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The Sign of Four.

CHAPTER VI.—Continued.

With great activity, considering his bulk, he sprang up the steps and squeezed through into the garret, and immediately afterwards we heard his exulting voice proclaiming that he had found the trap-door.

"He can find something," remarked Holmes, shrugging his shoulders; "he has occasional glimmers of reason. *Il n'y a pas des sots si incommodes que ceux qui ont de l'esprit!*"

"You see!" said Athelney Jones, reappearing down the steps again; "facts are better than theories, after all. My view of the case is confirmed. There is a trap-door communicating with the roof, and it is partly open."

"It was I who opened it."
"Oh, indeed! You did notice it, then?"
He seemed a little crestfallen at the discovery. "Well, whoever noticed it, it shows how our gentleman got away. Inspector!"

"Yes, sir," from the passage.
"Ask Mr. Sholto to step this way. Mr. Sholto, it is my duty to inform you that anything which you may say will be used against you. I arrest you in the Queen's name as being concerned in the death of your brother."

"There, now! Didn't I tell you!" cried the poor little man, throwing out his hands, and looking from one to the other of us.

"Don't trouble yourself about it, Mr. Sholto," said Holmes; "I think that I can engage to clear you of the charge."
"Don't trouble yourself about it, Mr. Theorist, don't promise too much!" snapped the detective. "You may find it a harder matter than you think."

"Not only will I clear him, Mr. Jones, but I will make you a free present of the name and description of one of the two people who were in this room last night. His name, I have every reason to believe, is Jonathan Small. He is a poorly-educated man, small, active, with his right leg off, and wearing a wooden stump which is worn away upon the inner side. His left boot has a coarse, square-toed sole, with an iron band round the heel. He is a middle-aged man, much sun-burned, and has been a convict. These few indications may be of some assistance to you, coupled with the fact that there is a good deal of skin missing from the palm of his hand. The other man—"

"Ah! the other man?" asked Athelney Jones in a sneering voice, but impressed none the less, as I could easily see, by the precision of the other's manner.
"Is a rhymer curious person," said Sherlock Holmes, turning upon his heel. "I hope before very long to be able to introduce you to the pair of them. A word with you, Watson."

He led me out to the head of the stair. "This unexpected occurrence," he said, "has caused us rather to lose sight of the original purpose of our journey."
"I have just been thinking so," I answered. "It is not right that Miss Morstan should remain in this stricken house."

"No. You must escort her home. She lives with Mrs. Cecil Forrester, in Lower Camberwell, so it is not very far. I will wait for you here if you will drive out again. Or perhaps you are too tired?"
"By no means. I don't think I could rest until I know more of this fantastic business. I have seen something of the rough side of life, but I give you my word that this quick succession of strange surprises to-night has shaken my nerve completely. I should like, however, to see the matter through with you, now that I have got so far."
"Your presence will be of great service

to me," he answered. "We shall work the case out independently, and leave this fellow Jones to exult over any mare's nest which he may choose to construct. When you have dropped Miss Morstan, I wish you to go on to No. 3, Pinchin Lane, down near the water's edge at Lambeth. The third house on the right hand side is a bird-stuffer's; Sherman is the name. You will see a weasel holding a young rabbit in the window. Knock old Sherman up, and tell him, with my compliments, that I want Toby at once. You will bring Toby back in the cab with you."

"A dog, I suppose."
"Yes, a queer mongrel, with a most amazing power of scent. I would rather have Toby's help than that of the whole detective force of London."

"I shall bring him, then," said I. "It is one now. I ought to be back before three, if I can get a fresh horse."

"And I," said Holmes, "shall see what I can learn from Mrs. Bernstone, and from the Indian servant, who, Mr. Thaddeus tells me, sleeps in the next garret. Then I shall study the great Jones's methods and listen to his not too delicate sarcasms. *Wir sind gewohnt dass die Menschen verhöhnen was sie nicht verstehen.*" Goethe is always pithy."

CHAPTER VII.

THE EPISODE OF THE BARREL.

