ شخص واحد كان بإمكانه النزول عبر الفتحة وبرينتون كان ذلك الشخص. أما الفتاة، فانظرت في الأعلى. ثم فتح برينتون العلبة وأعطي شريكته المحتويات — بما أننا لم نعثر عليها — ثم ماذا حصل؟ أي نار اتسع تحولت فجأة إلى لبيب في نفس تلك الشابة عندما رأت الرجل الذي خناها — أكثر مما اعتقدنا على الأرجح؟ هل صادف أن انزقت قطعة الخشب فانغلق الحجر على برينتون محاولاً الخلية إلى مثواه الأخير؟ هل تستعمل فقط مسؤولية كتمانه مصيره المشؤوم؟ أو هل أزاحت بيديها الخشبة معدة الحجر إلى مكانه؟"

"هذا يكمن سر أصفرارها وتوتر أوصابها ونوبات الضحك巴斯نترة في صباح اليوم التالي. لكن ماذا كان في العلبة يا تريد؟ ماذا فعلت بها؟ لا شك أنه المعدن القديم والحصى التي استخرجها موسغريف من البحيرة. لا شك أنها رمتها هناك حالما سنحت لنها
there at the first opportunity, to remove the last trace of her crime.

For twenty minutes I had sat motionless thinking the matter out. Musgrave still stood with a very pale face swinging his lantern and peering down into the hole.

'These are coins of Charles I,' said he, holding out the few which had been left in the box.

'Let me see the contents of the bag you fished from the mere.'

We ascended to his study, and he laid the debris before me. I could understand his regarding it as of small importance when I looked at it, for the metal was almost black, and the stones lustreless and dull. I rubbed one of them on my sleeve, however, and it glowed afterwards like a spark, in the dark hollow of my hand. The metal-work was in the form of a double-ring, but it had been bent and twisted out of its original shape.

'I must congratulate you on coming into possession, though in rather a tragic manner, of a relic which is of greater intrinsic value, but even of greater importance as an historical curiosity.'

'What is it, then?' he gasped in astonishment.

'It is nothing less than the ancient crown of the Kings of England.'

'The crown!'
‘Precisely. Consider what the Ritual says. How does it run? “Whose was it?” “His who is gone.” That was after the execution of Charles. Then, “Who shall have it?” “He who will come.” That was Charles II, whose advent was already foreseen. There can, I think, be no doubt that this battered and shapeless diadem once encircled the brows of the Royal Stuarts.’

‘And how was it, then, that Charles did not get his crown when he returned?’ asked Musgrave, pushing back the relic into its linen bag.

‘Ah, there you lay your finger upon the one point which we shall never probably be able to clear up. It is likely that the Musgrave who held the secret died in the interval, and by some oversight left this guide to his descendant without explaining the meaning of it. From that day to this it has been handed down from father to son, until at last it came within reach of a man who tore its secret out of it and lost his life in the venture.’

And that’s the story of the Musgrave Ritual, Watson. They have the crown down at Hurlstone. I am sure that if you mentioned it by name they would be happy to show it to you. Of the woman nothing was ever heard, and the probability is that she got away out of England, and carried herself, and the memory of her crime, to some land beyond the seas.”
The Noble Bachelor

The Lord St. Simon marriage, and its curious termination, have long since ceased to be a subject of interest in those exalted circles in which the unfortunate bridegroom moves. Fresh scandals have eclipsed it, and their more piquant details have drawn the gossips away from this four-year-old dramas. As I have reason to believe, however, that the full facts have never been revealed to the general public, and as my friend Sherlock Holmes had a considerable share in clearing the matter up, I feel that no memoir of him would be complete without some little sketch of this remarkable episode.

It was a few weeks before my own marriage, during the days when I was still sharing rooms with Holmes in Baker Street, that he came home from an afternoon stroll to find a letter on the table waiting for him.

He broke the seal, and glanced over the contents.

"Oh, come, it may prove to be something of interest after all."
"Not social, then?"
"No, distinctly professional".
"And from a noble client?"
"One of the highest in England".
"My dear fellow, I congratulate you".
"I assure you, Watson, without affectation, that the status of my client is a matter of less moment to me than the interest of his case. You have been reading the papers diligently of late, have you not?"
"It looks like it," said I ruefully, pointing to a huge bundle in the corner. "I have had nothing else to do."
"It is fortune, for you will perhaps be able to post me up. But if you have followed recent events so closely, you must have read about Lord St. Simon and his wedding?"
"Oh, yes, with the deepest interest."
"That is well. The letter which I hold in my hand is from Lord St. Simon. I will read it to you, and in return you must turn over these papers and let me have whatever bears upon the matter. This is what he says:
"My Dear Mr. Sherlock Holmes, - Lord Backwater tells me that I may place implicit reliance
upon your judgement and discretion. I have determined, therefore, to call upon you, and to consult you in reference to the very painful event which has occurred in connection with my wedding. Mr. Lestrade, of Scotland Yard, is acting already in the matter, but he assures me that he sees no objection to your cooperation. I will call at four o'clock in the afternoon—Yours faithfully,

ROBERT ST. SIMON.

"He says four o'clock. It is three now. He will be here in an hour."

"Then I have just time, with your assistance, to get clear upon the subject. Turn over those papers, and arrange the extracts in their order of time."

"I have very little difficulty in finding what I want," said I, "for the facts are quite recent, and the matter struck me as remarkable.

"Pray give me the results of your newspaper selections."

"Here is the first notice which I can find. It is in the personal column of the Morning Post, and dates, as you see, some weeks back. 'A marriage has been arranged', it says, 'and will, if rumour is correct, very shortly take place, between Lord Robert St. Simon, second son of the Duke of Balmoral, and..."
Miss Hatty Doran, the only daughter of Aloysius Doran, Esq., of San Francisco, Cal., U.S.A.' That is all'

"Terse and to the point," remarked Holmes, stretching his long, thin legs towards the fire.

"There was a paragraph amplifying this in one of the society papers of the same week. Ah, here it is:

'Lord St. Simon, who has shown himself for over twenty years proof against the little god's arrows, has now definitely announced his approaching marriage with Miss Hatty Doran, the fascinating daughter of a Californian millionaire. Miss Doran, whose graceful figure and striking face attracted much attention at the Westbury House festivities, is an only child, and it is currently reported that her dowry will run to considerably over the six figures with expectancies for the future. As it is an open secret that the Duke of Balmoral has been compelled to sell his pictures within the last few years, and as Lord St. Simon has no property of his own, save the small estate of Brichmoor, it is obvious that the Californian heiress is not the only gainer by an alliance which will enable her to make the easy and common transition from a Republican lady to a British title.' "

الابنة الوحيدة لألويس دوران المبجل، منسان فرانسيسكو، كاليفورنيا، الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية، هذا كل شيء.Ó

علق هولمز: "موجز ويسنت الموضوع "ومد ساقيه للتحليلين الطويلتين نحو النار. كاست هناك فترة توسع هذا الوصف في إحدى الصحف الاجتماعية في نفس الأسبوع. أه، ها هي:

"يا سان سيمون، الذي قرر أن يظهر نفسه وعلى مدى عشرين عاماً أنه صماع لسهام رمز الحب، قد أعلن الآن وعلى وجه التحديد زواجته المرتقبة بالفانت فان دوران، الابنة الفائقة لmillioner من كاليفورنيا، فالفانت فان دوران، التي جذبت شخصيتها المميزة وجهتها الأخاذ للانتباه كثيراً في مهرجانات ويشبرلي هاوس، هي مجدر طفولة، وقد روي وعلى نحو شائع أن مهرها سيتجاوز، وبمقدار ضخم، أكثر من ستة أضعاف القيمة السائدة، مع توقعات للمستقبل. وما أن سر مذاة أن دوق بلمورال قد كان معبأ على بيع لوحاته خلال السنوات القليلة الماضية، بما أن اللورد سان سيمون لم تكون له أملاً خاصة به، عدا ملكية صغيرة في بريثمور، لذا فإن من الواضح أن الوريثة كاليفورنية لم تكون المستفيدة الوحيدة من هذه المصادرة التي ستمكنت من الانتقال الشائع والسهل من سيدة جمهورية إلى حاملة لقب بريطانية.}"
“Anything else?” asked Holmes, yawning.

“Oh yes; plenty. Then there is another note in the Morning Post to say that the marriage would be an absolutely quiet one, that it would be at St. George’s, Hanover Square, that only half a dozen intimate friends would be invited, and that the party would return to the furnished house at Lancaster Gate which has been taken by Mr. Aloysius Doran. Two days later—that is, on Wednesday last—there is a curt announcement that the wedding had taken place, and that the honeymoon would be passed at Lord Backwater’s place, near Petersfield. Those are all the notices which appeared before the disappearance of the bride.”

“Before the what?” asked Holmes, with a start.

“The vanishing of the lady.”

“When did she vanish, then?”

“At the wedding breakfast. It is headed ‘Singular Occurrence at a Fashionable Wedding’.

The family of Lord Robert St. Simon has been thrown into the greatest consternation by the strange and painful episodes which have taken place in connection with his wedding. The ceremony, as shortly announced in the papers of yesterday, occurred on the previous morning; but it is only now...
that it has been possible to confirm the strange rumours which have been so persistently floating about. In spite of the attempts of the friends to hush the matter up, so much public attention has now been drawn to it that no good purpose can be served by affecting to disregard what is a common subject for conversation.

