

The Sign of Four.

CHAPTER X.—Continued.

"It is just these very simple things which are extremely liable to be overlooked. However, I determined to act on the idea. I started at once in this harmless seaman's rig and inquired at all the yards down the river. I drew blank at fifteen, but at the sixteenth—Jacobson's—I learned that the Aurora had been handed over to them two days ago by a wooden-legged man, with some trivial directions as to her rudder. "There ain't naught amiss with her rudder," said the foreman. "There she lies, with the red streaks." At that moment who should come down but Mordecai Smith, the missing owner! He was rather the worse for liquor. I should not, of course, have known him, but he bellowed out his name and the name of his launch. "I want her to-night at eight o'clock," said he—"eight o'clock sharp, mind, for I have two gentlemen who won't be kept waiting." They had evidently paid him well, for he was very flush of money, chucking shillings about to the men. I followed him some distance, but he subsided into an ale-house; so I went back to the yard, and, happening to pick up one of my boys on the way, I stationed him as a sentry over the launch. He is to stand at the water's edge and wave his handkerchief to us when they start. We shall be lying off in the stream, and it will be a strange thing if we do not take men, treasure, and all."

"You have planned it all very neatly, whether they are the right men or not," said Jones: but if the affairs were in my hands I should have had a body of police in Jacobson's Yard and arrested them when they came down."

"Which would have been never. This man Small is a pretty shrewd fellow. He would send a scout on ahead, and if anything made him suspicious he would lie snug for another week."

"But you might have struck to Mordecai Smith, and so been led to their hiding-place," said I.

"In that case I should have wasted my day. I think that it is a hundred to one against Smith knowing where they live. As long as he has liquor and good pay, why should he ask questions? They send him messages what to do. No, I thought over every possible course, and this is the best."

While this conversation had been proceeding, we had been shooting the long series of bridges which span the Thames. As we passed the city the last rays of the sun were gilding the cross upon the summit of St. Paul's. It was twilight before we reached the Tower.

"That is Jacobson's Yard," said Holmes, pointing to a bristle of masts and rigging on the Surrey side. "Cruise gently up and down here under cover of this string of lighters." He took a pair of night-glasses from his pocket and gazed some time at the shore. "I see my sentry at his post," he remarked, "but no sign of a handkerchief."

"Suppose we go down stream a short way and lie in wait for them," said Jones eagerly.

We were all eager by this time, even the policemen and stokers, who had a very vague idea of what was going forward.

"We have no right to take anything for granted," Holmes answered. "It is certainly ten to one that they go down stream, but we cannot be certain. From this point we can see the entrance of the yard, and they can hardly see us. It will be a clear night and plenty of light. We must stay where we are. See how the folk swarm over yonder in the gaslight."

"They are coming from work in the yard."

"Dirty-looking rascals, but I suppose every one has some little immortal spark concealed about him. You would not think it, to look at them. There is no *pirori* probability about it. A strange enigma is man!"

"Someone calls him a soul concealed in an animal," I suggested.

"Winwood Reade is good upon the subject," said Holmes. "He remarks that, while the individual man is an insoluble puzzle, in the aggregate he becomes a mathematical certainty. You can, for example, never foretell what any one man will do, but you can say with precision what an average number will be up to. Individuals vary, but percentages remain constant. So says the statistician. But do I see a handkerchief? Surely there is a white flutter over yonder."

"Yes, it is your boy," I cried. "I can see him plainly."

"And there is the Aurora," exclaimed Holmes, "and going like the devil! Full speed ahead, engineer. Make after that launch with the yellow light. By heaven, I shall never forgive myself if she proves to have the heels of us!"

She had slipped unseen through the yard-entrance and passed behind two or three small craft, so that she had fairly got her speed up before we saw her. Now she was flying down stream, near in to the shore, going at a tremendous rate. Jones looked gravely at her and shook his head.

"She is very fast," he said. "I doubt if we shall catch her."

"We must catch her!" said Holmes, between his teeth. "Heap it on, stokers! Make her do all she can! If we burn the boat we must have them!"

We were fairly after her now. The

furnaces roared, and the powerful engines whizzed and clanked, like a great metallic heart. Her sharp, steep prow cut through the still river-water and sent two rolling waves to right and to left of us. With every throb of the engines we sprang and quivered like a living thing. One great yellow lantern in our bows threw a long, flickering funnel of light in front of us. Right ahead a dark blur upon the water showed where the Aurora lay, and the swirl of white foam behind her spoke of the pace at which she was going. We flashed past barges, steamers, merchant-vessels, in and out, behind this one and round the other. Voices hailed us out of the darkness, but still the Aurora thundered on, and still we followed close upon her track.