The police had brought a cab with them, and in this I escorted Miss Morstan back to her home. After the angelic fashion of women, she had borne trouble with a calm face as long as there was someone weaker than herself to support, and I had found her bright and placid by the side of the frightened housekeeper. In the cab, however, she first turned faint, and then burst into a passion of weeping—so sorely had she been tried by the adventures of the night. She had told me since that she thought me cold and distant upon that journey. She little guessed the struggle within my breast, the effort of self-restraint which held me back. My sympathies and my love went out to her, even as my hand had in the garden. It felt that years of the conventionalities of life could not teach me to know her sweet, brave nature as had this one day of strange experiences. Yet there were two thoughts which sealed the words of affection upon my lips. She was weak and helpless, shaken in mind and nerve. It was to take her at a disadvantage to obtrude love upon her at such a time. Worse still, she was rich. If Holmes's researches were successful she would be an heiress. Was it fair, was it honorable, that a half-pay surgeon should take such advantage of an intimacy which chance had brought about? Might she not look upon me as a mere vulgar fortune-seeker? I could not bear to risk that such a thought should cross her mind. This Agre treasure intervened like an impassable barrier between us.

It was nearly two o'clock when we reached Mrs. Cecil Forrester's. The servants had retired hours ago, but Mrs. Forrester had been so interested by the strange message which Miss Morstan had received that she had sat up in the hope of her return. She opened the door herself, a middle-aged, graceful woman, and it gave me joy to see how tenderly her arm stole round the other's waist, and how motherly was the voice in which she greeted her. She was clearly no mere paid dependent, but an honored friend. I was introduced, and Mrs. Forrester earnestly begged me to step in and to tell her our adventures. I explained, however, the importance of my errand, and promised faithfully to call and report any progress which we might make with the case. As we drove away I stole a glance back, and I still seem to see that little group on the step—the two graceful, clinging figures, the half-opened door, the hall light shining through stained glass, the barometer, and the bright stair-rod. It was soothing to catch even that passing glimpse of a tranquil English home in the midst of the wild, dark business which had absorbed us.

And the more I thought of what had happened, the wilder and darker it grew. I reviewed the whole extraordinary sequence of events as I rattled on through the silent, gas-lit streets. There was the original problem: that at least was pretty clear now. The death of Captain Morstan, the sending of the pearls, the advertisement, the letter—we had had light upon all these events. They had only led us, however, to a deeper and far more tragic mystery. The Indian treasure, the curious plan found among Morstan's baggage, the strange scene at Major Sholto's death, the rediscovery of the treasure immediately followed by the murder of the discoverer, the very singular accompaniments to the crime, the footsteps, the remarkable weapons, the words upon the card corresponding with those upon Captain Morstan's chart—here was indeed a

labyrinth in which a man less singularly endowed than my fellow-lodger might well despair of ever finding the clue.

Pinchin Lane was a row of shabby, two-storied brick houses in the lower quarter of Lambeth. I had to knock for some time at No. 3 before I could make any impression. At last, however, there was the glint of a candle behind the blind, and a face looked out at the upper window.

"Go on, you drunken vagabone," said the face. "If you kick up any more row, I'll open the kennels and let out forty-three dogs upon you."

"If you let one out, it's just what I say 'three,' down goes the wiper," said I.
"Go on!" yelled the face. "So help me gracious, I have a wiper in this bag, an I'll drop it on your 'ead if you don't hook it!"

"But I want a dog," I cried.
"I won't be argued with!" shouted Mr. Sherman. "Now stand clear; for when I say 'three,' down goes the wiper."

"Mr. Sherlock Holmes—" I began; but the words had a most magical effect, for the window instantly slammed down, and within a minute the door was unbarred and open. Mr. Sherman was a lanky, lean old man, with stooping shoulders, a stringy neck, and blue tinted glasses.

"A friend of Mr. Sherlock is always welcome," said he. "Step in, sir. Keep clear of the badger, for he bites. Ah, naughty, naughty! would you take a nip at the gentleman?" This to a stoat which thrust its wicked head and red eyes between the bars of its cage. "Don't mind that, sir: it's only a slowworm. It hasn't got no fangs, so I gives it the run o' the room, for it keeps the beetles down. You must not mind my bein' just a little short w' you at first, for I'm guyed at by the children, and there's many a one just come down this lane to knock me up. What was it that Mr. Sherlock Holmes wanted, sir?"

"He wanted a dog of yours."
"Ah! that would be Toby."
"Yes, Toby was the name."
"Toby lives at No. 7 on the left here."

