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The Sign of Four.

CHAPTER I. THE SCIENCE OF DEDUCTION.

Sherlock Holmes took his bottle from the corner of the mantel-piece, and his hypodermic syringe from its neat morocco case. With his long, white, nervous fingers he adjusted the delicate needle, and rolled back his left shirt-cuff. For some little time his eyes rested thoughtfully upon the sinewy forearm and wrist, all dotted and scarred with innumerable puncture-marks. Finally he thrust the sharp point home, pressed down the tiny piston, and sank back into the velvet-lined arm-chair with a long sigh of satisfaction. Three times a day for many months I had witnessed this performance, but custom had not reconciled my mind to it. On the contrary, from day to day I had become more irritable at the sight, and my conscience swelled nightly within me at the thought that I had lacked the courage to protest. Again and again I had registered a vow that I should deliver my soul upon the subject; but there was that in the cool, nonchalant air of my companion which made him the last man with whom one would care to take anything approaching to a liberty. His great powers, his masterly manner, and the experience which I had had of his many extraordinary qualities, all made me diffident and backward in crossing him. Yet upon that afternoon, whether it was the Beauce which I had taken with my lunch, or the additional exasperation produced by the extreme deliberation of his manner, I suddenly felt that I could hold out no longer. "Which is it to-day," I asked, "morphine or cocaine?" He raised his eyes languidly from the old black-letter volume which he had opened. "It is cocaine," he said, "a seven per cent. solution. Would you care to try it?" "No, indeed," I answered brusquely. "My constitution has not got over the Afghan campaign yet. I cannot afford to throw any extra strain upon it." He smiled at my vehemence. "Perhaps you are right, Watson," he said. "I suppose that its influence is physically a bad one. I find it, however, so transcendently stimulating and clarifying to the mind that its secondary action is a matter of small moment."

"The only unofficial consulting detective," he answered. "I am the last and highest court of appeal in detection. When Gregson, or Lestrade, or Athelney Jones are out of their depths—which, by the way, is their normal state—the matter is laid before me. I examine the data as an expert, and pronounce a specialist's opinion. I claim no credit in such cases. My name figures in no newspaper. The work itself, the pleasure of finding a field for my peculiar powers, is the highest reward. But you have yourself had some experience of my methods of work in the Jefferson Hope case." "Yes, indeed," said I, cordially. "I was never so struck by anything in my life. I even embodied it in a small brochure, with the somewhat fantastic title of 'A Study in Scarlet.'" He shook his head sadly. "I glanced over it," said he. "Honestly, I cannot congratulate you upon it. Detection is, or ought to be, an exact science, and should be treated in the same cold and unemotional manner. You have attempted to tinge it with romanticism, which produces much the same effect as if you worked a love story or an elopement into the fifth proposition of Euclid." "But the romance was there," I remonstrated. "I could not tamper with the facts." "Some facts should be suppressed, or, at least, a just sense of proportion should be observed in treating them. The only point in the case which deserved mention was the curious analytical reasoning from effects to causes, by which I succeeded in unravelling it." I was annoyed at this criticism of a work which had been specially designed to please him. I confess, too, that I was irritated by the egotism which seemed to demand that every line of my pamphlet should be devoted to his own special doings. More than once during the years that I had lived with him in Baker street I had observed that a small vanity underlay my companion's quiet and didactic manner. I made no remark, however, but sat nursing my wounded leg. I had had a Jezail bullet through it some time before, and, though it did not prevent me from walking, it ached wearily at every change of the weather. "My practice has extended recently to the Continent," said Holmes, after a while, filling up his old briar-root pipe. "I was consulted last week by Francois le Villard, who, as you probably know, has come rather to the front lately in the French detective service. He has all the Celtic power of quick intuition, but he is deficient in the wide range of exact knowledge which is essential to the higher developments of his art. The case was concerned with a will, and possessed some features of interest. I was able to refer him to two parallel cases, the one at Riga in 1857, and the other at St. Louis in 1871, which have suggested to him the true solution. Here is the letter which I had this morning acknowledging my assistance." He tossed over, as he spoke, a crumpled sheet of foreign note paper. I glanced my eyes down it, catching a profusion of notes of admiration, with stray "magnifiques," "coup-de-maitres," and "tours-de-force," all testifying to the ardent admiration of the Frenchman. "He speaks as a pupil to his master," said I. "Oh, he rates my assistance too highly," said Sherlock Holmes lightly. "He has considerable gifts himself. He possesses two out of the three qualities necessary for the ideal detective. He has the power of observation and that of deduction. He is only wanting in knowledge, and that may come in time. He is now translating my small works into French."

