The RETURN of SHERLOCK HOLMES

By A. CONAN DOYLE

Illustrated by F. D. STEELE

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THE ADVENTURE OF A NORWOOD BUILDER

(Continued.)

"Well, after this fiasco I went into the bedroom and examined that also. The blood-stains were very slight, mere smears and discolorations, but undoubtedly fresh. The stick had been removed, but there also the marks were slight. There is no doubt about the stick belonging to our client. He admits it. Footmarks of both men could be made out on the carpet, but none of any third person, which again is a trick for the other side. They were piling up their score all the time, and we were at a standstill.

"Only one little gleam of hope did I get—and yet it amounted to nothing. I examined the contents of the safe, most of which had been taken out and left on the table. The papers had been made up into sealed envelopes, one or two of which had been opened by the police. They were not, so far as I could judge, of any great value nor did the bank-book show that Mr. Oldacre was in such affluent circumstances. But it seemed to me that all the papers were not there. There were allusions to some deeds—posibly the more valuable—which I could not find. This, of course, if we could only definitely prove it, would turn Lestrade's argument against himself; for who would steal a thing if he knew that he shortly would inherit it?

"Finally, having drawn every other cover and picked up no scent, I tried my luck with the housekeeper. Mrs. Lexington is her name—a little, dark silent person, with suspicious and sidelong eyes. She could tell us something if she would—I am convinced of it. But she was as close as wax. Yes, she had let Mr. McFarlane in at half past nine. She wished her hand had withered before she had done so. She had gone to bed at half past ten. Her room was at the other end of the house, and she could hear nothing of what passed. Mr. McFarlane had left his hat, and to the best of her belief his stick in the hall. She had been awakened by the alarm of fire. Her poor, dear master had certainly ben murdered. Had he any enemies? Well, every man had enemies, but Mr. Oldacre kept himself very much to himself, and only met people in the way of business. She had seen the buttons, and was sure that they belonged to the clothes which he had worn last night. The wood-pile was very dry, for it had not rained for a month. It burned like tinder, and by the time she reached the spot, nothing could be seen but flames She and all the firemen smelled the burning flesh from inside it. She knew nothing of the papers, nor of Mr. Oldacre's private affairs.



The housekeeper.

"So my dear Watson, there's my report of a failure. And yet—and yet—" —he clenched his thin hands in a paroxysm of conviction— "I know it's all wrong. I feel it in my bones. There is something that has not come out, and that housekeeper knows it. There was a sort of sulky defiance in her eyes, which only goes with guilty knowledge. However, there's no good talking any more about it, Watson; but unless some unlucky chance comes our way I fear that the Norwood Disappearance Case will not figure in that chronicle of our successes which I foresee that a patient public will sooner or later have to endure."

"Surely," said I, "the man's appearance would go far with any jury.?"

"That is a dangerous argument, my dear Watson. You remember that terrible murderer, Bert Stevens, who wanted us to get him off in '87? Was there ever a more mild-mannered, Sunday-school young man?"

"It is true."

"Unless we succeed in establishing an alternative theory, this man is lost. You can hardly find a flaw in the case which can now be presented against him, and all further investigation has served to strengthen it. By the way, there is one curious little point about those papers which may serve us as the starting point for an enquiry. On looking over the bank book I found that the low state of the balance was principally due to large cheques which have been made out during the past year to Mr. Cornelius. I confess that I should be interested to know who this Mr. Cornelius may be with whom a retired builder has such very large transactions. Is it possible that he has had a hand in the affair? Cornelius might be a broker, but we have found no scrip to correspond with these large payments. Failing any other indication, my researches must now take the direction of an inquiry at the bank for the gentleman who has cashed these cheques. But I fear my dear fellow, that our case will end ingloriously by Lestrade hanging our client, which will certainly be a triumph for Scotland Yard."

I do not know how far Sherlock Holmes took any sleep that night, but when I came down to breakfast I found him pale and harrassed, his bright eyes the brighter for the dark shadows around them. The carpet round his chair was littered with cigarette-ends and with the early editions of the morning papers. An open telegram lay upon the table.

"What do you think of this, Watson?" he asked, tossing it across.