"Pile it on, men, pile it on!" cried Holmes, looking down into the engine-room, while the fierce glow from below beat upon his eager, aquiline face. "Get every pound of steam you can."

"I think we gain a little," said Jones, with his eyes on the Aurora.

"I am sure of it," said I. "We shall be up with her in a very few minutes."

At that moment, however, as our evil fate would have it, a tug with three barges in tow blundered in between us. It was only by putting our helm hard down that we avoided a collision, and before we could round them and recover our way the Aurora had gained a good two hundred yards. She was still, however, well in view, and the murky, uncertain twilight was settling into a clear, starlit night. Our boilers were strained to their utmost, and the frail shell vibrated and creaked with the fierce energy which was driving us along. We had shot through the pool, past the West India Docks, down the long Deptford Reach, and up again after rounding the Isle of Dogs. The dull blur in front of us resolved itself now clearly enough into the dainty Aurora. Jones turned our search light upon her so that we could plainly see the figures upon her deck. One man sat by the stern, with something black between his knees, over which he stooped. Beside him lay a dark mass, which looked like a Newfoundland dog. The boy held the tiller, while against the red glare of the furnace I could see old Smith, stripped to the waist, and shoveling coals for dear life. They may have had some doubt at first as to whether we were pursuing them, but now as we followed every winding and turning which they took there could no longer be any question about it. At Greenwich we were about three hundred paces behind them. At Blackwall we could not have been more than two hundred and fifty. I have coursed many creatures in many countries during my checkered career, but never did sport give me such a wild thrill as this mad, flying man-hunt down the Thames. Steadily we drew in upon them, yard by yard. In the silence of the night we could hear the panting and clanking of their machinery. The man in the stern still crouched upon the deck, and his arms were moving as though he were busy, while every now and then he would look up and measure with a glance the distance which still separated us. Nearer we came and nearer. Jones yelled to them to stop. We were not more than four boat-lengths behind them, both boats flying at a tremendous pace. It was a clear reach of the river, with Barking Level upon one side and the melancholy Plumsted Marshes upon the other. At our hail the man in the stern sprang up from the deck and shook his two clinched fists at us, cursing the while in a high, cracked voice. He was a good-sized, powerful man, and as he stood poised himself with legs astride, I could see that from the thigh downwards there was but a wooden stump upon the right side. At the sound of his strident, angry cries, there was movement in the huddled bundle upon the deck. It traughtened itself into a little black man—the smallest I have ever seen—with a great, misshapen head and a shock of tangled, disheveled hair. Holmes had already drawn his revolver, and I whipped out mine at the sight of this savage, distorted creature. He was wrapped in some sort of dark ulster or blanket, which left only his face exposed; but that face was enough to give a man a sleepless night. Never have I seen features so deeply marked by bestiality and cruelty. His small eyes glowed and burned with a somber light, and his thick lips were writhed back from his teeth, which grinned and chattered at us with half animal fury.

"Fire if he raises his hand," said Holmes, quietly.

We were within a boat's length by this time, and almost within touch of our quarry. I can see the two of them now as they stood, the white man with his legs far apart, shrieking out curses, and the unhallowed dwarf with his hideous face, and his strong yellow teeth gnashing at us in the light of our lantern.

It is well that we had so clear a view of him. Even as we looked he plucked out from under his covering a short, round piece of wood, like a school-ruler, and clapped it to his lips. Our pistols rang out together. He whirled round, threw up his arms, and, with a kind of choking cough, fell sideways into the stream. I caught one glimpse of his venomous, menacing eyes amid the white swirl of the waters. At the same moment the wooden legged man threw himself upon the rudder and put it hard down, so that his boat

