The RETURN of SHERLOCK HOLMES

By A. CONAN DOYLE

Illustrated by F. D. STEELE

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THE ADVENTURE OF THE THREE STUDENTS

(Continued.)

"The foul-mouthed fellow at the top. He is the one with the worst record. And yet that Indian was a sly fellow also. Why should he be pacing his room all the time?"

"There is nothing in that. Many men do it when they are trying to learn anything by heart."

"He looked at us in a queer way."

"So would you, if a flock of strangers came in on you when you were preparing for an examination next day, and every moment was of value. No, I see nothing in that. Pencils, too, and knives—all was satisfactory. But that fellow does puzzle me."

"Who?"

"Why, Bannister, the servant. What's his game in the matter?"

"He impressed me as being a perfectly honest man."

"So he did me. That's the puzzling part. Why should a perfectly honest man—well, well, here's a large stationer's. We shall begin our researches here."

There were only four stationers of any consequence in the town, and at each Holmes produced his pencil chips, and bid high for a duplicate. All were agreed that one could be ordered, but that it was not a usual size of pencil, and that it was seldom kept in stock. My friend did not appear to be depressed by his failure, but shrugged his shoulders in half-humorous resignation.

"No good, my dear Watson. This, the best and only final clue, has run to nothing. But, indeed, I have little doubt that we can build up a sufficient case without it. By Jove! my dear fellow, it is nearly nine, and the landlady babbled of green peas at seven-thirty. What with your eternal tobacco, Watson, and your irregularity at meals, I expect that you will get notice to quit, and that I shall share your downfall—not, however, before we have solved the problem of the nervous tutor, the careless servant, and the three enterprising students."

Holmes made no further allusion to the matter that day, though he sat lost in thought for a long time after our belated dinner. At eight in the morning, he came into my room just as I finished my toilet.

"Well, Watson," said he, "it is time we went down to St. Luke's. Can you do without breakfast?"

"Certainly."

"Soames will be in a dreadful fidget until we are able to tell him something positive."

"Have you anything positive to tell him?"

"I think so."

"You have formed a conclusion?"

"Yes, my dear Watson, I have solved the mystery."

"But what fresh evidence could you have got?"

"Aha! It is not for nothing that I have turned myself out of bed at the untimely hour of six. I have put in two hours' hard work and covered at least five miles, with something to show for it. Look at that!"

He held out his hand. On the palm were three little pyramids of black, doughy clay.

"Why, Holmes, you had only two yesterday."

"And one more this morning. It is a fair argument that wherever No. 3 came from is also the source of Nos. 1 and 2. Eh, Watson? Well, come along and put friend Soames out of his pain."

The unfortunate tutor was certainly in a state of pitiable agitation when we found him in his chambers. In a few hours the examination would commence, and he was still in the dilemma between making the facts public and allowing the culprit to compete for the valuable scholarship. He could hardly stand still, so great was his mental agitation, and he ran towards Holmes with two eager hands outstretched.

"Thank Heaven, that you have come! I feared that you had given it up in despair. What am I to do? Shall the examination proceed?"

"Yes, let it proceed, by all means."

"But this rascal —?"

"He shall not compete."

"You know him?"

"I think so. If this matter is not to become public, we must give ourselves certain powers, and resolve ourselves into a small private court-martial. You there, if you please, Soames! Watson, you here! I'll take the armchair in the middle. I think that we are now sufficiently imposing to strike terror into a guilty breast. Kindly ring the bell!"

Bannister entered, and shrank back in evident surprise and fear at our judicial appearance.

"You will kindly close the door," said Holmes. "Now, Bannister, will you please tell us the truth about yesterday's incident?"

The man turned white to the roots of his hair.

"I have told you everything, sir."

"Nothing to add?"

"Nothing at all, sir."

"Well, then, I must make some suggestions to you. When you sat down on that chair yesterday, did you do so in order to conceal some object which would have shown who had been in the room?"

Bannister's face was ghastly.

"No, sir, certainly not."