It was from Norwood, and ran as follows:

"IMPORTANT FRESH EVIDENCE TO HAND. McFARLANE'S GUILT DEFINITELY ESTABLISHED. ADVISE YOU TO ABANDON THE CASE. —LESTRADE."

"This sounds serious," said I.

"It's Lestrade's little cock-a-doodle of victory," Holmes answered, with a bitter smile. "And yet it may be premature to abandon the case. After all, important fresh evidence is a two-edged thing, and may possibly cut in a very different direction to that which Lestrade imagines. Take your breakfast Watson, and we will go out together and see what we can do. I feel as if I shall need your company and your moral support today."

My friend had no breakfast himself, for it was one of his peculiarities that in his more intense moments he would permit himself no food, and I have known him presume upon his iron strength until he has fainted from pure inanition. "At present I cannot spare energy and nerve force for digestion," he would say in answer to my medical remonstrances. I was not surprised, therefore, when this morning he left his untouched meal behind him, and started with me for Norwood. A crowd of morbid sightseers were still gathered round Deep Dene House, which was just such a suburban villa as I had pictured. Within the gates Lestrade met us, his face flushed with victory, his manner grossly triumphant.

"Well, Mr. Holmes, have you proved us to be wrong yet? Have you found your tramp?" he cried.

"I have formed no conclusion whatever" my companion answered.

"But we formed ours yesterday, and now it proves to be correct, so you must acknowledge that we have been a little in front of you this time, Mr. Holmes."

"You certainly have the air of something unusual having occurred," said Holmes.

Lestrade laughed loudly.

"You don't like being beaten any more than the rest of us do," said he. "A man can't expect always to have it his own way, can he, Dr. Watson? Step this way, if you please, gentlemen, and I think I can convince you once for all that it was John McFarlane who did this crime."

He led us through the passage and out into a dark hall beyond.

"This is where young McFarlane must have come out to get his hat after the crime was done," said he. "Now look at this." With dramatic suddenness he struck a match and by its light exposed a stain of blood upon the whitewashed wall As he held the match nearer, I saw that it was more than a stain. It was the well-marked print of a thumb.

"Look at that with your magnifying glass, Mr. Holmes."

"Yes, I am doing so."

"You are aware that no two thumb-marks are alike?"

"I have heard something of the kind."

"Well, then, will you please compare that print with this wax impression of young McFarlane's right thumb, taken by my orders this morning?"

As he held the waxen print close to the blood-stain, it did not take a magnifying glass to see that the two were undoubtedly from the same thumb. It was evident to me that our unfortunate client was lost."

"That is final," said Lestrade.

"Yes, that is final," I involuntarily echoed.

"It is final," said Holmes.

Something in his tone caught my ear, and I turned to look at him. An extraordinary change had come over his face. It was writhing with inward merriment. His two eyes were shining like stars. It seemed to me that he was making desperate efforts to restrain a convulsive attack of laughter."

"Dear me! Dear me!" he said at last. "Well, now, who would have thought it? And how deceptive appearances may be, to be sure! Such a nice young man to look at! It is a lesson to us not to trust our own judgment, is it not Lestrade?"

"Yes, some of us are a little too much inclined to be cocksure, Mr. Holmes," said Lestrade. The man's insolence was maddening, but we could not resent it.

"What a providential thing that this young man should press his right thumb against the wall in taking his hat from the peg! Such a very natural action, too, if you come to think of it." Holmes was outwardly calm, but his whole body gave a wriggle of suppressed excitement as he spoke. "By the way, Lestrade, who made this remarkable discovery?"

"It was the housekeeper, Mrs. Lexington. who drew the night constable's attention to it."

"Where was the night constable?"

"He remained on guard in the bedroom where the crime was committed, so as to see that nothing was touched."

"But why didn't the police see this mark yesterday?"

"Well, we had no particular reason to make such a careful examination of the hall. Besides, it's not in such a very prominent place, as you see."

"No, no—of course not. I suppose there is no doubt that the mark was there yesterday?"

Lestrade looked at Holmes as if he thought he was going out of his mind. I confess that I was myself surprised both at his hilarious manner and at his rather wild observation.

"I don't know whether you think that McFarlane came out of gaol in the dead of night in order to strengthen the evidence against himself," said Lestrade. "I leave it to any expert in the world whether that is not the mark of his thumb."

"It is unquestionably the mark of his thumb."