"It appears that some little trouble had been caused by a woman, whose name has not been ascertained, who endeavoured to force her way into the house after the bridal party, alleging that she had some claim upon Lord St. Simon. It was only after a painful and prolonged scene that she was ejected by the butler and the footman. The bride, who had fortunately entered the house before this unpleasant interruption, had sat down to breakfast with the rest, when she complained of a sudden indisposition, and retired to her room. Her prolonged absence caused some comment, so her father followed her; but learned from her maid that she had only come up to her chamber for an instant, caught up an ulster and bonnet, and hurried down to the passage.

One of the footman declared that he had seen a lady leave the house thus apparelled; but had refused to credit that it was his mistress, believing her to be with the company. On ascertaining that his daughter had disappeared, Mr. Aloysius Doran, in conjunction with the bridegroom, instantly put themselves into
communication with the police, and very energetic inquiries are being made, which will probably result in a speedy clearing up of this very singular business.”

"And is that all?"

"Only one little item in another of the morning papers, but it is a suggestive one.”

"And it is?"

"That Miss Flora Millar, the lady who had caused the disturbance, has actually been arrested. It appears that she was formerly a danseuse at the Allegro, and that she had known the bridegroom for some years. There are no further particulars, and the whole case is in your hands now—so far as it has been set forth in the public press.”

"And an exceedingly interesting case it appears to be. I would not have missed it for the worlds. But there is a ring at the bell, I have no doubt that this will prove to be our noble client.

"Lord Robert St. Simon," announced our page-boy, throwing open the door. A gentleman entered, with a pleasant, cultured face, high-nosed and pale.

He advanced slowly into the room, turning his head from left to right, and swinging in his right hand the cord which held his golden eye-glasses.
“Good day, Lord St. Simon,” said Holmes. “Pray take the basket chair. This is my friend and colleague, Dr. Waston. Draw up a little to the fire, and we shall talk this matter over.”

“A most painful matter to me, as you can most readily imagine, Mr. Holmes. I have been cut to the quick. I understand you have already managed several delicate cases of this sort. As to my own case, I am ready to give you any information which may assist you in forming an opinion.”

“Thank you, I have already learned all that is in the public prints, nothing more. I presume that I may take it as correct—this article, for example, as to the disappearance of the bride.”

Lord St. Simon glanced over it. “Yes, it is correct, as far as it goes.”

“But it needs a great deal of supplementing before anyone could offer an opinion. I think that I may arrive at my facts most directly by questioning you.”

“Pray do so.”

“When did you first meet Miss Hatty Doran?”

“In San Francisco, a year ago.”
"You were travelling in the States?"

"Yes."

"Did you become engaged then?"

"No."

"But you were on a friendly footing?"

"I was amused by her society, and she could see that I was amused."

"Her father is very rich?"

"He said to be the richest man on the Pacific Slope."

"And how did he make his money?"

"In mining. He had nothing a few years ago. Then he struck gold, invested it, and came up by leaps and bounds."

"Now, what is your own impression as to the young lady's-your wife's-character?"

"You see, Mr. Holmes," said he, "my wife was twenty before her father became a rich man. During that time she ran free in a mining camp, and wandered through woods or mountains, so that her education has come from nature rather than from the schoolmaster. She is impetuous-volcanic, about to say. She is swift in making up her mind, and fearless..."
in carrying out her resolutions. Believe she is capable of heroic self-sacrifice, and that anything dishonourable would be repugnant to her.”

“Have you her photograph?”

“I brought this with me.” He opened a locket, and showed us the full face of a very lovely woman.

Holmes gazed long and earnestly at it. Then he closed the locket and handed it back to Lord St. Simon.

“The young lady came to London, then, and you renewed your acquaintance?”

“Yes, her father brought her over for this last London season. I met her several times, became engaged to her, and have now married her.”

“Did you see Miss Doran on the day before the wedding?”

“Yes.”

“Was she in good spirits?”

“Never better. She kept talking of what we should do in our future lives.”

“Indeed. That is very interesting. And on the morning of the wedding?”

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“She was as bright as possible— at least, until after the ceremony.”

“And did you observe any change in her then?”

“Well, to tell the truth, I saw then the first signs that I had ever seen that her temper was just a little sharp. The incident, however, was too trivial to relate, and can have no possible bearing upon the case.”

“Pray let us have it, for all that.”

“Oh, it is childish. She dropped her bouquet as we went towards the vestry. She was passing the front pew at the time, and it fell over into the pew. There was a moment’s delay, but the gentleman in the pew handed it up to her again, and it did not appear to be the worse for the fall. Yet, when I spoke to her of the matter, she answered me abruptly; and in the carriage, on our way home, she seemed absurdly agitated over this trifling cause.”

“This gentleman was not one of your wife’s friends?”

“No, no; I call him a gentleman by courtesy, but he was quite a common-looking person. I hardly noticed his appearance. But really I think that we are wandering rather far from the point.”

"كانت وضاءة بالبهجة والسعادة على الأقل حتى بعد الدراس." 

"وهل لاحظت أي تغير عليها بعدد؟" 

"حسناً، لكني أخبرك الحقيقة، رأيت بعددها أولى العلامات التي لم أكن قد شاهدتها من قبل. إن مراجعي كانت حاداً نسبياً، فالحادث، وبرغم كل شيء، تائه أكثر مما ينبغي لكي اسرده، وقد لا تكون له علاقة بمجرى القضية" 

"أرجوك دعنا نعرفه بالتفصيل" 

"أوه، إنه عمل صبياني، إذ أسقطت بائقة أثرها بينما كنت تسير باتجاه قاعة الكنيسة. وكانت تتجاج الصيف الآمن في ذلك الوقت، فسقطت البائقة في الصيف. وكانت هناك لحظة تأخير، غير أن الرجل النبيل في الصيف سلمها إليها ثانية، ولم يظهر أنها ماستاء من أجل السقطة، ومع ذلك عندما تحدثت إليها حول الموضوع، أعانتها على نحو حاد. وفي المركبة في طريق عودتها إلى المنزل، ظهر أنها مهتمة على نحو سخيف من هذا السبب المخيف" 

"لم يكن الرجل النبيل أحد أصدقاء زوجتي؟" 

"لا، فإني أدعوه سيداً نبيلاً من باب النبالة، إلا أنه شخصاً عادي المظهر تماماً، وبالكاد لاحظت ملامحه، ولكنني في الواقع أعتقد أننا ندور بعيداً نوعاً ما عن الموضوع"
“Lady St. Simon, then, returned from the wedding in a less cheerful frame of mind than she had gone to it. What did she do on re-entering her father’s house?”

“I saw her in conversation with her maid.”

“And who is her maid?”

“Alice is her name. She is an American, and came from California with her.”

“A confidential servant?”

“A little too much so. It seemed to me that her mistress allowed her to take great liberties.”

“You did not overhear what they said?”

“Lady St. Simon said something about ‘jumping a claim.’ She was accustomed to use slang of the kind. I have no idea what she meant.”

“American slang is very expressive sometimes. And what did your wife do when she had finished speaking to her maid?”

“She walked into the breakfast room.”

“On your arm?”

“No, alone. She was very independent in little
matters like that. Then after we had sat down for ten minutes or so, she rose hurriedly, muttered some words of apology, and left the room. She never came back.”

“But this maid Alice, as I understand, deposes that she went to her room, covered her bride’s dress with a long ulster, put on a bonnet, and went out.”

“Quite so. And she was afterwards seen walking into Hyde park in company with Flora Millar, a woman who is now in custody, and who had already made a disturbance at Mr. Doran’s house that morning.”

“Ah, yes. I should like a few particulars as to this young lady, and your relations to her.”

Lord St. Simon shrugged his shoulders, and raised his eyebrows. “We have been on a friendly footing for some years — I may say on a very friendly footing. She wrote me dreadful letters when she heard that I was to be married, and to tell the truth, the reason why I had the marriage celebrated so quietly was that I feared lest there might be a scandal in the church.”

“Did your wife hear all this?”

“No, thank goodness, she did not.”
“And she was seen walking with this very woman afterwards?”

“Yes. That is what Mr. Lestrade, of Scotland Yard, looks upon as so serious. It is thought that Flora decoyed my wife out, and laid some terrible trap for her.”

“Well, it is a possible supposition.”

“I do not think Flora would hurt a fly.”

“Still, jealousy is a strange transformer of characters. And now, Lord St. Simon, I think that I have nearly all my data. May I ask whether you were seated at the breakfast-table so that you could see out of the window?”

“We could see the other side of the road, and the Park.”

“Quite so. Then I do not think that I need detain you any longer. I shall communicate with you.”

“Should you be fortunate enough to solve this problem,” said our client, rising.

“I have solved it.”

“Eh? What was that?”

“I say that I have solved it.”
“Where, then, is my wife?”

“That is a detail which I shall speedily supply.”

Lord St. Simon shook his head. “I am afraid that it will take wiser heads than yours or mine,” he remarked, and bowing in a stately, old-fashioned manner, he departed.

“I had formed my conclusions as to the case before our client came into the room.”

“My dear Holmes!”

“I have notes of several similar cases, though none, as I remarked before, which were quite so prompt. My whole examination served to turn my conjecture into a certainty.”

“But I have heard all that you have heard.”

“Without, however, the knowledge of pre-existing cases which serves me so well. It is one of these cases— but hallo, here is Lestrade! Good afternoon, Lestrade! You will find an extra tumbler upon the sideboard, and there are cigars in the box.”

With a short greeting he seated himself, and lit the cigar which had been offered to him.

“What’s up, then?” asked Holmes, with a twinkle in his eye. “You look dissatisfied.”
"And I feel dissatisfied. It is this infernal St. Simon marriage case. I can make neither head nor tail of the business."

"Really! You surprise me."

"Who ever heard of such a mixed affair? Every clue seems to slip through my fingers. I have been at work upon it all day."