"Your works?" "Oh, didn't you know?" he cried, laughing. "Yes, I have been guilty of several monographs. They are all upon technical subjects. Here, for example, is one 'Upon the Distinction between the Ashes of the Various Tobaccos.' In it I enumerate a hundred and forty forms of cigar, cigarette, and pipe tobacco, with colored plates illustrating the difference in the ash. It is a point which is continually turning up in criminal trials, and which is sometimes of supreme importance as a clue. If you can say definitely, for example, that some murder had been done by a man who was smoking an Indian lunkah, it obviously narrows your field of search. To the trained eye there is as much difference between the black ash of a Trichinopoly and the white fluff of bird's-eye as there is between a cabbage and a potato." "You have an extraordinary genius for minutiae, I remarked." "I appreciate their importance. Here is my monograph upon the tracing of footsteps, with some remarks upon the uses of plaster of Paris as a preserver of impressions. Here, too, is a curious little work upon the influence of a trade upon the form of the hand, with lithotypes of the hands of slaters, sailors, cork-cutters, compositors, weavers and diamond-polishers. That is a matter of great practical interest to the scientific detective—especially in cases of unclaimed bodies, or in discovering the antecedents of criminals. But I weary you with my hobby." "Not at all," I answered earnestly. "It is of the greatest interest to me, especially since I have had the opportunity of observing your practical application to it. But you spoke just now of observation and deduction. Surely the one to some extent implies the other." "Why, hardly," he answered, leaning back luxuriously in his arm-chair, and sending up thick blue wreaths from his pipe. "For example, observation shows me that you have been to the Wigmore Street Post-Office this morning, but deduction lets me know that when there you dispatched a telegram." "Right!" said I. "Right on both points! But I confess that I don't see how you arrived at it. It was a sudden impulse upon my part, and I have mentioned it to no one." "It is simplicity itself," he remarked, chuckling at my surprise—"so absurdly simple that an explanation is superfluous; and yet it may serve to define the limits of observation and of deduction. Observation tells me that you have a little reddish mold adhering to your instep. Just opposite the Wigmore Street Office they have taken up the pavement and thrown up some earth, which lies in such a way that it is difficult to avoid treading in it entering. The earth is of this peculiar reddish tint which is found, as far as I know, nowhere else in the neighborhood. So much is observation. The rest is deduction." "How, then, did you deduce the telegram?" "Why, of course I knew that you had not written a letter, since I sat opposite to you all morning. I see also in your open desk there that you have a sheet of stamps and a thick bundle of post-cards. What could you go into the post-office for, then, but to send a wire? Eliminate all other factors, and the one which remains must be the truth." "In this case it certainly is so," I replied, after a little thought. "The thing, however, is, as you say, of the simplest. Would you think me impertinent if I were to put your theories to a more severe test?" "On the contrary," he answered; "it would prevent me from taking a second dose of cocaine. I should be delighted to look into any problem which you might submit to me." "I have heard you say that it is difficult for a man to have any object in daily use without leaving the impress of his individuality upon it in such a way that a trained observer might read it. Now, I have here a watch which has recently come into my possession. Would you have the kindness to let me have an opinion upon the character or habits of the late owner?" I handed him over the watch with some slight feeling of amusement in my heart, for the test was, as I thought, an impossible one, and I intended it as a lesson against the somewhat dogmatic tone which he occasionally assumed. He balanced the watch in his hand, gazed hard at the dial, opened the back, and examined the works, first with his naked eyes and then with a powerful convex lens. I could hardly keep from smiling at his crest-fallen face when he finally snapped the case to and handed it back. "There are hardly any data," he remarked. "The watch has been recently cleaned, which robs me of any most suggestive facts." "You are right," I answered. "It was cleaned before being sent to me." "In my heart I accused my companion of putting forward a most lame and impotent excuse to cover his failure. What data could he expect from an uncleaned watch?" "Though unsatisfactory, my research has not been entirely barren," he observed, staring up at the ceiling with dreamy, lack-luster eyes. "Subject to your correction, I should judge that the watch belonged to your elder brother, who inherited it from your father." "That you gather, no doubt, from the H. W. upon the back." "Quite so. The W. suggests your own name. The date of the watch is nearly fifty years back and the initials are as old as the watch; so it was made for the last generation. Jewelry usually descends to the eldest son and he is most likely to have the same name as the father. Your father has, if I remember right, been dead many years. It has, therefore, been in the hands of your eldest brother."