He moved slowly forward with his candle among the queer animal family which he had gathered round him. In the uncertain, shadowy light I could see dimly that there were glancing, glimmering eyes peeping down at us from every cranny and corner. Even the rafters above our heads were lined by solemn fowls, who lazily shifted their weight from one leg to the other as our voices disturbed their slumbers.

Toby proved to be an ugly, long-haired, lop-eared creature, half spaniel and half lurcher, brown and white in color, with a very clumsy, waddling gait. It accepted, after some hesitation, a lump of sugar which the old naturalist handed to me, and, having thus sealed an alliance, it followed me to the cab, and made no difficulties about accompanying me. It had just struck three on the Palace clock when I found myself back once more at Pondicherry Lodge. The ex-prize fighter McMurdo had, I found, been arrested as an accessory, and both he and Mr. Sholto had been marched off to the station. Two constables guarded the narrow gate, but they allowed me to pass with the dog on my mentioning the detective's name.

Holmes was standing on the doorstep, with his hands in his pockets, smoking his pipe.
"Ah, you have him there!" said he. "Good dog, then! Athelney Jones has gone. We have had an immense display of energy since you left. He has arrested not only friend Thaddeus, but the gate-keeper, the housekeeper, and the Indian servant. We have the place to ourselves, but for a sergeant upstairs. Leave the dog here, and come up."

We tied Toby to the hall table, and re-ascended the stairs. The room was as we had left it, save that a sheet had been draped over the central figure. A weary looking police sergeant reclined in the corner.

"Lend me your bull's-eye, sergeant," said my companion. "Now tie this bit of card round my neck, so as to hang it in front of me. Thank you. Now I must kick off my boots and stockings. Just you carry them down with you, Watson. I am going to do a little climbing. And dip my handkerchief into the creosote. That will do. Now come up into the garret with me for a moment."

We clambered up through the hole. Holmes turned his light once more upon the footsteps in the dust.
"I wish you particularly to notice these footmarks," he said. "Do you observe anything noteworthy about them?"
"They belong," I said, "to a child or a small woman."
"Apart from their size, though. Is there nothing else?"
"They appear to be much as other footmarks."
"Not at all. Look here! This is the

print of a right foot in the dust. Now I make one with my naked foot beside it. What is the chief difference?"

"Your toes are all cramped together. The other print has each toe distinctly divided."

"Quite so. That is the point. Bear that in mind. Now, would you kindly step over to that flap-window and smell the edge of the wood-work? I shall stay over here, as I have this handkerchief in my hand."

I did as he directed, and was instantly conscious of a strong tarry smell.

"That is where he put his foot in getting out. If you can trace him, I should think that Toby will have no difficulty. Now run downstairs, loose the dog, and look out for Blondin."

By the time that I got out into the grounds Sherlock Holmes was on the roof, and I could see him like an enormous glow-worm crawling very slowly along the ridge. I lost sight of him behind a stack of chimneys, but he presently reappeared, and then vanished once more upon the opposite side. When I made my way round there I found him seated at one of the corner eaves.

"That you, Watson?" he cried.
"Yes."
"This is the place. What is that black thing down there?"
"A water-barrel."
"Top on it?"
"Yes."
"No sign of a ladder?"
"No."
"Confound the fellow! It's a most break-neck place. I ought to be able to come down here he could climb up. The water-pipe feels pretty firm. Here goes, anyhow."

There was a scuffling of feet, and the lantern began to come steadily down the side of the wall. Then with a light spring he came on to the barrel, and from there to the earth.

"It was easy to follow him," he said, drawing on his stockings and boots. "Tiles were loosened the whole way along and in his hurry he had dropped this. It confirms my diagnosis, as you doctors express it."

The object which he held up to me was a small pocket or pouch woven out of colored grasses and with a few tawdry beads strung round it. In shape and size it was not unlike a cigarette-case. Inside were half a dozen spines of dark wood, sharp at one end and rounded at the other, like that which had struck Bartholomew Sholto.

"They are hellish things," said he. "Look out that you don't prick yourself. I'm delighted to have them, for the chances are that they are all he has. There is the less fear of you or me finding one in our skin before long. I would sooner face a Martini bullet myself. Are you game for a six-mile trudge, Watson?"
"Certainly," I answered.
"Your leg will stand it?"
"Oh yes."

