

MEMOIRS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES,

BY A. CONAN DOYLE.

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THE MYSTERY OF THE STOCKBROKER'S CLERK

(Continued.)

"He suspects that we are detectives,"

I suggested.

"That's it," cried Pycroft.

Holmes shook his head. "He did not turn pale. He was pale when we entered the room," said he. "It is just possible that—"

His words were interrupted by a sharp rat-tat from the direction of the inner door.

"What the deuce is he knocking at his own door for?" cried the clerk.

Again and much louder came the rat-tat-tat. We all gazed expectantly at the closed door. Glancing at Holmes, I saw his face turn rigid, and he leaned forward in intense excitement. Then suddenly came a low grunting, gurgling sound, and a brisk drumming upon wood-work. Holmes sprang frantically across the room and pushed at the door. It was fastened on the inner side. Following his example, we threw ourselves upon it with all our weight.

One hinge snapped, then the other, and down came the door with a crash. Rushing over it we found ourselves in the inner room. It was empty. But it was only for a moment that we were at fault. At one corner, the corner nearest the room which we had left, there was a second door. Holmes sprang to it and pulled it open. A coat and waistcoat were lying on the floor, and from a book behind the door, with his own traces round his neck, was hanging the managing director of the Franco-Midland Hardware Company. His knees were drawn up, his head hung at a dreadful angle to his body, and the clatter of his heels against the door made the noise which had broken in upon our conversation.

In an instant I had caught him round the waist and held him up while Holmes and Pycroft untied the elastic bands which had disappeared between the livid creases of skin. Then we carried him into the other room, where he lay with a clay-colored face, puffing his purple lips in and out with every breath—a dreadful wreck of all that he had been but five minutes before.

"What do you think of him, Watson?" asked Holmes.

I stood over him and examined him. His pulse was feeble and intermittent, but his breathing grew longer, and there was a little shivering of the eyelids, which showed a thin white slit of ball beneath.

"It has been touch and go with him," said I, "but he'll live now. Just open

that window and hand me the water-carafe."

I undid his collar, poured the cold water over his face, and raised and sank his arms until he drew a long, natural breath.

"It's only a question of time now," said I, as I turned away from him.

Holmes stood by the table with his hands deep in his trousers pockets and his chin upon his breast.

"I suppose we ought to call the police in now," said he. "And yet I confess that I'd like to give them a complete case when they come."

"It's a blessed mystery to me," cried Pycroft, scratching his head. "Whatever they wanted to bring me all the way up here for, and then—"

"Pooh! All that is clear enough," said Holmes, impatiently. "It is this last sudden move."

"You understand the rest, then?"

"I think that it is fairly obvious. What do you say, Watson?"

I shrugged my shoulders. "I must confess that I am out of my depths," said I.

"Oh, surely, if you consider the events at first they can only point to one conclusion."

"What do you make of them?"

"Well, the whole thing hinges upon two points. The first is the making of Pycroft write a declaration by which he entered the service of this preposterous company. Do you not see how very suggestive that is?"

"I am afraid I miss the point."

"Well, why did they want him to do it? Not as a business matter, for these arrangements are usually verbal, and there was no earthly reason why this should be an exception. Don't you see, my young friend, that they were very anxious to obtain a specimen of your handwriting and had no other way of doing it?"

"And why?"

"Quite so. Why? When we answer that we have made some progress with our little problem. Why? There can be only one adequate reason. Some one wanted to learn to imitate your writing, and had to procure a specimen of it first. And now if we pass on to the second point we find that each throws light upon the other. That point is the request made by Pinner that you should not resign your place, but should leave the manager of this important business in the full expectation that Mr. Hall Pycroft, whom he had never seen, was about to enter the office upon the Monday morning."

"My God!" cried our client, "what a blind beetle have been!"

"Now you see the point about the handwriting. Suppose that some one turned up in your place who wrote a completely different hand from that in which you had applied for the vacancy, of course the game would have been up. But in the interval the rogue had learned to imitate you, and his position was therefore secure, as I presume that nobody in the office had

ever set eyes upon you."