"He was a man of untidy habits—very untidy and careless. He was left with good prospects, but he threw away his chances, lived for some time in poverty with occasional short intervals of prosperity, and finally taking to drink he died. That is all I can gather." I sprang from my chair and limped impatiently about the room with considerable bitterness in my heart. [TO BE CONTINUED.] CARLETON, St. John, N. B. With satisfaction wish to inform you that for the last three years I have suffered from rheumatism in my arm,—I have used many kinds of liniment without relief—of late I have used four bottles of SCOTT'S CURE FOR RHEUMATISM, and I am perfectly cured. ISAAC CRAIG. THE JOSH BILLINGS PAPERS. Animalology. THE PISMIRE. The pismire is about 19 sizes bigger than the ant, actual measurement, and is a kind of bizzy loafer among bugs. They are like sun men, always bizzy about sum thing, but wot it is I can't tell. I never see a pismire yet that wosn't on the travel, but i hav watched them all day long, and never see them git tew the place they started for. Just before a hard shower they are in biggest hurry, they seem tew postpone everything for that okashun. Thar iz a grate difference between hurry and dispatch, but pismires don't seem to understand the difference. If pismires would go slower I should like them better, for i don't kno ov enny thing more unpleasent to view than an aktive loafer. A pismire iz like a boy's wind-mill, on the gable end of a smoke house, in a gale, the faster it goze around, the less common sense, thar seems to be in it. If pismires aint got a destiny ov sum kind to fill they wear out more shu leath-er than thar iz enny sense. THE POLE CAT. Mi friend did you ever examine the fragrant pole kat clusly? I guss not, there a kriter who won't bear examining with a microscope. They ar butiful beings; but oh, how deceptive! Their habits are phew, but unique. They build their houses full ov earth and the hav but one door tew them, and that iz a front door. When they enter their houses they don't shut the door after them. There called pole kats because it is not convenient to kill them with a club, but with a pole, and the longer the pole the more convenient. Writers on natral history disagree about the right length ov the pole tew be used, but i would suggest that the pole be about 365 feet, especially if the wind iz in favor ov the pole kat. When a pole kat is suddenly wallowed with a long pole, the fust thing that he, she, or it duz iz to enbalm the air for menny miles in diameter, with an akrimonious refreshment, which permeates the ethereal fluid with an entirely original smell. This smell iz less popular, in the fashionable world, than lubins ekstrakt, but the day may cum, when it will be bottled up like musk, and sold for 87 1/2 cents per bottle; bottles small at that. A pole kat will remove the filling from a hen's egg, without braking a hole in the shell, bigger than a narrow-fat pea. How this iz did, historians hav left us to doubt. This iz vulgarly called "surking eggs." This iz an accomplishment known among humans, which it iz sed, they hav learnt from the pole kats. Pole kats also deal in chickens, yung turkeys and yung goslings. They won't touch an old goose, they are sound on that question. Man is the only fellow who will attempt tew bight into an old goose, and his teeth fly oph a grate man times before he loosens any of the meat. A pole kat travels under an alias which iz called skunk. Thar iz a grate many aliases that thar iz no accounting for, and this iz one ov them. I hav kaught skunks in a trap. They ar ezazier to get into a trap than tew get out ov it. In taking them out ov a trap great judgment must be had not to shake them up; the more yu shake them up the more anbrosial they am. One pole kat in a township iz enuf, especially if the wind changes once in a while. A pole kat's skin iz wuth 2 dollars, in market after it iz skinned, but it iz wuth 3 dollars and 50 cents tew skin him. This is one way to make 12 shillings in a wed day.