made straight in for the southern bank, while we shot past her stern, only clearing her by a few feet. We were round after her in an instant, but she was already nearly at the bank. It was a wild and desolate place, where the moon glimmered upon a wide expanse of marsh-land, with pools of stagnant water and beds of decaying vegetation. The launch, with a dull thud, ran up upon the mud-bank, with her bow in the air and her stern flush with the water. The fugitive sprang out, but his stump instantly sank its whole length into the sodden soil. In vain he struggled and writhed. Not one step could he possibly take either forwards or backwards. He yelled in impotent rage, and kicked frantically into the mud with his other foot; but his struggles only bored his wooden pin the deeper into the sticky bank. When we brought our launch alongside he was so firmly anchored that it was only by throwing the end of a rope over his shoulders that we were able to haul him out, and to drag him, like some evil fish, over our side. The two Smiths, father and son, sat sullenly in their launch, but came aboard meekly enough when commanded. The Aurora herself we hauled off and made fast to our stern. A solid iron chest of Indian workmanship stood upon the deck. This, there could be no question, was the same that had contained the ill-omened treasure of the Sholto. There was no key, but it was of considerable weight, so we transferred it carefully to our own little cabin. As we steamed slowly up-stream again, we flashed our search-light in every direction, but there was no sign of the Islander. Somewhere in the dark ooze at the bottom of the Thames lie the bones of that strange visitor to our shores.

"See here," said Holmes, pointing to the wooden hatchway. "We were hardly quick enough with our pistols." There, sure enough, just beyond where we had been standing, stuck one of those murderous darts which we knew so well. It must have whizzed between us at the instant we fired. Holmes smiled at it and shrugged his shoulders in a easy fashion, but I confess that it turned me sick to think of the horrible death which had passed so close to us that night.

CHAPTER XI.

THE GREAT ARGENT TREASURE.

Our captive sat in the cabin opposite to the iron box which he had done so much and waited so long to gain. He was a sun-burned, reckless-eyed fellow, with a network of lines and wrinkles all over his mahogany features, which told of a hard open-air life. There was a singular prominence about his bearded chin which marked a man who was not to be easily turned from his purpose. His age may have been fifty or thereabouts, for his black, curly hair was thickly shot with gray. His face in repose was not unpleasing one, though his heavy brows and aggressive chin gave him, as I had lately seen, a terrible expression when moved to anger. He sat now with his handcuffed hands upon his lap, and his head sunk upon his breast, while he looked with his keen, twinkling eyes on the box which had been the cause of his ill-doing. It seemed to me that there was more sorrow than anger in his rigid and contained countenance. Once he looked up at me with a gleam of something like humor in his eyes.

"Well, Jonathan Small," said Holmes, lighting a cigar, "I am sorry that it has come to this."

"And so am I, sir," he answered frankly. "I don't believe that I can swing over the job. I give you my word on the book that I never raised hand against Mr. Sholto. It was that little hell-bound Tonga who shot one of his cursed darts into him. I had no part in it, sir. I was as grieved as if it had been my blood-relation. I welched the little devil with the slack end of the rope for it, but it was done, and I could not undo it again."

"Have a cigar," said Holmes, "and you had best take a pull out of my flask, for you are very wet. How could you expect so small and weak a man as this black fellow to overpower Mr. Sholto and hold him while you were climbing the rope?"

"You seem to know as much about it as if you were there, sir. The truth is that I hoped to find the room clear. I knew the habits of the house pretty well, and it was the time when Mr. Sholto usually went down to supper. I shall make no secret of the business. The best defense that I can make is just the simple truth. Now, if it had been the old major, I would have swung for him with a light heart. I would have thought no more of knifing him than of smoking this cigar. But it's cursed hard that I should be lagged over this young Sholto, with whom I had no quarrel whatever."

"You are under the charge of Mr. Athelney Jones, of Scotland Yard. He is going to bring you up to my rooms, and I shall ask you for a true account of the matter. You must make a clean breast of it, for if you do I hope that I may be of use to you. I think I can prove that the poison acts so quickly that the man was dead before ever you reached the room."

"That he was, sir. I never got such a turn in my life as when I saw him grinning at me with his head on his shoulder as I climbed through the window. It fairly shook me, sir. I'd have half killed Tonga for it if he had not scrambled off."



William A. Lehr
of Kendallville, Ind., says Hood's
Hood's Sarsaparilla is
King of Medicines
And His Cure Was
Almost a Miracle

"C. I. Hood & Co., Lowell, Mass.