"Not a soul," groaned Hall Pycroft.

"Very good. Of course it was of the utmost importance to prevent you from thinking better of it, and also to keep you from coming into contact with any one who might tell you that your double was at work in Mawson's office. Therefore they gave you a handsome advance on your salary, and ran you off to the Midlands, where they gave you enough work to do to prevent you going to London, where you might have burst their little game up. That is all plain enough."

"But why should this man pretend to be his own brother?"

"Well, that is pretty clear also. There are evidently only two of them in it. The other is personating you at the office. This one acted as your engager, and then found that he could not find you an employer without admitting a third party into his plot. That he was most unwilling to do. He changed his appearance as far as he could, and trusted that the likeness, which you could not fail to observe, would be put down to a family resemblance. But for the happy chance of the gold stuffing, your suspicions would probably never have been aroused."

Hall Pycroft shook his clinched hands in the air. "Good Lord!" he cried, "while I have been fooled in this way, what has the other Hall Pycroft been doing at Mawson's? What should we do, Mr. Holmes? Tell me what to do."

"We must wire to Mawson's."

"They shut at twelve on Saturdays."

"Never mind. There may be some door-keeper or attendant."

"Ah yes, they keep a permanent guard there on account of the value of the securities that they hold. I remember hearing it talked of in the city."

"Very good; we shall wire to him, and see if all is well, and if a clerk of your name is working there. That is clear enough; but what is not clear is why at sight of us one of the rogues should instantly walk out of the room and hang himself."

"The paper!" croaked a voice behind us. The man was sitting up, blanched and ghastly, with returning reason to his eyes, and hands which rubbed nervously at the broad red band which still encircled his throat.

"The paper! Of course!" yelled Holmes, in a paroxysm of excitement. "Idiot that I was! I thought so much of our visit that the paper never entered my head for an instant. To be sure, the secret must lie there."

He flattened it out upon the table, and a cry of triumph burst from his lips. "Look at this, Watson," he cried. "It is a London paper, an early edition of the Evening Standard. Here is what we want. Look at the headlines: 'Crime in the City. Murder at Mawson & Williams'. Gigantic Attempted Robbery. Capture of the Criminal.' Here, Watson, we are all equally anxious to hear it, so kindly read it aloud to us."

It appeared from its position in the paper to have been the one event of importance in town, and the account of it ran in this way:

"A desperate attempt at robbery, culminating in the death of one man and the

capture of the criminal occurred this afternoon in the city. For some time back Mawson & Williams, the famous financial house, have been the guardians of securities which amount in the aggregate to a sum of considerably over a million sterling. So conscious was the manager of the responsibility which devolved upon him in consequence of the great interests at stake that safes of the very latest construction have been employed, and an armed watchman has been employed and an armed watchman has been left day and night in the building. It appears that last week a new clerk named Hall Pycroft was engaged by the firm. This person appears to have been none other than Beedington, the famous forger and crackman, who, with his brother, has only recently emerged from a five years' spell of penal servitude. By some means, which are not yet clear, he succeeded in winning, under a false name, this official position in the office, which he utilized in order to obtain mouldings of various locks, and a thorough knowledge of the position of the strong-room and the safes."

"It is customary at Mawson's for the clerks to leave at midday on Saturday. Sergeant Tuson, of the city police, was somewhat surprised, therefore, to see a gentleman with a carpet-bag come down the steps at twenty minutes past one. His suspicions being aroused, the sergeant followed the man, and with the aid of Constable Pollock succeeded, after a most desperate resistance, in arresting him. It was at once clear that a daring and gigantic robbery had been committed. Nearly a hundred thousand pounds' worth of American railway bonds, with a large amount of scrip in mines and other companies, were discovered in the bag. On examining the premises the body of the unfortunate watchman was found doubled up and thrust into the largest of the safes, where it would not have been discovered until Monday morning had it not been for the prompt action of Sergeant Tuson. The man's skull had been shattered by a blow from a poker delivered from behind. There could be no doubt that Beedington had obtained entrance by pretending that he had left something behind him, and having murdered the watchman, rapidly rifled the large safe, and then made off with his booty. His brother, who usually works with him, has not appeared in this job as far as can at present be ascertained, although the police are making energetic inquiries as to his whereabouts."