"And very wet it seems to have made you," said Holmes

"Yes, I have been dragging the Serpentine."

"In Heaven's name, what for?"

"In search of the body of Lady St. Simon."

Sherlock Holmes leaned back in his chair and laughed heartily.

Lestrade shot an angry glance at my companion.

"I suppose you know all about it," he snarled.

"Well, I have only just heard the facts, but my mind is made up."

"Oh, indeed! Then you think that the Serpentine plays no part in the matter?"
"I think it is very unlikely."

"Then perhaps you will kindly explain how it is that we found this in it?" He opened his bag as he spoke, and tumbled on to the floor a wedding dress of watered silk, a pair of white satin shoes, and a bride's wreath and veil, all discoloured and soaked in water.

"You dragged them from the Serpentine?"

"No. They were found floating near the margin by a park-keeper. They were identified as her clothes, and it seemed to me that if the clothes were there, the body would not be far off."

"And pray what did you hope to arrive at through this?"

"At some evidence implicating Flora Millar in the disappearance."

"I am afraid you will find it difficult."

"This dress does implicate Miss Flora Millar."

"And how?"

"In the dress is a pocket. In the pocket is a card-case. In the card-case is a note. And here is the very note. Listen to this. 'You will see me when all is ready. Come at once. F.H.M.' Now my theory all
along has been that Lady St. Simon was decoyed away by Flora Millar, and that she, with confederates no doubt, was responsible for her disappearance. Here, signed with her initials, is the very note which was no doubt quietly slipped into her hand at the door, and which lured her within their reach.

"Very good, Lestrade," said Holmes, laughing. "You really are very fine indeed. Let me see it". He took up the paper in a listless way, but his attention instantly became riveted, and he gave a little cry of satisfaction. "This is indeed important," said he.

"Ha, you find it so?"

"Extremely so. I congratulate you warmly."

Lestrade rose in his triumph and bent his head to look. "Why," he shrieked, "you're looking in the wrong side."

"On the contrary, this is the right side."

"The right side? You're mad! Here is the note written in pencil over here."

"And over here is what appears to be a fragment of a hotel bill, which interests me deeply."

"There's nothing in it. I looked at it before," said Holmes.
“Very likely not. It is most important all the same. As to the note, it is important also, or at least the initials are, so I congratulate you again.”

“I’ve wasted time enough,” said Lestrade, rising, “I believe in hard work, and not in sitting by the fire spinning fine theories. Good day, Mr. Holmes, and we shall see which gets to the bottom of the matter first.”

He had hardly shut the door behind him, when Holmes rose and put on his overcoat. “There is something in what the fellow says about outdoor work,” he remarked, “so I think, Watson, that I must leave you to your papers for a little while.”

It was after five o’clock when Sherlock Holmes left me, but I had no time to be lonely, for within an hour there arrived a confectioner’s man with a very large flat box. This he unpacked with the help of a youth whom he had brought with him, and presently, to my very great astonishment, a quite epicurean little cold supper began to be laid out upon our
humble lodging house mahogany. My two visitors vanished away, like the genie of the Arabian Nights, with no explanation save that the things had been paid for, and were ordered to this address.

Just before nine o’clock Sherlock Holmes stepped briskly into the room. His features were gravely set, but there was a light in his eye which made me think that he had not been disappointed in his conclusions.

“They have laid the supper, then,” he said, rubbing his hands.

“You seem to expect company. They have laid for five.”

“Yes, I fancy we may have some company dropping in,” said he. “I am surprised that Lord St. Simon has not already arrived. Ha! I fancy that I hear his step now upon the stairs.”

It was indeed our visitor of the morning who came bustling in.

“My messenger reached you, then?” asked Holmes.

“Yes, and I must confess that the contents startled me beyond measure. What will the Duke say,” he murmured, “when he hears that one of the family has been subjected to such a humiliation? I fail to see...
that anyone is to blame. I can hardly see how the
lady could have acted otherwise, though her abrupt
method of doing it was undoubtedly to be regretted.
Having no mother, she had no one to advise her at
such a crisis."

"I think I heard a ring," said Holmes. "Yes, there
are steps on the landing." He opened the door and
ushered in a lady and gentleman.

"Lord St. Simon," said he, "allow me to introduce
you to Mr. And Mrs. Francis Hay Moulton. The lady
I think you have already met."

At the sight of these new-comers our client had
sprung from his seat, and stood very erect, with his
eyes cast down and his hand thrust into the breast of
his frock-coat, a picture of offended dignity. The
lady had taken a quick step forward and had held out
her hand to him, but he still refused to raise his eyes.
It was as well for his resolution, perhaps, for her
pleading face was one which it was hard to resist.

"You're angry, Robert," said she. "Well, I guess
you have every cause to be."

"Pray make no apology to me," said Lord St.
Simon bitterly.
“Then I’ll tell our story right away,” said the lady. “Frank here and I met in ’81, in McQuire’s camp, near the Rockies, where Pa was working a claim. We were engaged to each other, Frank and I; but then one day father struck a rich pocket, and made a pile, while poor Frank here had a claim that petered out and came to nothing. The richer Pa grew, the poorer was Frank; so at last Pa wouldn’t hear of our engagement lasting any longer, and he took me away to Frisco.

Frank said that he would go and make his pile, too, and never came back to claim me until he had as much as Pa. So then I promised to wait for him to the end of time, and pledged myself not to marry anyone else while he lived.

‘Why shouldn’t we be married right away, then’, said he, ‘and then I will feel sure of you; and I won’t claim to be your husband until I come back’. And then Frank went off to seek his fortune and I went back to Pa.

“The next that I heard of Frank was that he was in Montana, and then he went prospecting into Arizona, and then I heard of him from New Mexico. After that came a long newspaper story about how a miners’ camp had been attacked by Apache Indians, and
there was my Frank's name among the killed. Then Lord St. Simon came to 'Frisco, and we came to London, and a marriage was arranged, and Pa was very pleased, but I felt all the time that no man on this earth would ever take the place in my heart that had been given to my poor Frank.

"I went to the altar with him with the intention that I would make him just as good a wife as it was in me to be. But you may imagine what I felt when, just as I came to the altar rails, I glanced back and saw Frank standing looking at me out of the first pew. I thought it was his ghost at first; but, when I looked again, there he was still, with a kind of question in his eyes as if to ask me whether I were glad or sorry to see him. I wonder I didn't drop. I know that everything was turning round, and the words of the clergyman were just like the buzz of a bee in my ear. Then I saw him scribble on a piece of paper, and I knew he was writing me a note. As I passed his pew on the way out I dropped my bouquet over to him, and he slipped the note into my hand when he returned me the flowers. It was only a line asking me to join him when he made the sign to me to do so.

"When I got back I told my maid, who had known
him in California, and had always been his friend. I ordered her to say nothing, but to get a few things packed and my ulster ready. I just made up my mind to run away, and explain afterwards. I hadn't been at the table ten minutes before I saw Frank out of the window at the other side of the road. He beckoned to me, and then began walking into the Park. I slipped out, put on my things, and followed him. Some woman came talking something or other about Lord St. Simon to me- seemed to me from the little I heard as if he had a little secret of his own before marriage also- but I managed to get away from her, and soon overtook Frank. We got into a cab together, and away we drove to some lodgings he had taken in Gordon Square, and that was my true wedding after all those years of waiting. Frank had been a prisoner among the Apaches, had escaped, came on to ‘Frisco, found that I had given him up for dead and had gone to England, followed me there, and had come upon me at last on the very morning of my second wedding."

"Then we had a talk as to what we should do, and Frank was all for openness, but I was so ashamed of it all that I felt as if I would like to vanish away and never see any of them again, just sending a line to Pa, perhaps, to show him that I was alive. So Frank
took my wedding clothes and things, and made a
bundle of them so that I should not be traced, and
dropped them away somewhere where no one should
find them... It is likely that we should have gone on to
Paris tomorrow, only that this good gentleman, Mr.
Holmes, came round to us this evening, though how
he found us is more than I can think, and he showed
us very clearly and kindly that I was wrong and that
Frank was right, and that we should put ourselves in
the wrong if we were so secret. Then he offered to
give us a chance of talking to Lord St. Simon alone.

Now, Robert, you have heard all, and I am very sorry
if I have given you pain, and I hope that you do not
think very meanly of me.”

“Excuse me,” he said, “but it is not my custom to
discuss my most intimate personal affairs in this
public manner.”

“Then you won’t forgive me? You won’t shake
hands before I go?”

“Oh, certainly, if it would give you any pleasure.”
He put out his hand and coldly grasped that which
she extended to him.

“I think that, with your permission, I will now
wish you all a very good night.”
He included us all in a sweeping bow, and stalked out of the room.

"The case that has been an interesting one," remarked Holmes, when our visitors had left, "because it serves to show very clearly how simple the explanation may be of an affair which at first sight seems to be almost inexplicable."

"You were not yourself at fault, then?"

"From the first, two facts were very obvious to me, the one that the lady had been quite willing to undergo the wedding ceremony, the other that she repented of it within a few minutes of returning home. Obviously something had occurred during the morning, then, to cause her to change her mind. What could that something be? She could not have spoken to anyone when she was out, for she had been in the company of the bridegroom. Had she seen someone, then? If she had, it must be someone from America, because she had spent so short time in this country that she could hardly have allowed anyone to acquire so deep an influence over her that the mere sight of him would induce her to change her plans so completely.