Household Receipts. GINGER SNAPS.—One cup molasses, one cup sugar, one cup butter, one teaspoon each of cinnamon, allspice and nutmeg, one tablespoon ginger, one scant teaspoon soda. Dissolve the soda in four table-spoons hot water, mix the ingredients and add flour to make a dough as soft as it as it can be rolled. LAYER PUDDING.—Divide a package of gelatine into three portions and put each to soak in cold water. Add to one and one-fourth cups of scalding water, the juice of one lemon and two-thirds of a cup of sugar, then turn it slowly over the beaten whites of two eggs, stirring it well, cook in a double boiler until it thickens and then pour it over one portion of the soaked jelly. Flavor with lemon powder and put in a shallow mould. This will make a yellow layer. For the red layer take one and one-half cupfuls fruit juice, heat it to a boiling point, turn it over the second portion of gelatine, stir until well dissolved, and then pour into a dish similar to that holding the yellow layer. For the white layer, heat one and one-half cups of milk to boiling, add one-half cup sugar, pour it over the third portion of the gelatine, strain it, let it cool, flavor it with vanilla powder and turn into a mould similar to the others. When all are cold, arrange them in layers, and serve with a whipped sauce made of the whites of eggs. CLOVE SNAPS.—One and one-half pounds flour, half pound butter, half pound sugar, half ounce of cloves, half pint molasses. Mix well, roll out, cut in fancy shapes and bake in a moderately hot oven. EGGLESS FRUIT CAKE.—One cup sugar, half cup buttermilk, two cups sifted flour, one cup of raisins, chopped and seeded, one teaspoon soda, one teaspoon cinnamon, half teaspoon cloves, half teaspoon grated nutmeg. Beat the sugar and butter to a cream, dissolve soda in hot water, stir into the milk, add sugar and butter, then the spices. Flour the raisins and add them last. Butter a tin, place a clean, white bit of buttered paper in the bottom pour in the cake and bake slowly. This is a much-prized receipt. FILLINGS FOR CAKE.—Lemon Filling.—Take one egg, one-half cupful sugar, the juice and grated rind of one lemon and one tablespoon soda, one teaspoon of flour. Set a can containing this into a basin of boiling water, and let it simmer for five minutes. Spread it when partly cooled. It should be perfectly smooth and of a consistency of thick cream. Fig Paste Filling.—Stew one-half pound of chopped figs in the syrup made of one-fourth cupful of sugar. Spread this when it is quite thick. It is excellent. Another nice filling made by using raisins instead of figs, treating them in the same way. COCOANUT FILLING.—Mix one-fourth cup sugar with one-half coconut and pour over all half a cupful of hot milk. Let this stand about an hour, until the coconut has become quite tender, then spread it between the layers. A Voice From Scotland. DEAR SIRS,—I highly recommend Haygard's Pectoral Balsam. It cured my daughter of a cough she had been bothered with since childhood. She is now twelve years old. Mrs. M. FAIRCHILD, Scotland, Ont. Very Odd. The effect of mind on matter is curiously illustrated in the case of young Joseph Hardin, who resided in Wellington, Kansas. For some alleged offence he was captured by four masked men, whose purpose was to frighten him. They informed him that he was about to be shot to death. Seating him on a box, which he had every reason to suppose was his coffin and with his back to the riflemen, they blindfolded him and told him to prepare to meet his fate. His condition can be perhaps imagined, but it cannot be described. He had no reason to believe that he was the victim of a practical joke, and really felt as if his last moment had come. At a given signal a shot was fired by one of the party, but fired in the air, of course. At the same instant another man gave him a tap on the back of the head. The poor fellow fell forward at the impact and the jokers concluded that he had fainted. They tried to resuscitate him by the usual applications, but their efforts were of no avail. He was stone dead, the cause being heart failure. It wasn't the bullet that killed him, but the idea of a bullet. He died from the effect of an impression. And now certain people are fasking this rather tough question:—If a man can be killed by the idea that he is going to be killed why can't he be cured by the idea that he can be cured?