"Well, we may save the police some little trouble in that direction," said Holmes, glancing at the haggard figure huddled up by the window. "Human nature is a strange mixture, Watson. You see that even a villain and murderer can inspire such affection that his brother turns to suicide when he learns that his name is forfeited. However, we have no choice as to our action. The doctor and I will remain on guard, Mr. Pycroft, if you will have the kindness to step out for the police."

(THE END.)

SCHOOLS IN GERMANY

Strict Medical Inspection—How
Poor Children Are Cared for
—Example to the World.

Last April two delegates were sent from England to investigate the conditions of life and labor in other countries. Their special mission was to inquire into the physical and industrial life of brassworkers. While in Berlin the delegates visited a school in the parish of Riger Strasse. The Schoolmaster (London) prints the following interesting extract from their report:

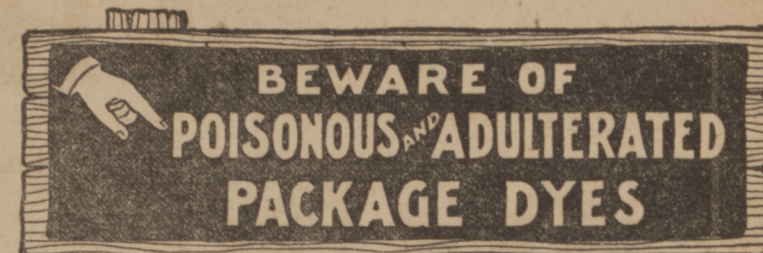
"We saw no case of underfed, poorly clad or untidy children, either in the streets or in the school. The children of needy parents receive shoes and clothes from the municipal poor guardians and societies. They must come clean and well dressed. There are thirty-six official school doctors in Berlin, each having a group of about seven schools to attend to. Every new scholar is examined by them, and doubtful children are thoroughly examined in the presence of their parents. If needful they are kept under medical supervision, and special seats are provided where defective vision or hearing render it advisable. Spectacles or instruments are provided."

"The school we inspected was one of the most recently built schools and had the latest improvements with accommodation for 1000 boys and 1000 girls. The director has funds to supply needy children with food, but the sum required was practically nothing, for it only amounted to £4 per annum among the 2000. In the basements were extensive bathing accommodations, principally warm showerbaths. Each of the 2000 children received a shower bath weekly. Soap was provided, but they brought their own towels. The classrooms were large, about 28 feet by 17 feet and 15 feet high, for classes of forty to fifty scholars. The floors were of wood, and were swept every day and oiled four times per year. The desk with seat is hinged to the floor, so that it lifts up for cleaning purposes, but it cannot be displaced. The desks are washed every day with water."

"The attendant looks through a glazed porthole into the classrooms from the passages, so that he can see a good large thermometer inside, and regulates the temperature. On the top floor is a large gymnasium about 80 feet by 40 feet and 15 feet high, and there is a hall for festivities about 40 feet by 20 feet; also two conference rooms are provided for the teachers. We saw a class at work drawing flowers and plants from nature; another class was drawing the same objects from memory and doing excellent work. On our entering all the scholars rose from their seats and remained standing until told to sit down."

"The Scriptures are read and explained according to Evangelical-Lutheran tenets (three or four hours weekly are given to this subject); other denominational children, except Jews, must prove that they attend their own religious classes."