It might be a lover; it might be a husband. Her young womanhood had, I knew, been spent in rough
scenes, and under strange condition. So far had I got before I ever heard Lord St. Simon’s narrative. When he told us of a man in a pew, of the change in the bride’s manner, of so transparent a device of obtaining a note as the dropping of a bouquet, of her resort to her confidential maid, and of her very significant allusion to claim-jumping, which in miner’s parlance means taking possession of that which another person has a prior claim to, the whole situation became absolutely clear. She had gone off with a man, and the man was either a lover or was a previous husband, the chances being in favour of the latter.”

“And how in the world did you find them?”

“It might have been difficult, but friend Lestrade held information in his hands the value of which he did not himself know. The initials were of course of the highest importance, but more valuable still was it to know that within a week he had settled his bill at one of the most select London hotels.

“In the second one which I visited in Northumberland Avenue, I learned by an inspection of the book that Francis H. Moulton, an American gentleman, had left only the day before, and on looking over the entries against him, I came upon the
very items which I had seen in the duplicate bill. His letters were to be forwarded to 226 Gordon Square, so thither I travelled, and being fortunate enough to find the loving couple at home, I ventured to give them some paternal advice, and to point out to them that it would be better in every way that they should make their position a little clearer, both to the General public and to Lord St. Simon in particular. I invited them to meet him here, and, as you see, I made him keep the appointment.”
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 Colonel Waburton’s madness. Of these the latter may have afforded 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.

It was in the summer of 1889, not long after my marriage, that the events occurred which I am now about to summarize.

My practice had steadily increased, and as I happened to live at no very 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 endeavouoring 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.

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, "It's a new patient, I must go now, Doctor, I have my dooties, 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 wrapped, which was mottled all over with bloodstains. 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 in 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 that she has left it upon the side table."

I took it up and glanced at it. "Mr. Victor Hatherley, hydraulic engineer, 16 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 is in itself 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.

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

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

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

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He unwound the handkerchief and held out his hand.

It gave even my hardened nerves a shudder to look at it.

There were four protruding fingers and a horrid 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 bled considerably."

"Yes, it did. I fainted when it was done."

"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 over with cotton wadding and carbolized bandages. 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 no better speak of the matter. It is evidently trying to your nerves."

"Oh, no; not now. I shall have to tell my tale to the police."

"Ha!" cried I, "if it is anything in the nature of a problem which you desire to see solved, I should strongly recommend you to come to my friend Mr. Sherlock Holmes 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."

I rushed upstairs, explained the matter shortly 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 agony column of The Times. He received us in his quietly genial fashion, ordered fresh rashers and eggs, and joined in us 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 that 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 have 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 shall start at once upon my peculiar experiences."

"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 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 everyone 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.

"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 'Colonel Lysander Stark' engraved upon it. Close at his heels came the Colonel himself, a man rather over the middle size but of an exceeding thinness. I do not think that I have ever seen so thin a man. 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 who gave me so good a character?' I asked.

'Well, perhaps it is better that I should not tell you 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 say that I cannot see 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."
"You do promise, then?" said he at last.

"Yes, I promise."

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

"I have already given you my word."

"Very good."

"I beg that you will state your business, sir," said I; "my time is of value." Heaven forgive me for that last sentence, but the words came to my lips.

"How would fifty guineas for a night's work suit you?" he asked.

"Most admirably."

"I say a night's work, but an hour's would be nearer the mark. I simply want your opinion about a hydraulic stamping machine which has got out of gear. If you show us what is wrong we shall soon set it right ourselves. What do you think of such a commission as that?"

"The work appears to be light, and the pay munificent."

"Precisely so. We shall want you to come tonight by the last train."

"Where to?"
‘To Eyford, in Berkshire. It is a little place near the borders of Oxfordshire, and within seven miles of Reading. There is a train from Paddington which would bring you in there at about eleven fifteen.’

‘Very good.’

‘I shall come down in a carriage to meet you.’

‘There is a drive, then?’

‘Yes, our little place is quite out in the country. It is a good seven miles from Eyford station.’

‘Then we can hardly get there before midnight. I suppose there would be no chance of a train back. I should be compelled to stop the night.’

‘Quite so. It is very natural that the pledge of secrecy which we have exacted from you should have aroused your curiosity. I have no wish to commit you to anything without your having it all laid before you. I suppose that we are absolutely safe from eavesdroppers?’

‘Entirely.’

‘Then the matter stands thus. You are probably aware that fuller’s earth is a valuable product, and that it is only found in one or two places in England?’

‘I have heard so.’
Some little time ago I bought a small place-

within ten miles of Reading. I was fortunate enough to discover that there was a deposit of fuller’s earth in one of my fields. On examining it, however, I found that this deposit was a comparatively small one, and that it formed a link between two very much larger ones upon the right and the left—both of them, however, in the grounds of my neighbours.

I took a few of my friends into the secret, however, and they suggested that we should quietly and secretly work our own little deposit, and that in this way we should earn the money which would enable us to buy the neighbouring fields. This we have now been doing for some time, and in order to help us in our operations we erected a hydraulic press. This press, as I have already explained, has got out of order, and we wish your advice upon the subject.

"I quite follow you," said I. "The only point which I could not quite understand, was what use you could make of hydraulic press in excavating fuller’s earth, which, as I understand, is dug out like gravel from a pit."

"Ah!" said he carelessly. "we have our own process. We compress the earth into bricks, so as to remove them without revealing what they are. But
that is a mere detail. I have taken you fully into my confidence now, Mr. Hatherley, and I have shown you how I trust you.'

He rose as he spoke. 'I shall expect you, then, at Eyford, at 11.15.'

'I shall certainly be there.'

'And not a word to a soul.' He looked at me with a last long, questioning gaze, and then, pressing my hand in a cold, dank grasp, he hurried from the room.

However, I threw all my fears to the winds, ate a hearty supper, drove to Paddington, and started off, having obeyed to the letter the injunction as to holding my tongue.

At Reading I had to change not only my carriage but my station. However, I was in time for the last train to Eyford, and I reached the little dim-lit station after eleven o'clock. I was the only passenger who got out there, and there was no one upon the Platform save a single sleepy porter with a lantern. As I passed out through the gate, however, I found my acquaintance of the morning waiting in the shadow upon the other side. Without a word he grasped my arm and hurried me into a carriage, the door of which was standing open. He drew up the
windows on either side, tapped on the woodwork, and away we went as hard as the horse could go."

"One horse?" interjected Holmes.

"Yes, only one."

"Tired-looking or fresh?"

"Oh, fresh and glossy."

"Thank you. I am sorry to have interrupted you. Pray continue your most interesting statement."

"Away we went then, and we drove for at least an hour. Colonel Lysander Stark had said that it was only seven miles, but I should think, from the rate that we seemed to go, and the time that we took, that it must have been nearer twelve. He sat at my side in silence all the time, and I was aware, more than once when I glanced in his direction, that he was looking at me with great intensity. The country roads seemed to be not very good in the part of the world, for we lurched and jolted terribly.

At last, however, the bumping of the road was exchanged for the crisp smoothness of a gravel drive and the carriage came to a stand. Colonel Lysander..."
Stark sprang out, and, as I followed after him, pulled me swiftly into a porch which gaped in front of us. We stepped, as it were, right out of the carriage and into the hall, so that I failed to catch the most fleeting glance of the front of the house. The instant that I had crossed the threshold the door slammed heavily behind us, and I heard faintly the rattle of the wheels as the carriage drove away.

Suddenly a door opened at the other end of the passage, and a long, golden bar of light shot out in our direction. It grew broader, and a woman appeared with a lamp in her hand, which she held above her head, pushing her face forward and peering at us. She spoke a few words in a foreign tongue in a tone as though asking a question, and when my companion answered in a gruff monosyllable, she gave such a start that the lamp nearly fell from her hand. Colonel Stark went up to her, whispered something in her ear, and then, pushing her back into the room from whence she had come, he walked towards me again with the lamp in his hand.

"Perhaps you will have the kindness to wait in this room for a few minutes," said he, throwing open another door. It was a quiet little plainly furnished room, with a round table in the centre, on which...
German books were scattered. Colonel Stark laid down the lamp on the top of a harmonium beside the door. "I shall not keep you waiting an instant," said he, and vanished into the darkness.

A vague feeling of uneasiness began to steal over me. Who were these German people, and what were they doing, living in this strange, out-of-the-way place? And where was the place? I was ten miles or so from Eyford, that was all I knew, but whether north, south, east, or west, I had no idea. For that matter, Reading, and possibly other large towns, were within that radius, so the place might not be so secluded after all. Yet it was quite certain from the absolute stillness that we were in the country.

"Suddenly, without any preliminary sound in the midst of the utter stillness, the door of my room swung slowly open. The woman was standing in the aperture, the darkness of the hall behind her, the yellow light from my lamp beating upon her eager and beautiful face. I could see at a glance that she was sick with fear, and the sight sent a chill to my own heart. She held up one shaking finger to warn me to be silent, and she shot a few whispered words of broken English at me, her eyes glancing back, like those of frightened horse, into the gloom behind her."
"I would go," said she, trying hard, as it seemed to me, to speak calmly; 'I would go. I should not stay here. There is no good for you to do'.

"But, madam," said I, "I have not yet done what I came for. I cannot possibly leave until I have seen the machine'.

"It is not worth your while to wait', she went on. 'You can pass through the door; no one hinders'. And then, seeing that I smiled and shook my head, she suddenly threw aside her constraint, and made a step forward, with her hands wrung together. 'For the love of Heaven!' she whispered, 'get away from here before it is too late'!

I thought of my fifty-guinea fee, of my wearisome journey, and of the unpleasant night which seemed to be before me. Was it all to go for nothing?