"It is only a suggestion," said Holmes, suavely. "I frankly admit that I am unable to prove it. But it seems probable enough, since the moment that Mr. Soames' back was turned, you released the man who was hiding in that bedroom."

Bannister licked his dry lips.

"There was no man, sir."

"Ah, that's a pity, Bannister. Up to now you may have spoken the truth, but now I know that you have lied."

The man's face set in sullen defiance.

"There was no man, sir."

"Come, come, Bannister!"

"No, sir, there was none."

"In that case, you give us no further information. Would you please remain in the room. Stand over there near the bedroom door. Now, Soames, I am going to ask you to have the great kindness to go up to the room of young Gilchrist, and to ask him to step down into yours."

An instant later the tutor returned, bringing with him the student. He was a fine figure of a man, tall, lithe, and agile, with a springy step and a pleasant, open face. His troubled blue eyes glanced at each of us, and finally rested with an expression of blank dismay upon Bannister in the farther corner.

"Just close the door," said Holmes. "Now, Mr. Gilchrist, we are all quite alone here, and no one need ever know one word of what passes between us. We can be perfectly frank with each other. We want to know, Mr. Gilchrist, how you, an honorable man, ever came to commit such an action as that of yesterday?"

The unfortunate young man staggered back, and cast a look full of horror and reproach at Bannister.

"No, no, Mr. Gilchrist, sir, I never said a word—never one word!" cried the servant.

"No, but you have now," said Holmes. "Now, sir, you must see that after Bannister's words your position is hopeless, and that your only chance lies in a frank confession."

For a moment Gilchrist, with upraised hand, tried to control his writhing features. The next he had thrown himself on his knees beside the table, and, burying his face in his hands, he had burst into a storm of passionate sobbing.

"Come, come," said Holmes, kindly, "it is human to err, and at least no one can accuse you of being a callous criminal. Perhaps it would be easier for you if I were to tell Mr. Soames what occurred, and you can check me where I am wrong. Shall I do so? Well, well, don't trouble to answer. Listen, and see that I do you no injustice."

"From the moment, Mr. Soames, that you said to me that not one, not even Bannister, could have told that the papers were in your room, the case began to take a definite shape in my mind. The printer one could, of course, dismiss. He could examine the papers in his own office. The Indian I also thought nothing of. If the proofs were in roll, he could not possibly know what they were. On the other hand, it seemed an unthinkable coincidence that a man should dare to enter the room, and that by chance on that very day the papers were on the table. I dismissed that. The man who entered knew that the papers were there. How did he know?

"When I approached your room, I examined the window. You amused me by supposing that I was contemplating the possibility of someone having in broad daylight, under the eyes of all those opposite rooms, forced himself through it. Such an idea was absurd. I was measuring how tall a man would need to be in order to see, as he passed, what papers were on the central table. I am six feet high, and I could do it with an effort. No one less than that would have a chance. Already you see I had reason to think that, if one of your three students was a man of unusual height, he was the most worth watching of the three.

"I entered, and I took you into my confidence as to the suggestions of the side table. Of the centre table I could make nothing, until in your description of Gilchrist you mentioned that he was a long-distance jumper. Then the whole thing came to me in an instant, and I only needed certain corroborative proofs, which I speedily obtained.

"What happened was this. This young fellow had employed his afternoon at the athletic grounds, where he had been practising the jump. He returned carrying his jumping shoes, which are provided, as you are aware, with several sharp spikes. As he passed your window he saw, by means of his great height, these proofs upon your table, and conjectured what they were. No harm would have been done had it not been that, as he passed your door, he perceived the key which had been left by the carelessness of your servant. A sudden impulse came over him to enter, and see if they were indeed the proofs. It was not a dangerous exploit, for he could always pretend that he had simply looked in to ask a question.

"Well, when he say that they were indeed the proofs, it was then that he yielded to temptation. He put his shoes on the table. What was it you put on that chair near the window?"

"Gloves," said the young man.