"The timetable shows that for children between six and seven the school commences at 9 a. m. in winter and 8 a. m. in summer, and closes between 12 p. m. and 1 p. m. in winter and between eleven and twelve in summer. For scholars above the age school begins at 7 a. m. in summer and 8 a. m. in winter, closing about noon in the former and about one in winter. The hours spent in instruction vary according to the age of the children from twenty hours a week to thirty-two hours; and they have to bestow from six to twelve hours a week upon home lessons. There are three intervals for rest during the five hours devoted to work, in one of which luncheon is taken. Generally the luncheon is a sandwich and milk, the caretaker sell-



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"If children desire to work at any employment in the afternoons they must get permission from the police. In this school from fifteen to twenty boys are so occupied, mostly on errands; and from ten to fifteen little girls as minders of children. No child vendors of newspapers are seen in the streets. No young girls are permitted by the authorities to stand in the gutters selling flowers. Schoolboy smoking is not allowed. The boy would have his cigarette knocked out of his mouth if seen by a workman in the street, and the workman would be thanked by the parents for so doing."

COMMENT ON
BANK MERGER

What a Montreal Man Says of
the Bank of New Brunswick.

(H. M. P. Eckhardt in Boston Transcript.)

It is doubtful if the arrangement with the Bank of New Brunswick for the merger at the beginning of next year has actually concluded, but apparently it is well under way. There is a possibility that stockholders of the Bank of New Brunswick will oppose the deal, as a matter of fact, the publication of the news has evoked dissatisfaction and hostility from a section of the press in that part of the country. The measure is opposed chiefly for two reasons—because owners of the New Brunswick bank's stock think they should get a better price than the Montreal bank offers; and, because the people down there are becoming alarmed at the rapid rate at which their local banks are being gobbled up by the big institutions of Ontario and Quebec. In the first objection American readers will not have much interest. But the second is substantially the same as that commonly urged in the United States against the introduction of the branch bank system. Some of the people of Halifax and of St. John, N. B., are saying: "Our local industries and our local borrowers will not receive the same consideration from the branch of a bank controlled in Montreal or Toronto as they now receive from our own institutions. owned and controlled by our own home folks. Already three of our local banks have been taken over by these big outsiders. A fourth is now in danger of the same fate. Let us protest, at once, and oppose this measure vigorously, or we shall have none left that we can call our own."

The reason given for the last two absorptions was that being small concerns they did not feel that they were strong enough

to hold their ground in the future against the competition of the big banks, whose branches met them at nearly every point; and the men in charge deemed it wise to sell out while general conditions were sound and prosperous. This line of argument seems hardly to apply to the case of the Bank of New Brunswick. Let an excellent little bank with an enviable record as to management, profits and dividends. A twelve per cent dividend has been paid without interruption for quite a number of years. The bank is solidly entrenched at St. John, the head office, where nearly all its business is done. Its directors are the chief business men of the city and it does not appear that it has a great deal to fear in the future from the competition of the big fellows. It has met them, and met them successfully, in St. John for many years. In cash and quick assets it is relatively as strong as any in the Dominion. If the merger comes off it will not be because the Bank of New Brunswick was driven into it. The Bank of Montreal will have to pay a stiff price before it gets the solid little blue-nose concern.

The deal, if consummated, will be interesting because it will mark the disappearance of the strongest and best of the American type of bank in Canada. The Bank of New Brunswick has, to be sure, some five or a half-dozen branches, but for all that it is practically a local St. John bank—the branch expansion having taken place in the last two or three years only. Of the remaining local banks none has much importance. The general idea is that all are doomed to be swallowed up by big banks in a comparatively short space of time. When this happens financial affairs in the localities where they work will undoubtedly be placed on a solid basis. It will likely be found, too, that the borrowing inhabitants of those localities will receive every bit as favorable a hearing from the branches of the outside bank as they now receive from their local institution. And the branches can and will hold at the disposal of the locality a much larger supply of capital than the existing office banks can scrape together.

A boating accident occurred at Shediac Cape Saturday afternoon and but for timely assistance the affair might have been more serious. Joe Bruce, of the Bank of Nova Scotia at Montreal, who is spending his vacation at his father's summer house at Shediac Cape, was out alone for a sail in Shediac harbor and on his return the boat capsized. Fortunately for Bruce, Hal Weldon was on the shore and heard his call for assistance and went to the rescue, arriving in the nick of time.

Rev. Father Savage, of Moncton, passed through the city yesterday on his way to Boston, New York and Baltimore.

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