This woman might, for all I knew, be a monomaniac. With a stout bearing, therefore, though her manner had shaken me more than I cared to confess, I still shook my head, and declared my intention of remaining where I was. She was about to renew her entreaties when a door slammed overhead, and the sound of several footsteps were heard upon the stairs. She listened for an instant, threw up her hands with a despairing gesture, and vanished as suddenly and noiselessly as she had come.
The new-comers were Colonel Lysander Stark, and a short thick man with a chinchilla beard growing out of the creases of his double chin, who was introduced to me as Mr. Ferguson.

"This is my secretary and manager", said the Colonel. "Mr. Ferguson and I will take you up to see the machine".

"I had better put my hat on, I suppose".

"Oh no, it is in the house".

"What, do you dig fuller's earth in the house?"

"No, no. This is only where we compress it. But never mind that! All we wish you to do is to examine the machine and to let us know what is wrong with it".

"We went upstairs together, the Colonel first with the lamp, the fat manager and I behind him.

I tried to put on as uninterested an air as possible, but I had not forgotten the warning of the lady, even though I disregarded them, and I kept a keen eye upon my two companions.

"Colonel Lysander Stark stopped at last before a low door, which he unlocked. Within was a small square room, in which the three of us could hardly get at one time. Ferguson remained outside, and the Colonel ushered me in.
"We are now,' said he, 'actually within the hydraulic press, and it would be a particularly unpleasant thing for us if anyone were to turn it on. The ceiling of this small chamber is really the end of the descending piston, and it comes down with the force of many tons upon this metal floor. The machine goes readily enough, but there is some stiffness in the working of it and it has lost a little of its force. Perhaps you will have the goodness to look it over, and to show us how we can set it right'.

"I took the lamp from him, and I examined the machine very thoroughly. It was indeed a gigantic one, and capable of exercising enormous pressure. When I passed outside, however, and pressed down the levers which controlled it, I knew at once by the whishing sound that there was a slight leakage, which allowed a regurgitation of water through one of the side-cylinders. This was clearly the cause of the loss of power, and I pointed it out to my companions, who followed my remarks very carefully, and asked several practical questions as to how they should proceed to set it right. When I had made it clear to them, I returned to the main chamber of the machine, and took a good look at it to satisfy my own curiosity. It was obvious at a glance that the story of the fuller's earth was the merest fabrication, for it would be absurd to suppose that so powerful an engine could be designed for so inadequate a..."
purpose. The walls were of wood, but the floor consisted of a large iron trough, and when I came to examine it, I could see a crust of metallic deposit all over it. I had stopped and was scraping at this to see exactly what it was, when I heard a muttered exclamation in German, and saw the cadaverous face of the Colonel looking down at me.

"'What are you doing there?' he asked.

'I felt angry at having been tricked by so elaborate a story as that which he had told me. 'I was admiring your fuller's earth', said I; 'I think that I should be better able to advise you as to your machine if I knew what the exact purpose was for which it was used'.

'Very well', said he, 'you shall know all about the machine'. He took a step backward, slammed the little door, and turned the key in the lock. I rushed towards it and pulled at the handle, but it was quite secure, and did not give in the least to my kicks and hoves.

'Hallo!' I yelled. 'Hallo! Colonel! Let me out!'

'And then suddenly in the silence I heard a sound which sent my heart into my mouth. It was the clank of the levers, and the swish of the leakage cylinder. Ie had set the engine at work. The lamp still stood

من الخشب، إلا أن الأرضية كانت تحتوي على حوض حديدي كبير، وعندما أتيت لأفحصها، كان بإمكانني أن أرى قشرة من الراسب المعدي في جميع أنحاءها، وكنت قد توقفت وبدأت أكشفها لكي أرى بالضبط ما إذا كانت هذه، عندما سمعت غموض هائلة في الألمانية، ورأيت وجه الكولونيل الشديد النحول ينظر إلى الأسفل نحوي.

"سأل: ماذا تفعل هناك؟" وشعرت بالغضب لأنه تم خداعي بواسطة هذه القصة المتميزة للغاية التي قسها عليه. قلت: كنت معجبًا بتراب القصارية الذي يخصك، وأعتقد أن بإمكانني أن أحصل بشكل أفضل بخصوص التأكد إن عرفت الغضب الحقيقي الذي تعمل من أجله.

قال: "حسنًا، ستعرف كل شيء عن الآلة"، وخطا خطة إلى الوراء، وأغلق بعنف الباب الصغير، وأدار المفتاح في القفل، فاندفعت نحوه وسبحت المقبض، إلا أنه كان آمنًا تمامًا، ولم يستسلم على الأقل لرسالي ودعائي الالتفتة.

صرخت: "هل، هالو! كولونيل! دعني أخرج!" ثم سمعت صوتًا من وسط السكون، على نحو مفاجئ، فأخذ بقوادي نحو فمي، فكان هذا صوت قمعة العائلات وهمسة الإسطوانة المرشحة. إذ كان قد هيا الماكنة للعمل، وكان المصب
upon the floor where I had placed it when examining the trough. By its light I saw that the black ceiling was coming down upon me, slowly, jerkily, but, as none knew better than myself, with a force which must within a minute grind me to a shapeless pulp. I threw myself, screaming, against the door, and dragged with my nails at the lock. I implored the Colonel to let me out, but the remorseless clanking of the levers drowned my cries. The ceiling was only a foot or two above my head, and with my hand upraised I could feel its hard rough surface. Already I was unable to stand erect, when my eye caught something which brought a gush of hope back to my heart.

“I have said that though floor and ceiling were of iron, the walls were of wood. As I gave a last hurried glance around, I saw a thin line of yellow light between two of the boards, which broadened and broadened as a small panel was pushed backwards. For an instant I could hardly believe that here was indeed a door which led away from death. The next I threw myself through, and lay half fainting upon the other side. The panel had closed again behind me, but the crash of the lamp, and a few moments afterwards the clang of the two slabs of metal, told me how narrow had been my escape.
"I was recalled to myself by a frantic plucking at my wrist, and I found myself lying upon the stone floor of a narrow corridor, while a woman bent over me and tugged at me with her left hand, while she held a candle in her right. It was the same good friend whose warning I had so foolishly rejected.

"Come! Come!" she cried breathlessly. "They will be here in a moment. They will see that you are not there. Oh, do not waste the so precious time, but come!"

"This time, at least, I did not scorn her advice. I staggered to my feet, and ran with her along the corridor and down a winding stair. The latter led to another broad passage, and, just as we reached it we heard the sound of running feet and the shouting of two voices— one answering the other— from the floor on which we were, and from the one beneath. My guide stopped and looked about her like one who is at her wits' end. Then she threw open a door which led into a bedroom, through the window of which the moon was shining brightly.

"It is your only chance", said she. "It is high, but it may be that you can jump it."

"As she spoke a light sprang into view at the further end of the passage, and I saw the lean figure
of Colonel Lysander Stark rushing forward with a lantern in one hand, and a weapon like a butcher’s cleaver in the other. I rushed across the bedroom, flung open the window, and looked out. How quiet and sweet and wholesome the garden looked in the moonlight, and it could not be more than thirty feet down. I clambered out upon the sill, but I hesitated to jump, until I should have heard what passed between my saviour and the ruffian who pursued me. He dashed her to one side, and, rushing to the window, cut at me with his heavy weapon. I had let myself go, and was hanging with my fingers in the window slot and my hands across the sill, when his blow fell. I was conscious of a dull pain, my grip loosened, and I fell into the garden below.

“I was shaken, but not hurt by the fall; so I picked myself up, and rushed off among the bushes as hard as I could run, for I understood that I was far from being out of danger yet. Suddenly, however, as I ran, a deadly dizziness and sickness came over me. I glanced down at my hand, which was throbbing painfully, and then, for the first time, saw that my thumb had been cut off, and that the blood was pouring from my wound. I endeavoured to tie my handkerchief round it, but there came a sudden buzzing in my ears, and next moment I fell in a dead faint among the rose-bushes.
“How long I remained unconscious I cannot tell. It must have been a very long time, for the moon had sunk and a bright morning was breaking when I came to myself. I had been lying in an angle of the hedge close by the highroad, and just a little lower down was a long building, which proved, upon my approaching it, to be the very station at which I had arrived upon the previous night.

“Half dazed, I went into the station, and asked about the morning train. There would be one to Reading in less than an hour.

“It was a little past six when I arrived, so I went first to have my wound dressed, and then the doctor was kind enough to bring me along here.

We both sat in silence for some little time after listening to this extraordinary narrative.

“Well, every moment now is precious, so, if you feel equal to it, we shall go down to Scotland Yard at once as a preliminary to starting for Eyford.

Some three hours or so afterwards we were all in the train together, bound from Reading to the little Berkshire village. There were Sherlock Holmes, the hydraulic engineer, Inspector Bradstreet of Scotland...
Yard, a plainclothes man, and myself. Bradstreet had spread an ordnance map of the country out upon the seat, and was busy with his compasses drawing a circle with Eyford for its centre.

"There you are", said he. "That circle is drawn at a radius of ten miles from the village. The place we want must be somewhere near that line. You said ten miles, I think, sir?"

"It was an hour's good drive."

"And you think that they brought you back all that way when you were unconscious?"

"They must have done so. I have a confused memory, too, of having been lifted and conveyed somewhere."

"What I cannot understand," said I, "is why they should have spared you when they found you lying fainting in the garden. Perhaps the villain was softened by the woman's entreaties."

"I hardly think that likely. I never saw a more inexorable face in my life."

"Oh, we shall soon clear up all that," said Bradstreet. "Well, I have drawn my circle, and I only wish I knew at what point upon it the folk that we are in search of are to be found."