Holmes looked triumphantly at Bannister. "He put his gloves on the chair, and he took the proofs, sheet by sheet, to copy them. He thought the tutor must return by the main gate, and that he would see him. As we know, he came back by the side gate. Suddenly he heard him at the very door. There was no possible escape. He forgot his gloves, but he caught up his shoes and darted into the bedroom. You observe that the scratch on that table is slight at one side, but deepens in the direction of the bedroom door. That in itself is enough to show us that the shoe had been drawn in that direction, and that the culprit had taken refuge there. The earth round the spike had been left on the table, and a second sample was loosened and fell on the bedroom. I may add that I walked out to the athletic grounds this morning, saw that tenacious black clay is used in the jumping-pit, and carried away a specimen of it, together with some of the fine tan or sawdust which is strewn over it to prevent the athlete from slipping. Have I told the truth, Mr. Gilchrist?"

The student had drawn himself erect.

"Yes, sir, it is true," said he.

"Good Heavens! have you nothing to add?" cried Soames.

"Yes, sir, I have, but the shock of this disgraceful exposure has bewildered me. I have a letter here, Mr. Soames, which I wrote to you early this morning in the middle of a restless night. It was before I knew that my sin had found me out. Here it is, sir. You will see that I have said, 'I have determined not to go in for the examination. I have been offered a commission in the Rhodesian Police, and I am going out to South Africa at once.'"

"I am indeed pleased to hear that you did not intend to profit by your unfair advantage," said Soames. "But why did you change your purpose?"

Gilchrist pointed to Bannister.

"There is the man who set me in the right path," said he.

"Come now, Bannister," said Holmes. "It will be clear to you, from what I have said, that only you could have let this young man out, since you were left in the room, and must have locked the door when you went out. As to his escaping by that window, it was incredible. Can you not clear up the last point in this mystery, and tell us the reasons for your action?"

"It was simple enough, sir, if you only had known, but, with all your cleverness, it was impossible that you could know. Time was, sir, when I was butler to old Sir Jabez Gilchrist, this young gentleman's father. When he was ruined I came to the college as servant, but I never forgot my old employer, because he was down in the world. I watched his son all I could for the sake of the old days. Well, sir, when I came into this room yesterday, when the alarm was given, the very first thing I saw was Mr. Gilchrist's tan gloves a-lying in that chair. I knew those gloves well, and I understood their message. If Mr. Soames saw them, the game was up. I flopped down into that chair, and nothing would budge me until Mr. Soames he went for you. Then out came my poor young master, whom I had dandled on my kee, and confessed it all to me. Wasn't it natural, sir, that I should try to speak to him as his dead father would have done, and make him understand that he could not profit by such a deed? Could you blame me, sir?"

"No, indeed," said Holmes, heartily, springing to his feet. "Well, Soames, I think we have cleared your little problem up, and our breakfast awaits us at home. Come, Watson! As to you, sir, I trust that a bright future awaits you in Rhodesia. For once you have fallen low. Let us see, in the future, how high you can rise."

(To be continued.)

ON THE REAL FRONTIER

Far from the Madding Crowd in West Canada---The Lonely Lives Led by Prospectors, Missionaries, Engineers, Shepherders, Fur-traders and Mounted Police.

(Correspondence Boston Transcript).

As the rafts made of lumber intended for use in house-building at the scattered stations along the northern stretches of the great Saskatchewan River are loaded up at this port (Edmonton, Alberta) with household supplies and groceries, accompanied by a rowboat and the whole craft engineered by a daring pioneer or two on their way into the wilderness, one cannot help thinking of the number of people in this region whose lives are passed in the utter loneliness on the great frontier. Here is an area larger than the continental republic of the United States, but containing a population of approximately only one-fifteenth. Yet this great area must be controlled in the interests of commerce; none of its valuable furs can be left unsought even in its most remote stretches to the north. The souls of its native races have been for generations dear to the missionaries who push into the extreme outposts of settlement.