FONTENAY, THE SWORDSMAN.

A MILITARY NOVEL. BY FORTUNE DU BOISGOBEY. (Translated by H. L. Williams.) CHAPTER XXV.—Continued. "Oh, no! she has the memory of the heart, and your fiancée will no sooner forget you; I answer for it who know her nature." "Fetter than I do, assuredly, for I had not seen her since November last, and she did not speak a word to me this time." "The Empress did the speaking for her. But all the winter in the palace how many times she spoke of you! You may believe from me that she loves you truly and passionately, for General de Gavre was a hero, and his child is no commonplace woman. You see she never blanchd when Josephine advised your returning into Spain; yet heaven knows what she suffered while you were risking your life there every day! The noble girl understands that a French officer's place is where the battle goes on." "I might be fighting in Austria!" "Not when you are in no fit state to keep the saddle. The Emperor starts tomorrow. This spring you can only go to war in Spain; it succeeded very well with you before, as you obtained a brilliant promotion; you did not pay too dearly for it by a couple of wounds less serious than this one nearly terminating your career in this peaceful city." "I ask but to go!" "I only want you to bear in mind that this Montalvan has stolen the fortune of your betrothed. I believe she has washed her hands of it, as they say vulgarly. But if you manage to make the uncle disgorge I believe that the Empress will also be glad." "Do you think that he has really returned into his infernal country?" "I suspect so, and heaven grant that he may never come out of it. It is not possible that you will be face to face with him again, for you are destined to serve in the Army in Valencia and Aragon." "How do you know that?" "The minister of war, General Clarke, told me so in the Empress court yesterday. He was not ignorant of my being your friend and he wanted me to have the pleasure of imparting the good news. I was going to repeat it when the Empress came in." "Then I am going back again on Marshal Lannes' staff?" "Not so. All has changed there in the month during which our dear Yvan shut you up in quarantine. The Duke de Montebello is on the way to rejoin the Emperor on the other side of the Rhine, remitting his command to General Suchet—become nephew you know, by alliance to King Joseph. He is sent into Spain to win his marshal's staff-of-office. His commission is to conquer Valencia, and at the same time he will direct the military operations at Aragon. I leave you to guess how sorely he will require officers and how many chances you will have to distinguish yourself." "Do you mean to say the taking of Saragossa did not complete the taking of the province?" "Oh, it is conquered, in the sense of the towns being ours; pacified, 'tis another affair! the guerrillas overrun all the country-side, and to admit the truth, we are only masters of the points we occupy." "On the whole, all goes badly." "Very badly, since the Emperor is no longer there. Our generals do not agree together, from their common jealousy. It is hoped that Suchet will improve our standing, anything but firm." "I must not say I am glad to hear it, though I am pleased to hear that I will not be idle there." "Would I could go to see you, as I did at Chamartin! Unfortunately, if I have the luck to carry the state council portfolio, it will be to Vienna, they will send me." "You appear to believe that the Emperor will soon be in Vienna?" "In a month—maybe sooner. It will be a repetition of the campaign of Austerlitz, and I hope that Napoleon will this time treat Austria in such a way as to give her no idea of renewing the strife! I hope," he added, shaking his head, "that she will not get out of the difficulty by offering the hand of one of her arch-duchesses." "It is true, then, that he thinks of divorce?" "Too true—unfortunately for him, for us, and for France, for I foresee that it will be the end of his successes. Still I hope that he will give up the fatal project. He does not wish to break the