"I think I could lay my finger on it," said Holmes quietly.
“Really, now!” cried the inspector, “you have formed your opinion! Come now, we shall see who agrees with you.

“This is my point,” he placed his finger on the centre of the circle. “This is where we shall find them.”

“But the twelve-mile drive?” gasped Hatherly.

“Six out and six back. Nothing simpler. You say yourself that the horse was fresh and glossy when you got in. How could it be that, if it had gone twelve miles over heavy roads?”

“Indeed it is a likely ruse enough”, observed Bradstreet thoughtfully. “Of course there can be no doubt as to the nature of this gang.”

“None at all,” said Holmes. “They are coiners on a large scale, and have used the machine to form the amalgam which has taken the place of silver.”

“We have known for some time that a clever gang was at work,” said the inspector. “They have been turning out half-crowns by the thousand. We even traced them as far as Reading, but could get no further; for they had covered their traces in a way that showed that they were very old hands. But now, thanks to this lucky chance, I think that we have got them right enough.”

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But the inspector was mistaken, for those criminals were not destined to fall into the hands of justice. As we rolled in Eyford station we saw a gigantic column of smoke which streamed up from behind a small clump of trees in the neighbourhood, and hung like an immense ostrich feather over the landscape.

"A house on fire?" asked Bradstreet, as the train steamed off again on its way.

"Yes, sir," said the stationmaster.

"When did it break out?"

"I hear that it was during the night, sir, but it has got worse, and the whole place is in a blaze."

"Whose house is it?"

"Dr. Becher's."

"Tell me," broke the engineer, "is Dr. Becher a German, very thin, with a long sharp nose?"

The stationmaster laughed heartily. "No, sir, Dr. Becher is an Englishman."

The stationmaster had not finished his speech before we were all hastening in the direction of the fire. The road topped a low hill, and there was a great
widespread whitewashed building in front of us, spouting fire at every chink and window, while in the garden in front three fire-engines were vainly striving to keep the flames under.

"That’s it!" cried Hatherly, in intense excitement. "There is the gravel drive, and there are the rose-bushes where I lay. That second window is the one that I jumped from."

"Well, at least," said Holmes, "you have had your revenge upon them. There can be no question that it was your oil lamp which, when it was crushed in the press, set fire to the wooden walls, though no doubt they were too excited in the chase after you to observe it at the time. Now keep your eyes open in this crowd for your friends of last night, though I very much fear that they are a good hundred miles off by now."

And Holmes fears came to be realized, for from that day to this no word has ever been heard of the beautiful woman, the sinister German, or the morose Englishman.

How our hydraulic engineer had been conveyed from the garden to the spot where he recovered his senses might have remained for ever a mystery were it not for the soft mould, which told us a very plain

أمامنا بداية مطلية باللون الأبيض تمتد على مساحة كبيرة، وتبنيق منها النيران من كل شق وشق، بينما كان في الحديقة الأمامية ثلاث مضخات حريق تكافأ أثقا لكي تبقى اللهب مخفياً.

صباح مثيرًا بعطاء شديد؛ تلك هو المنزل! هناك الطريق المرصوف بالحصى، وهناك شجيرات الورد التي اصطدمت عليها.

وذلك الشباك الثاني الذي قفزت منه.

قال هولمز: "حسنًا، على الأقل لقد حصلت على انتقامك منهم، وليس هناك شك في أن زيت مصباحك هو الذي أشعل الحريق في الجدار الخشبي، عندما سحق بالمكبس، ومع ذلك ليس هناك شك في أنهم كانوا متجمسين جدا في مطاردتك قبل مشاهدتك في ذلك الوقت. والآن أيق عينيك مفتوحتين على هذا الحشد لمشاهدة أصدقائك في الليلة الماضية، رغم أن جل ما أختشأن أنت الآن على بعد مئات الأميال.

وتحقت مخاوف هولمز، لأنه من ذلك اليوم وحتى الآن لم تسمع أي كلمة على الإطلاق عن المرأة الجميلة، والألماني البشع، والرجل الإنجليزي الكتيب.

كيف نقل المهندس الهيدروليكي من الحديقة إلى الملعب، الذي استعد بها حواسه، ربما كان سيقضي هذا لغاية إلى الأبد لا سيّما الأرض اللين الذي أخبرنا حكاية واضحة جداً، إذ حمله شخِصان
tale. He had evidently been carried down by two persons, one of whom had remarkably small feet, and the other unusually large ones. On the whole, it was most probable that the silent Englishman, being less bold or less murderous than his companion, had assisted the woman to bear the unconscious man out of the way of danger.
The Five Orange Pips

When I glance over my notes and records of the Sherlock Holmes cases between the years '82 and '90, I am faced by so many which present strange and interesting features, that it is no easy matter to know which to choose and which to leave. Some, however, have already gained publicity through the papers, and others have not offered a field for those peculiar qualities which my friend possessed in so high a degree, and which it is the object of these papers to illustrate.

There is, however, one of these last which was so remarkable in its details and so startling in its results.

It was in the latter days of September, and the equinoctial gales had set in with exceptional violence. All day the wind had screamed and the rain had beaten against the windows, so that even here in the heart of London we were forced to raise our minds for the instant from the routine of life, and to recognize the presence of those great elemental forces which shriek at mankind through the bars of his civilization, like untamed beasts in a cage.
“Why,” said I, glancing up at my companion “that was surely the bell? Who could come to-night? Some friend of yours, perhaps?”

“Except yourself I have none,” he answered. “I do not encourage visitors.”

“A client, then?”

“If so, it is a serious case. Nothing less would bring a man out on such a day, and at such an hour.”

“Come in!” said he. The door was knocked.

The man who entered was young, some two-and-twenty at the outside, well groomed and trimly clad, with something of refinement and delicacy in his bearing. The streaming umbrella which he held in his hand told of the fierce weather through which he had come.

“I owe you an apology,” he said, raising his golden pince-nez to his eyes. “I trust that I am not intruding. I fear that I have brought some traces of the storm and the rain into your snug chamber. I have come for advice.”

“That is easily got.”

“And help.”

“That is not always so easy.”

“قال رافعاً تنظره الأنفية الذهبية إلى عينيه: "أيمن لك باعتدار، أمل أن تلم أدخل عنوة. أخشى أن يلبث نسيت من أثر العاصفة والمطر إلى حجرتك الأنفية. لقد جئت من أجل النصيحة."
"I have heard of you, Mr. Holmes. I heard from Major Prendergast how you saved him in the Tankerville Club Scandal."

"Ah, of course. He was wrongfully accused of cheating at cards."

"He said that you could solve anything."

"I beg that you will draw your chair up to the fire, and favour me with some details as to your case."

The young man pulled his chair up, and pushed his wet feet out towards the blaze.

"My name," said he, "is John Openshaw, but my own affairs have, so far as I can understand it, little to do with this awful business. It is a hereditary matter, so in order to give you an idea of the facts, I must go back to the commencement of the affair."

"You must know that my grandfather had two sons – my uncle Elias and my father Joseph. My father had a small factory at Coventry, which he enlarged at the time of the invention of bicycling.

"My uncle Elias emigrated to America when he was a young man, and became a planter in Florida, where he was reported to have done very well. At the time of the war he fought in Jackson’s army, and..."
afterwards under Hood, where he rose to be a colonel. When Lee laid down his arms my uncle returned to his plantation, where he remained for three or four years. About 1869 or 1870 he came back to Europe, and took a small estate in Sussex, near Horsham. He had made a very considerable fortune in the States, and his reason for leaving them was his aversion to the negroes, and his dislike of the Republican policy in extending the franchise to them. He was a singular man, fierce and quick-tempered, very foul-mouthed when he was angry, and of a most retiring disposition. During all the years that he lived at Horsham I doubt if ever set he foot in the town. He drank a great deal of brandy, and smoked very heavily, but he would see no society, and did not want any friends, not even his own brother.

"He didn't mind me, in fact he took a fancy to me, for at the time when he saw me first I was a youngster of twelve. That would be in the year 1878, after he had been nine years in England. He begged my father to let me live with him, and he was very kind to me in his way. When he was sober he used to be fond of playing backgammon and draughts with me, and he would make me his representative both with the servants and with the tradespeople, so that by the time that I was sixteen I was quite master of the house. I kept all the keys, and could go where I

وعندما أقتي لي أسلحته عاد عمي إلى مزرعته، حيث بقي هناك لمدة ثلاث أو أربع سنوات. وقارب العام 1869 أو العام 1870 عاد إلى أوروبا، واقترض ملكية صغيرة في سويسكست، قرب هورشام. وكان قد جمع ثروة كبيرة جداً في الولايات المتحدة، أساسه مغادرة لهها فكان مقتله الزنوج ووكره له سياسة النظام الجمهوري في منح الامتيازات لهم. وكان رجلاً غريباً، عنيفاً وسريع الغضب، ذا لسان بذيء جداً عندما يكون غاضباً، وذا نزعة للانكسار على نفسه، وشتك في أنه وضع قدمه في المدينة أثناء كل السنوات التي عاش بها في هورشام. وكان يشرب البراندي بإسراف، ويدخن بكثافة، لا يجب أن يرى رفقة، ولا يريد أي أصدقاء، أو حتى أخوه.

ولم يرغب عمي، وفي الواقع كان يستمتع على إنجابي، لأنه في ذلك الوقت عندما رأى أول مرة كنت طفلاً في الثانية عشرة من عمري. حصل هذا في العام 1878، بعد أن أمضت تسعة سنوات في إنكلترا، وتوصل إلى والدي أن يدعني أعيش معه وكان عطوفاً جداً في سلوكه تجاهي. وعندما لا يسرف في تناول الشراب اعتاد أن يكون مولعاً بلعب الطاولة والداما معى، وكان يجعلني ممتلاً عليه مع الخدم والتجار، لذلك في الوقت الذي بلغت فيه السادسة عشرة من العمر أصبحت سيداً للنزل تماماً. وكونت
liked and do what I liked, so long as I did not disturb him in his privacy. There was one singular exception, however, for he had a single room, a lumber-room up among the attics, which was invariably locked, and which he would never permit either me or anyone else to enter.