"There, that's enough," said Lestrade. "I am a practical man, Mr. Holmes, and when I have got my evidence I come to my conclusions. If you have anything to say, you will find me writing my report in the sitting-room."

Holmes had recovered his equanimity, though I seemed to detect gleams of amusement in his expression.

"Dear me, this is a very sad development, Watson, is it not?" said he. "And yet there are singular points about it which hold out some hopes for our client."

"I am delighted to hear it," said I heartily. "I was afraid it was all up with him."

"I would hardly go as far as to say that, my dear Watson. The fact is that there is one really serious flaw in this evidence to which our friend attaches so much importance."

"Indeed, Holmes! What is it?"

"Only this: that I know that that mark was not there when I examined the hall yesterday. And now, Watson, let us have a little stroll round in the sunshine."

With a confused brain, but with a heart into which some warmth of hope was returning, I accompained my friend in a walk round the garden. Holmes took each face of the house in turn, and examined it with great interest. He then led the way inside, and went over the whole building from basement to attic. Most of the rooms were unfurnished, but none the less Holmes inspected them all minutely. Finally, on the top corridor, which ran outside three untenanted bedrooms, he again was seized with a spasm of merriment.

(To be continued.)



It was more than a stain. It was the well marked print of a thumb.

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RELIGIOUS INTERESTS

Some Interesting Items of News of Churches and Places.

More than one-third of the 140 persons who have been incarcerated for non-payment of the education tax in England have been ministers.

M. Paul Leroy-Beaulieu says that the separation of Church and State in France will result in half the population of that country relapsing into paganism.

The Reformed Presbyterian Church General Synod last week deplored increasing recognition of Christmas and Easter, because they are not provided for, mentioned or authorized in the Bible.

Ministers of Philadelphia to the number of 100 marched to the City Hall on May 22 and met Mayor Weaver and commended him for his stand in favor of the citizens and the welfare of the city.

The thirteenth annual convention of the Japan Union of Christian Endeavor has just been held at Okayama, and notwithstanding the war a larger sum of money was raised for the work than at any previous meeting.

The gospel was preached last week from a four-horse wagon located under the shadow of Pierpont Morgan's window near the new Stock Exchange, New York City. The speaker was listened to with close attention, although there was great excitement in the street.

The question of raising $25,000 for tabernacles to be placed on three sides of the city of Chicago, and also of inviting Dr. Torrey's assistance in a religious campaign next winter, was discussed at a conference of laymen and ministers in that city, last week.

Sixty-four young women have recently graduated from the Chicago Training School for Missions. Forty of these graduates will enter deaconess work in this country; eight expect to go within the year to foreign missionary fields and others will make further preparation for special Christian work.

Rev. F. B. Meyer, just before leaving New York for London, said: "With the expectation that I may soon be imprisoned for non-payment of my education rates I am learning how to use a scrubbrush and how to brighten tins, and I will remain in jail so long as it be necessary, rather than contribute toward priestly teaching in our elementary schools."

The American Tract Society is seeking a permanent endowment. On the first day of the fiscal year the society receives from Ralph Voorhees of New Jersey, who is one of its managers, a gift of $100,000. Last year the society employed eighty-one colporteurs who labored in twenty-eight States; also, in Porto Rico and Cuba. It has issued during the past year new publications in fifteen languages.

The bishop of Newcastle (Eng.) believes that if "Christians would only be induced to give in some proportion acording to their income, the giver and the beggar would be saved a world of trouble and vexation." The bishop asks: "Ought such a thing to be possible as that the proceeds of a theatrical entertainment or a fortune-telling tent should actually be spent on the furnishing of the house of God?"

The archdiocese of Boston last year led the dioceses of the world in contributions for the Propagation of the Faith, giving a total of $83,029.25. The total contributions of the United States amounted to $156,942.92, which sum the Pilot says is "not adequately representative of the wealth and breadth of soul of our Catholic people." France is at the head of the nations with its contribution of $702,008,-64.

The outdoor evangelistic campaign in New York city is now fairly opened. These meetings began on the steps of City Hall. In Union square, Irving place, on the custom house steps in Wall street, and in front of the Stock Exchange in Broad street, crowds have gathered to listen to addresses from the foremost pastors of the city. Practically these audiences are composed of men. Campaign automobiles are stationed at many of the Central Park entrances.