"There are other sentinels of civilization stationed in the wilderness. The northwestern mounted police see that order is maintained. The prospectors for minerals and the engineers who are spying out the land for new railroad lines are among those asked to separate themselves for months, and sometimes years, from the haunts of men. It would be easy to project railroad routes if this country were suitably mapped, but it is not; surveyors have found streams a hundred miles from the place indicated for their course on the map. Rivers and lakes of considerable magnitude are frequently encountered by these advance agents of twentieth century civilization, where none were known to exist. The Indian is not a great mountain climber, and so when the engineers had to survey a route over the Selkirks, they are supposed to have been the first men, of any race, from the beginning of time, to find a path.

The sheep-herders are peculiarly lonely. Some of these provinces are considering legislation which will forbid one man's going by himself, so considerable is the danger of becoming insane. If he should die, or get seriously ill, the sheep would probably go to destruction, even though it be true, as often alleged, that the shepherd dogs know more than their masters. Sheep herders are a cheap class of people, a simple-minded man can perform this work, and in our own Western country there is hardly a more serious insult of the local saloon than to brand the stranger a "sheep man." The conditions of their life would keep from it those who could do anything else; away from home four months at a time, seeing no human face for that period, they are said to imitate the bleating of the sheep in order to have some medium of communication which they may hear as well as utter.

Dan McKay, who has been connected with the mounted police for twenty-three years, is one of the local characters here whose story is of more than ordinary interest, especially as illustrative of the call of the wilderness upon brave-hearted men. Soon after he joined the force, the Riel rebellion broke out, and he claims to have fired the first shot in behalf of the government. Riel, he came to know very well, regarding him as a vain man, misled by speculators who wanted to get hold of land scrip which the half-breeds and Indians possessed. These men were really responsible for the outbreak and the fate which Riel himself suffered in the little jail at Regina, in spite of the threats that the Canadian government, on account of French Canadian sympathies, would never dare to hang him.

McKay says that the criminal rarely gets away, even with this wilderness in which to hide. He and another man camped out an entire winter in pursuit of a gang of criminals, going three hundred miles North. They seldom erected even the tents which they had for shelter, sleeping at night in fur blankets and near their horses. Sometimes the temperature was sixty degrees below zero, but they kept up the pursuit, passing much wild game, and having many exciting adventures.

The Hudson Bay Company's men commit themselves to the wilderness. The wife of the governor of the Northwest Territory, which is soon to be dismembered, tells in her beautiful home at Regina of her camping out experiences; for five years she saw no white person except her husband. She lived in a tent, in crossing the northwestern country, when it was so cold that the steam arising from boiling water would promptly crystallize in the air. Lord Strathcona, now the foremost man of Canada and the governor of the Hudson Bay Company, was for thirty years one of its agents in Labrador. Lady Strathcona is a Cree Indian, or more strictly, about half Cree. The fur traders were the pioneers who opened the way for the settlement of the Northwest, and many of the railroad towns today which are coming into activity in the new wheat era owe their start to the simpler needs of the period of "the gentlemen adventurers trading in the Hudson Bay," to use its official title, still stamped on its wares. Edmonton, the point farthest north reached by an American railroad connected with the other roads of the continent, has been a trading post for fifty years. The town today contains a low rambling log-house, which was the "hotel" in 1873, and is maintained as a relic of the age that is passed. The modern hotels have electric lights and modern shower baths, and an automobile.

The fur trader of the period of exploration and the railroad of the New Northwest, are able to agree upon the river towns as centres of trade. Formerly the river was the only excuse for the location of a post; today, it is contributory. Edmonton, for example, exhibits a flourishing sawmill which is a key to its present position. Logs are floated down the mighty Saskatchewan from the wooded country to the north, and here they meet lignite coal, shovelled out the sides of the hills, which can be deposited at the mills for a dollar a ton. This turns the logs into lumber, and the lumber starts back to the frozen north, or down the river through the prairies which have no wood, thus meeting a widespread need. Prince Albert and Battleford, other towns on the lower courses of the river, have steamboat connection with Edmonton, but traffic has not yet justified a regular line. Down stream articles float too easily to make the expenditure of steam necessary, and there is little traffic up-stream.

FAKIR'S READY WIT

Hampton L. Carson, attorney general of Pennsylvania sat on the plaza of a Delaware Water Gap hotel, talking about a very resourceful and alert lawyer.