"Here you are, doggy! Good old Toby! Smell it, Toby, smell it!" he pushed the creosote handkerchief under the dog's nose, while the creature stood with its fluffy legs separated, and with a most comical cock to its head, like a connoisseur sniffing the bouquet of a famous vintage. Holmes then threw the handkerchief to a distance, fastened a stout cord to the mongrel's collar, and led him to the foot of the water-barrel. The creature instantly broke into a succession of high, tremulous yelps, and, with his nose on the ground, and his tail in the air, pattered off upon the trail at a pace which strained his leash and kept us at the top of our speed.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

A Point for You.

In view of what Hood's Sarsaparilla has done for others, is it not reasonable to suppose that it will be of benefit to you? For Scrofula, Salt Rheum, and all other diseases of the blood, for Dyspepsia, Indigestion, Sick Headache, Loss of Appetite, That Tired Feeling, Catarrh, Malaria, Rheumatism, Hood's Sarsaparilla is an unequalled remedy.

Hood's Pills cure sick headache.

What Bibulous Means.

A Kentucky gentleman who recently came to Washington to consult with his member of Congress about an office under the new administration was asked yesterday by a gentleman from Boston whether it is really true that the people of Kentucky are so very bibulous.

"Bibulous!" said the Kentuckian. "Bibulous—! I don't reckon you could find a dozen Bibles in the whole state."

The best way to avoid scalp diseases, hair falling out, premature baldness is to use the best preventative for that purpose—Hall's Hair Renewer.

FONTENAY,

THE SWORDSMAN.

A MILITARY NOVEL.

BY FORTUNE DU BOISGOBEY.

(Translated by H. L. Williams.)

CHAPTER XXXIII.—Continued.

"My dear friend," he said, "I can explain your anger but not associate myself with it. All is well done that heaven does. This duenna ought to have been hanged high and dry over the house door where she led the soldiers to give up her master and also, I do not doubt, to have you killed by them. She hoped in the tumult and darkness of the room whither she conducted you that you would be taken for a Spaniard and treated as such."

"I did not think of that," muttered Fontenay beginning to understand Carmen's conduct. "Now I believe with you that she meant to destroy me. She took good care not to tell me she was going to warn the colonel. It was I who ought to go there, and I wish I had, for I wanted to save the inoffensive old nobleman who perished with this Montalvan."

"It was his destiny, and I repeat, heaven does everything well. It is one enemy less for France, and you have not to reproach yourself for his death."
"No; it is not he I am sad about, but this young lady who so strongly resembles Mlle. de Gavre, and is probably her relative."

"I understand her interesting you, though perhaps she does not merit it. But no misfortune has befallen her that I know of. The fate her father reserves for her has no attractive features. Do you believe she will pine in the convent where he intended shutting her up?"
"But where is she?" interrupted Fontenay.

"Hidden somewhere not easily discovered; this Montalvan said before you. It follows that she has nothing to fear."
"He added that he alone, and the duenna knew this place of concealment."
"Well, neither will betray her. Montalvan is dead; the duenna is no longer in Teruel and not likely to return—"

"And Donna Inez will die, starved in the cavern where they shut her up, and whence nobody can liberate her."
"Oh," said the Pole, who had not any such idea, "you fancy an unlikely accident. Things do not happen in the Old World as in romances and on the stage. I saw in Paris a play entitled *Les Victimes Cloitrées*, but as for your guerilla's daughter being walled up alive—"

"You forget that we are in Spain, that Montalvan did not foresee his being killed, and that his faithful duenna is capable of all crimes."
This retort appeared to make some impression upon Zolnycki.

"Indeed, anything may happen in this infernal country," he said after reflection. "But if really the young lady is confined to some dungeon we should have her out. You are well aware, my dear Fontenay, that, by the general's order, all the houses in Teruel will be ransacked from top to bottom to-morrow. It is a vile work that no officer cares to direct; but I will volunteer for it. Do not doubt it will be accorded me, and you may believe that the search will be conscientiously made. I will not leave one cellar unvisited. Nothing prevents your joining me."

"I thank you with all my heart and I accept," quickly said the creole. "If we do not find Donna Inez, as I believe we shall, it will be because she has been able to leave her prison and the town. Perhaps Carmen may aid her. This duenna is a monster, but what will she not do for money? she has betrayed her master for a hundred duros, but she knows her master's daughter is rich, and nothing proves that she has used that pass to reach the country. She would rather sell it to the senora, who would pay her handsomely for it when in possession of her father's property."