“One day — it was in March, 1883-a letter with a foreign stamp lay upon the table in front of the Colonel’s plate. ‘From India!’ said he, as he took it up, Pondicherry postmark! What can this be?’

Opening it hurriedly, out there jumped five little dried orange pips, which pattered down upon his plate. I began to laugh at this, but the laugh was struck from my lips at the sight of his face. His lip had fallen, his eyes were protruding, his skin the colour of putty, and he glared at the envelope which he still held in his trembling hand. ‘k. k. k.,’ he shrieked, and then: ‘My God, my God, my sins have overtaken me.’

‘What is it, uncle?’ I cried.

‘Death,’ said he, and rising from the table, he retired to his room, leaving me palpitating with horror.

I left the breakfast-table, and as I ascended the
stair. I met him coming down with an old rusty key, which must have belonged to the attic, in one hand, and a small brass box, like a cash box in the other.

"They may do what they like, but I'll checkmate them still," said he. 'Tell Mary that I shall want a fire in my room to-day, and send down to Fordham, the Horsham lawyer.'

I did as he ordered, and when the lawyer arrived I was asked to step up to the room. The fire was burning brightly, and in the grate there was a mass of black, fluffy ashes, as of burned paper, while the brass box stood open and empty beside it. As I glanced at the box I noticed, with a start, that upon the lid were printed the treble K which I had read in the morning upon the envelope.

"I wish you, John," said my uncle, 'to witness my will. I leave my estate, with all its advantages and all its disadvantages to my brother, your father, whence it will, no doubt, descend to you. If you can enjoy it in peace, well and good! If you find you cannot, take my advice, my boy, and leave it to your deadliest enemy. I am sorry to give you such a two-edged thing, but I can't say what turn things are

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going to take. Kindly sign the paper where Mr. Fordham shows you.'

"I signed the paper as directed, and the lawyer took it away with him.

I could see a change in my uncle, however. He drank more than ever, and he was less inclined for any sort of society. Most of his time he would spend in his room, with the door locked upon the inside, but sometimes he would emerge in a sort of drunken frenzy and would burst out of the house and tear about the garden with a revolver in his hand, screaming that he was afraid of no man, and that he was not to be cooped up, like a sheep in a pen, by man or devil.

At such times I have seen his face even on a cold day, glisten with moisture as though it were newly raised from a basin.

"Well, to come to an end of the matter, Mr. Holmes, and not to abuse your patience, there came a night when he made one of those drunken sallies from which he never came back. We found him, when we went to search for him, face downwards in a little green-scummed pool, which lay at the foot of the garden. There was no sign of any violence, and the water was but two feet deep, so that the jury, having regard to his known eccentricity, brought in a
verdict of suicide. But I, who knew how he winced from the very thought of death, had much ado to persuade myself that he had gone out of his way to meet it. The matter passed, however, and my father entered into possession of the estate, and of some fourteen thousand pounds, which lay to his credit at the bank.

"One moment," Holmes interposed. "Your statement is, I foresee, one of the most remarkable to which I have ever listened. Let me have the date of the reception by your uncle of the letter, and the date of his supposed suicide."

"The letter arrived on March the 10th, 1883. His death was seven weeks later, upon the night of the 2nd of May."

"Thank you. Pray proceed."

"When my father took over the Horsham property, he, at my request, made a careful examination of the attic, which had been always locked up. We found the brass box there, although its contents had been destroyed. On the inside of the cover was a paper label, with the initials K. K. K. repeated upon it, and 'Letters, memoranda, receipts and a register' written beneath. These, we presume, indicated the nature of the papers which had been destroyed by Colonel Openshaw.

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“Well, it was the beginning of ’84, when my father came to live at Horsham, and all went as well as possible with us until the January of ’85. On the fourth day after the New Year I heard my father give a sharp cry of surprise as we sat together at the breakfast table. There he was, sitting with a newly opened envelope in one hand and five dried orange pips in the outstretched palm of the other one. He had always laughed at what he called my cock-and-bull story about the Colonel, but he looked very puzzled and scared now that the same thing had come upon himself.

“‘What does this mean, John?’ he stammered.

“My heart had turned to lead. ‘It is K.K.K.’, said I.

“He looked inside the envelope. ‘So it is’, he cried. ‘Here are the very letters. But what is this written above them?’

“‘Put the papers on the sundial’, I read, peeping over his shoulder.

“‘What papers? What sundial?’ he asked.

“The sundial in the garden. There is no other’, said I; ‘but the papers must be those that are destroyed’.

“‘Pooh!’ said he, gripping hard at his courage.
‘We are in a civilized land here, and we can’t have tomfoolery of this kind. Where does the thing come from?’

‘From Dundee’, I answered, glancing at the postmark.

‘Some preposterous practical joke’, said he. ‘What have I to do with sundials and papers? I shall take no notice of such nonsense’.

‘I should certainly speak to the police’, I said.

‘And be laughed at for my pains. Nothing of the sort’.

‘Then let me do so’.

‘No, I forbid you. I won’t have a fuss made over such nonsense.’

“It was in vain to argue with him, for he was a very obstinate man. I went about, however, with a heart which was full of forebodings.

“On the third day after the coming of the letter my father went from home to visit an old friend of his, Major Freebody, who is in command of one of the forts upon Portsdown Hill. I was glad that he should go, for it seemed to me that he was farther from danger when he was away from home. In that, however, I was in error. Upon the second day of his absence I received a telegram from the Major, imploring me to come at once. My father had fallen
over one of the deep chalk-pits which abound in the neighbourhood, and was lying senseless, with a shattered skull. I hurried to him, but he passed away without having ever recovered his consciousness. He had, as it appears, been returning from Fareham in the twilight, and as the country was unknown to him, and the chalk-pit was unfenced, the jury had no hesitation in bringing in a verdict of ‘Death from accidental causes.’ And yet I need not tell you that my mind was far from at ease, and that I was wellnigh certain that some foul plot had been woven round him.

“It was in January, ’85, that my poor father met his end, and two years and eight months have elapsed since then. During that time I have lived happily at Horsham, and I had begun to hope that this curse had passed away from the family, and that it had ended with the last generation. I had begun to take comfort too soon, however; yesterday morning the blow fell in the very shape in which it had come upon my father.”

The young man took from his waistcoat a crumpled envelope, and, turning to the table, he shook out upon it five little dried orange pips.

‘This is the envelope,” he continued. “The postmark is London-eastern division. Within are the very words which were upon my father’s last
message. 'K.K.K.'; and then 'Put the papers on the sundial'."

"What have you done?" asked Holmes.

"Nothing."

"Tut! Tut!" cried Sherlock Holmes. "You must act, man, or you are lost. Nothing but energy can save you. This is no time for despair."

"I have seen the police."

"Ah?"

"But they listened to my story with a smile. I am convinced that the inspector has formed the opinion that the letters are all practical jokes, and that the deaths of my relations were really accidents, as the jury stated, and were not to be connected with warnings."

Holmes shook his clenched hands in the air. "Incredible imbecility!" he cried.

"Why did you come to me?" he said; "and, above all, why did you not come at once?"

"I did not know. It was only today that I spoke to Major Prendergast about my trouble, and was advised by him to come to you."

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"It is really two days since you had the letter. We should have acted before this. You have no further evidence, I suppose, than that which you have placed before us—no suggestive details which might help us."

"There is one thing," said John Openshaw. He rummaged in his coat pocket, and drawing out a piece of discoloured, blue-tinted paper, he laid it out upon the table. "I have some remembrance," said he, "that on the day when my uncle burned the papers I observed that the small, unburned margins which lay amid the ashes were of this particular colour. I found this single sheet upon the floor of his room, and I am inclined to think that it may be one of the papers which had, perhaps, fluttered out from among the others, and in that way have escaped destruction.

Holmes moved the lamp, and we both bent over the sheet of paper, which showed by its ragged edge that it had indeed been torn from a book. It was headed "March, 1869", and beneath were the following enigmatical notices:

"4th. Hudson came. Same old platform."

"7th. Set the pips on McCauley, Paramore, and Swain of St. Augustine."

"9th. McCauley cleared."
"10th. John Swain cleared."

"12th. Visited Paramore. All well."

"Thank you!" said Holmes, folding up the paper and returning it to our visitor. "And now you must on no account lose another instant. We cannot spare time even to discuss what you have told me. You must get home instantly, and act."

"What shall I do?"

"There is but one thing to do. It must be done at once. You must put this piece of paper which you have shown us into the brass box which you have described. You must also put in a note to say that all the other papers were burned by your uncle, and that this is the only one which remains. You must assert that in such words as will carry conviction with them. Having done this, you must at once put the box out upon the sundial. Do you understand?"

"Entirely."

"Do not think of revenge, or anything of the sort, at present. I think that we may gain that by means of the law; but we have our web to weave, while theirs is already woven. The first consideration is to remove the pressing danger which threatens you. The
second is to clear up the mystery, and to punish the guilty parties."

"I thank you", said the young man, rising, and pulling on his overcoat. "You have given me fresh life and hope. I shall certainly do as you advise."

"How do you go back?"

"By train from Waterloo."

"It is not yet nine. The streets will be crowded, so I trust that you may be in safety. And yet you cannot guard yourself too closely."