"His ready wit never fails him," Mr. Carson said. "He is like the fakir who was selling Hercules cement. This fakir stood on a village street corner with a half dozen women about him. He was recounting eloquently his cement's virtues, and at the same time he was demonstrating these virtues with actual experiment. He took up a plate broke it in half, cemented the two pieces with the Hercules, and then suspended from the mended plate a 10-pound weight.

" 'Look-a-here,' he said. 'There is no cement like the Hercules. It is always ready it needs no heating, and it is as strong as steel. To this plate, for instance, I have just hung a 10-pound weight. I will now remove that weight and substitute a 25-pound one. The cement you see, holds firm. I now increase the weight to 30 pounds, and"—

"Crash! The plate broke. The little audience smiled.

"But the fakir, not at all perturbed, went right on:

" 'And you will observe, ladies, that the plate now breaks with ease, thus giving us an opportunity to cement the edges more firmly together whenever it is desirable to do so.' "—Buffalo Enquirer.

BRITAIN IS INTERESTED

In a Railway Rival to the Great Panama Canal.

WASHINGTON, July 21—Closely following Special Commissioner Bristow's account of the Mexican-British Railroad, destined to connect the Atlantic and the Pacific and form a rival of the Panama Canal, comes a significant report from United States Consul Moe, at Dublin, Ireland, in which he says:

Considerable interest has been aroused in the development of the transcontinental route between Tehehauntepec and Coatzacoalcos, in Mexico, by British capital and enterprise. The British public consider this prospective new route as an additional outlet for their Pacific trade, and are pleased to think that it will be something of a rival to the more southerly canal at Panama. The press discussions have been numerous, but it is only recently that the matter has come under notice in Ireland. The following editorial appeared recently in the Dublin Irish Times, a Conservative paper, holding a position similar to that held by the London Times in England:

"Panama is to have a great rival in Mexico for the trade which must pass from the East to the West and from the West to the East. Mexico itself is a country of great potentialities, but whether they have been properly appraised in Great Britain is very doubtful. Sir Weetman Pearson, in an interview with a London journalist, gave a few facts well worth pondering over. His statement dealt for the most part with 'the New World's highway.' It is a railway, 190 miles long, which is going to be constructed by a company under a partnership arrangement with the Mexican Government. It crosses the Isthmus of Tehuantepec from Salina Cruz, on the Pacific, to Coatzacoalcos on the Atlantic. When reconstructed, it is said, there will be no better railway in the world. There has been expended already $9,753,000 on the road itself and $3,913,000 is being devoted to the ports, which will be perfectly equipped. The railway company has come to an agreement with a steamship company, which is not named, by which the train service will be fed by eleven boats, averaging 10,000 tons. The vessels will sail, of course, in both the Atlantic and the Pacific.

"This is going to be one of the greatest routes of the world," said Sir Weetman Pearson, 'and it will divert traffic that now goes around Cape Horn and by the Suez canal. It will compete, too, with the American transcontinental railways, for we shall be able to convey goods from the Pacific to the Atlantic coast of the United States in twenty days, which is less time than is occupied by the express freight trains of some of the railways.' The Panama Canal will not, he thinks, injure this big enterprise. The railway with all its appurtenances is 1200 miles north of Panama and 800 miles south of New Orleans. 'Here, then,' he says, 'is the natural highway to the Atlantic.'

"On paper, at all events, the short line—short for the American continent—with its magnificent ports and steamship services, seems to be a serious rival to the ship canal across the Isthmus. It will be interesting to see how the Yankees will regard its development, for they have sunk much money in what is, of course, a much more formidable undertaking, and it would be too much to expect that they would smile to see themselves cut out of a great commercial advantage which they had hoped they had captured for all time."

Since Root and Hart fought it has been learned that there was no winner and loser ends in the $5,000 purse. Before the men entered the ring they agreed to split the purse. Both fighters, it is said, made matchmaker Joe Egan a present of $125 for the way he treated them.



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