"Gentlemen: When I was 14 years of age I was confined to my bed for several months by an attack of rheumatism, and when I had partially recovered I did not have the use of my legs, so that I had to go on crutches. About a year later, *Serofula*, in the form of

White Swellings,

appeared on various parts of my body, and for eleven years I was an invalid, being confined to my bed six years. In that time ten or eleven of these sores appeared and broke, causing me great pain and suffering. Several times pieces of bone worked out of the sores. Physicians did not help me and

I Became Discouraged

"I went to Chicago to visit a sister, as it was thought a change of air and scene might do me good. But I was confined to my bed most of the time. I was so impressed with the success of Hood's Sarsaparilla in cases similar to mine that I decided to try it. So a bottle was bought, and to my great gratification the sores soon decreased, and I began to feel better. This strengthened my faith in the medicine, and in a short time I was

Up and Out of Doors

To make a long story short, I continued to take Hood's Sarsaparilla for a year, when I had become so fully released from the chains of disease that I took a position with the Flint & Walling Mfg. Co., and since that time have not lost a single day on account of sickness. I always feel well, am in good spirits and have a good appetite. I endorse

Hood's Sarsaparilla

for it has been a great blessing to me, and to my friends my recovery seems almost miraculous. I think Hood's Sarsaparilla is the King of all medicines." WILLIAM A. LEHR, No. 9 North Railroad St., Kendallville, Ind.

Hood's Pills cure Biliousness.

GOOD
COMMERCIAL
AND OTHER
PRINTING
AT
THE REVIEW
OFFICE

W. C. PITFIELD, General Partner. S. HAYWARD, Special Partner.
W. C. PITFIELD & CO.
IMPORTERS AND JOBBERS OF
BRITISH, FOREIGN and DOMESTIC

Dry Goods, TEAS, &c.,

CANTERBURY STREET, ST. JOHN, N. B.

FIRST-CLASS Livery Stable!

I am prepared to furnish

FIRST-CLASS TEAMS to accommodate the travelling public, at short notice to any part of the country.

ISAC TRENHOLM, Buctouche, June 16, 1892. (6m)

SPRING GOODS!
TO WHOLESALE BUYERS
We now have the most complete stock to be had in the LOWER PROVINCES.

BY LATE ARRIVALS WE HAVE RECEIVED:—

5960 Cases Window Glass.	5960 Cases Polished Plate Glass.
2250 bbls. Portland Cement.	25 tons Zinc and Spelter.
20 tons Iron Wire.	3000 boxes Tin Plates.
10 tons Pig Lead.	2 tons Pig Tin.
2 car loads White Leads.	12 cars Manila Cordage.
100 bbls. Linseed Oil.	100 bbls. Whiting.
1200 packages General Shelf Goods.	46 bales Net and Fishing Twines.

W. H. THORNE & CO.
ST. JOHN, N. B.

JOHN HANNAH,
—MANUFACTURER OF—
Woven Wire Mattresses,

Of Different Grades for the Trade only. Warranted not to sag.
To be had from all the principal furniture and general dealers in the Maritime Provinces.
Repairing promptly done. **105 CITY ROAD, ST. JOHN, N. B.**

Millers' Tanning Extract Co.
(LIMITED).

—WORKS AT—
Millerton and Mortimore, N. B.

Cable Addresses—"Hypotan," London; and "Miller," Miramichi.
A very complete stock of General Goods, cheap for Cash or Trade, at **OUR MORTIMORE STORE.**

NEW GOODS!

Nearly every day brings in new additions to stock. We buy nothing but the Plums in the trade. Our expenses are light, and therefore we can and will give our patrons the advantages of our purchases every time. We mean to sell goods and mean that our prices will do it. Those who want best value for their money should not fail to come to us. We will make it to their interest to do so. We are having much of a run now on for Chambrays for ladies' house Wrappers. They are only 8c a yard, worth twice the money.

J. FLANAGAN
90 MAIN STREET, MONCTON, N. B.

RICHARD SULLIVAN & CO.
—WHOLESALE—
Wine and Spirit Merchants,
—IMPORTERS AND DEALERS IN—
TEAS, TOBACCOS and CIGARS,
54 DOCK STREET, ST. JOHN, N. B.
Bonded Warehouse No. 8.

NEAT! STYLISH! SERVICEABLE!
THIS IS WHAT IS REQUIRED IN A SUIT OF CLOTHES.

MURDOCK McLEOD'S
TAILORING ESTABLISHMENT,
113 MAIN STREET,
MONCTON,
IS THE PLACE TO GET A SUIT OF CLOTHES MADE.
A Fine Stock of Cloths on hand to select from.

DO YOU WANT A GOOD GARMENT AT A SMALL PRICE?

The subscriber has just received a full assortment of
Scotch and Canadian Tweeds, Ladies' Figured and Plain Mantil Cloths, Men's Felt Hats, &c., which will be sold 20 per cent lower than the regular retail prices.

L. J. REDDIN,
BUCTOUCHE.

Subscribe for **THE REVIEW.**
Only **\$1.00.**