Fontenay drank in his companion's encouraging words, and when they reached the quarters he no longer in the least despaired of saving Marguerite's cousin.

The following days resulted in nothing to confirm Zolnycki's optimistic forecast, for the house-visits only resulted in discovering some unfortunate insurgents in hiding. Suchet, who was humane, was content to expel them from the town. Cellars and underground holes were found, but no refuse, or even the passage under the outer wall through which Montalvan was to have fled with his daughter, the duenna and the unfortunate Don Inigo.

Once recovering from his early uneasiness, Fontenay gradually grew to believe they were exaggerated, that the widow had not died most dreadfully, that she lived in some village of Aragon where the

French would never go to her and even that a day would come when she would remember that Marguerite was her cousin and had never been her enemy.

In any case, Fontenay was glad to quit the town where he had gone through so much emotion.

On receiving the flag which his young captain had captured, General Suchet announced that he would soon recall him on his staff. When the call indeed speedily came, he bade adieu to his comrades, the brave and kindly Zolnycki, his brother-in-arms and by affection, and many others who had become friends since he shared their dangers.

In transmitting the order, the colonel hinted that it was a step on the return journey into France of the young captain who was entitled to six months' furlough. So Fontenay marched with a light heart, not without again visiting the quaint tomb of the Lovers of Teruel, and he took with him Tournesol, still more delighted.

He did not know what the future held in store for him, but whatever happened, he had not, as the old-fashioned folk say, "eaten his cake before the bread."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

UNITED AT LAST.

On leaving Teruel in June, 1809, Paul Fontenay fully believed that he had finished with Spain, and yet he was at Saragossa two months afterward.

General Suchet had recalled him on his staff only to retain him there, so thoroughly was he satisfied with his manner of serving him. He would have hastened to pack him off into France, had he been discontented. So matters go on in armies—and elsewhere too much merit injures a man. The prizes are for average men.

Fontenay bore his burden patiently, because he rather often received letters from his friend George de Prigny, and sometimes from Mlle de Gavre; but what annoyed him for his inability to return to Paris was the fact of his fiancée not being there. She had accompanied the Empress to Plombières, with no more prospect of passing the end of summer at la Malmaison than of the Emperor's return. After his dazzling victory of Wagram, he was waiting at Scheonbrunn for Austria to accept the peace he imposed.

On the 18th of August, after four months absence, Josephine again saw the chateau preferred by her above all the imperial residences, because it reminded her only of pleasing events.

She did not find happiness there again, although nothing was changed in appearance. The park was still as fine, the gardens as blooming, and the court as brilliant. But Napoleon wrote seldom and although he styled her "*Mon amie*" or even "*Ma tendre amie*," and never ceased to be affectionate, his laconic notes little resembled the burning epistles he dashed off to her during the first campaign in Italy, in 1796.

The more deeply the good Empress was saddened and fretted over the change, the more closely she attached herself to the young reader who took the greatest share in the sorrows she had divined, without venturing to speak of them. Marguerite was so exclusively her favorite that the ladies of the palace felt some jealousy.

Josephine found pleasure in leading the girl to speak of her beloved and her grief at not seeing him. She had no secrets from her patroness, touched by her love and charmed by her simplicity. It was sweet to encourage her hopes while seeking to soothe her, and she would repeat that Paul Fontenay, retained by duty, was not free to return as quickly as he wished.

She had not told her that he was decorated with the cross of honor, although she had learnt this fact from the war minister; she wished to reserve a surprise for his arrival; and as Paul was so modest as not to acquaint his betrothed with the news, Marguerite believed he was prolonging his stay to win the token which the Empress had resolved to include among the wedding presents.

The heat was excessive during the glorious summer of 1809, and Josephine who suffered from it, although she dreaded the cold more, often strolled under the park trees for coolness, without her suite, like the lady of the house eluding her guests to enjoy the loneliness of the groves; but she never missed taking her dear Marguerite.

On one of the later days of this burning August, her reading-lady was seated by her on a grassy seat before the colonnade of that miniature Temple of Cupid where, one November afternoon, Carénac had awaited the West Indian master of *ph. pher.* to fight a duel having a most unfor- sequel. ed.

Why should the Empress mad Laurance ner her goal, when she sold- ner from the time it took to

(Continued on ...)