"I am armed."

"That is well. To-morrow I shall set to work upon your case."

"I shall see you at Horsham, then?"

"No, your secret lies in London. It is there that I shall seek it."

"Then I shall call upon you in a day, or in two days, with news as to the box and the papers. I shall take your advice in every particular." He shook hands with us, and took his leave.

Sherlock Holmes sat for some time in silence with his head sunk forward, and his eyes bent upon the red glow of the fire.

"I think, Watson," he remarked at last, "that of all

اعتيار هو إزالة الخطر الملح الذي يهددك. والثاني أن نحل اللغز، وأن نفاعب الأطراف المدنية.

قال الشاب ناهضاً: "أشكرك"، وسحب معلقته. "لقد أعطيتني حياة جديدة وأمل. سأفعل بالتأكيد ما نصح به.

كيف ستعود؟" "بواصة القطار من واترلو.

لم يحن وقت الانتظار حتى الآن. وستكون الشوارع مزدحمة، لذلك أمل أن تكون في آمن. ومع ذلك ليس بإمكانك أن تحمي نفسك بإحكام تام. "أني مسلح.

"هذا حسن. سأبدأ العمل في قضتيك يوم غد.

"إذن سأظل في هورشام؟"

"لا إن سرك في لندن. سأبحث قضيتك من هناك.

"إذن سأزروك في غضون يوم أو يومين، مع أخبار تخص بالصندوق والأوراق. سألتزم نصيحتك في كل نقطة منها. ثم صافحتنا ورحل.

جلس شيرلوك هولمز لبعض الوقت في صمت وображен غامض إلى الأمام، وعيناه محدقتان إلى الوجه الأحمر للنار. علق أخيراً: "أعتقد، واتسون، أن من بين جميع القضايا التشي
our cases we have had none more fantastic than this.”

“Save, perhaps, the Sign of Four.”

“Well, yes. Save, perhaps, that. And yet this John Openshaw seems to me to be walking amid even greater perils than did the Sholtos.”

“But have you,” I asked, “formed any definite conception as to what these perils are?”

“There can be no question as to their nature,” he answered.

“Then what are they? Who is this K.K.K., and why does he pursue this unhappy family?”

Sherlock Holmes closed his eyes, and placed his elbows upon the arms of his chair, with his fingertips together.

“Kindly hand me down the letter K of the American Encyclopedia which stands upon the shelf beside you. Thank you. Now let us consider the situation, and see what may be deduced from it. In the first place, we may start with a strong presumption that Colonel Openshaw had some very strong reason for leaving America. Men at his time of life do not change all their habits, and exchange willingly the charming climate of Florida for the lonely life of an English town. His extreme love of
solitude in England suggests the idea that he was in fear of someone or something, so we may assume as a working hypothesis that it was fear of someone or something which drove him from America. As to what it was he feared, we can only deduce that by considering the formidable letters which were received by himself and his successors. Did you remark the postmarks of those letters?

"The first was from Pondicherry, the second from Dundee, and the third from London."

"From East London. What did you deduce from that?"

"They are all seaports. That the writer was on board of a ship. And now let us consider another point. In the case of Pondicherry seven weeks elapsed between the threat and its fulfillment, in Dundee it was only some three or four days. Does that suggest anything?"

"A greater distance to travel."

"But the letter had also a greater distance to come."

"Then I do not see the point."

"There is at least a presumption that the vessel in which the man or men are is a sailing ship. It looks as if they always sent their singular warning or token before them when starting upon their mission. You
see how quickly the deed followed the sign when it came from Dundee.

If they had come from Pondicherry in a steamer they would have arrived almost as soon as their Letter. But as a matter of fact seven weeks elapsed. I think that those seven weeks represented the difference between the mail boat which brought the letter, and the sailing vessel which brought the writer."

"It is possible."

"But this one comes from London, and therefore we cannot count upon delay."

"Good God!" I cried. "What can it mean this relentless persecution?"

"The papers which Openshaw carried are obviously of vital importance to the person or persons in the sailing ship. I think that it is quite clear that there must be more than one of them. A single man could not have carried out two deaths in such a way as to deceive a corner's jury. There must have been several in I, and they must have been men of resource and determination. Their papers they
mean to have, be the holder of them who it may. In this way you see K. K. K. ceases to be the initials of an individual, and becomes the badge of a society."

"But of what society?"

"Have you never —"said Sherlock Holmes, bending forward and sinking his voice—"have you never heard of the Ku Klux Klan?"

"I never have."

Holmes turned over the leaves of the book upon his knee. "Here it is," said he presently, "Ku Klux Klan. A name derived from a fanciful resemblance to the sound produced by cocking a rifle. This terrible secret society was formed by some ex-Confederate soldiers in the Southern States after the Civil War, and it rapidly formed local branches in different parts of the country, notably in Tennessee, Louisiana, the Carolinas, Georgia, and Florida. Its power was used for political purposes, principally for the terrorizing of the negro voters, and the murdering or driving from the country of those who were opposed to its views. Its outrages were usually preceded by a warning sent to the marked man in some fantastic but generally recognized shape—a sprig of oak leaves in some parts, melon seeds or orange pips in others. On receiving this the victim might either openly abjure his former ways, or might fly from the country. If he
braved the matter out, death would unfailingly come upon him, and usually in some strange and unforeseen manner.

Eventually, in the year 1869, the movement rather suddenly collapsed, although there have been sporadic out breaks of the same sort since that date.'

"You will observe," said Holmes, "that the sudden breaking up of the society was coincident with the disappearance of Openshaw from America with their papers. You can understand that this register and diary may implicate some of the first men in the South, and that there may be many who will not sleep easy at night until it is recovered."

"Then the page which we have seen –"

"Is such as we might expect. It ran, if I remember right, 'sent the pips to A, B, and C' – that is, sent the society's warning to them. Then there are successive entries that A and B cleared, or left the country, and finally that C was visited, with, I fear, a sinister result for C. It had cleared in the morning, and the sun was shining with a subdued brightness through the dim veil which hangs over the great city. Sherlock Holmes was already at breakfast when I came down.
As I waited, I lifted the unopened newspaper from the table and glanced my eye over it. It rested upon a heading which sent a chill to my heart.

"Holmes," I cried, "you are too late."

"Ah!" said he, laying down his cup, "I feared as much. How was it done?"

He spoke calmly, but I could see that he was deeply moved.

"My eye caught the name of Openshow, and the heading 'Tragedy near Waterloo Bridge.' Here is the account: Between nine and ten last night Police-constable Cook, of the H division, on duty near Waterloo Bridge, heard a cry for help and a splash in the water.

The alarm, however, was given, and, by the aid of the water police, the body was eventually recovered. It proved to be that of a young gentleman whose name, as it appears from an envelope which was found in his pocket, was John Openshow, and whose residence is near Horsham. It is conjectured that he may have been hurrying down to catch the last train from Waterloo Station, and that in his haste and the
Extreme darkness, he missed his path, and walked over the edge of one of the small landing-place for river steam-boats.

We sat in silence for some minutes, Holmes more depressed and shaken than I had ever seen him.

"That hurts my pride, Watson," he said at last. "It is a petty feeling, no doubt, but it hurts my pride. It becomes a personal matter with me now, and, if God sends me health, I shall set my hand upon this gang. That he should come to me for help, and that I should send him away to his death--! Well, Watson, we shall see who will win in the long run. I am going out now!"

"To the police?"

"No; I shall be my own police."

All day I was engaged in my professional work, and it was late in the evening before I returned to Baker Street. Sherlock Holmes had not come back yet. It was nearly ten o'clock before he entered, looking pale and worn.

"I have them in the hollow of my hand. Young Openshaw shall not remain long unavenged. Why, Watson, let us put their own devilish trade-mark upon them. It is well thought of!"

"What do you mean?"
He took an orange from the cupboard, and tearing it to pieces, he squeezed out the pips upon the table. Of these he took five, and thrust them into an envelope.

On the inside of the flap he wrote, "S.H. for J.C." Then he sealed it and addressed it to "Captain James Calhoun, Barque Lone Star, Savannah, Georgia."

"That will await him when he enters port," said he, chuckling. "It may give him a sleepless night. He will find it as sure a precursor of his fate as Openshaw did before him."

"And who is this Captain Calhoun?"

"The leader of the gang. I shall have the others, but he first."

"How did you trace it, then?"

"I have spent the whole day," said he, "over Lloyd's registers and the files of old papers, following the future career of every vessel which touched at Pondicherry in January and in February in 83. There were thirty-six ships of fair tonnage which were reported there during those months. Of these, the Lone Star instantly attracted my attention, since, although it was reported as having cleared from London, the name is that which is given to one of the States of the Union."

"Texas, I think."
"I knew that the ship must have an American origin.

"What then?"

"I searched the Dundee records, and when I found that the barque Lone Star was there in January, '85, my suspicion became a certainty. I then inquired as to vessels which lay at present in the port of London. The Lone Star had arrived here last week. I went down to the Albert dock, and found that she had been taken down the river by the early tide this morning, homeward bound to Savannah.

"What will you do then?"

"I have my hand upon him. He and the two mates are, as I learn, the only Americans in the ship. By the time their sailing ship reaches Savannah the mail boat will have carried this letter, and the cable will have informed the police of Savannah that these three gentlemen are badly wanted here upon a charge of murder.

We waited long for news of the Lone Star of Savannah, but none ever reached us. We did at last hear that somewhere far out in the Atlantic a shattered sternpost of a boat was seen swinging in the trough of a wave, with the letters "L.S." carved upon it, and that is all which we shall ever know of the fate of the Lone Star.