The new Methodist church recently dedicated at Poland (O.), is a memorial to the late President William McKinley. The new and beautiful edifice occupies the site of the old frame church of which Mr. McKinley was a member. The memorial window to Mr. McKinley has his potrait. Mr. Carnegie was part donor of the large organ. The total cost of church and furniture was $10,000. Relatives and friends of Mr. McKinley gave generously to the building fund. The church is without debt.

Bishop Vincent, in his address at the convention of the diocese of western Massachusetts said he "hoped that the day was not far distant when in every church in the diocese there would be at least a weekly celebration of the Holy Eucharist, when there would be said daily in our churches the offices of the Morning and Evening Prayer, and when the doors of every church would be open all the day."

The sacred edifices of France were divided under the disestablishment bill into two classes, those erected before and after the Concordat. The former group, which included cathedrals, churches, bishops' palaces, priests' houses and seminaries, are the property of the State or the Commune. The second class of churches, built after the Concordat of 1801 remain the property of the various religious bodies, and must be transferred to the associations.

NEEDN'T DRESS UP FOR THIS CHURCH

Des Moines Pastor Asked People to Come in Simple Attire and They Did.

DES MOINES, June 16—The Rev. A. W. McConnell, pastor of the Clifton Heights Presbyterian church, last week made a request that the congregation abolish the habit of wearing fine clothes to church, as he believed it kept away many of the poorer residents, who could not afford fine clothes.

His congregation complied Sunday and he not only had all his regular attendants, but also several hundred working men and women who had not attended regular church services in months, and some in years. At the conclusion of the church services many of the poorer classes remained and personally thanked the pastor, as did the leading and more wealthy members, who were active church workers. Prayers were offered up to make the people more lowly in their dress.

Mr. McConnell's church is located midway betwen a settlement of laborers and fairly well-to-do people, his parish including both domains. He has worked hard to get the poor people to attend church, and although they would partially promise him that they would attend, he noticed that they would come one or two Sundays and then remain at home.

"I found," said Mr. McConnell, "it was because they could not dress as well as so and so. I thought it was a poor excuse but I determined that they should not have even that. So I asked my people to come to church in their simplest clothes. If when the service hour arrives they are without coats and collars they are just as welcome, and their appearance so may bring others to services who will not bother with starched shirts and collars.

"I propose to make the poorer people feel that they are as welcome in our church in overalls and jumpers as in a Tuxedo or a Prince Albert, and I will do it if I have to shed my coat and preach in my shirt sleeves.

Smokers who want a delicate smoke should try Buster Brown cigars, 5c. each time.

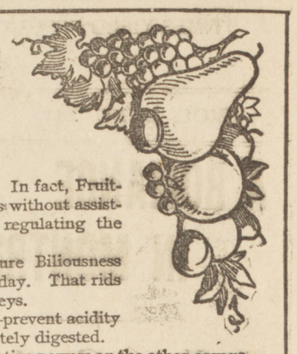
WEDDINGS

Stewart-Fawcett

The marriage of Robert Stewart, of Stellarton (N. S.), and Miss Anna Laura Fawcett, of Campbellton (N. B.), took place last evening at the residence of the bride's uncle, R. M. Currie, 53 Mecklenburg street. Rev. A.A. Graham officiated. Mr. and Mrs. Stewart will reside in Stellarton.

At the tip of the tongue should be Buster Brown. The best cigar at 5c.

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ALL GENUINE SIGNED W. F. Smith

MEMORIAL SERVICE

Independent Order of Oddfellows' Held Their Annual Last Last Night.

The annual memorial service of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows of St. John, was held last night in Odd Fellows Hall, C. D. Fowler, noble grand of Pioneer lodge, presided. There was a large and representative gathering of Odd Fellows all the city lodges being well represented.

The representatives of the lodges presented the names of their deceased members and addresses appropriate to the occasion were delivered by C. N. Skinner, John Thompson and M. D. Brown, of Peerless; C. B. Allan, of Golden Rule, and H. F. Codner, of Siloam.

The services closed by the singing of a hymn.

Scene: Inside a grocery store. Time: Saturday night.
Customer—"Gimme a pound of tea."
Grocer—"What kind?"
Customer—"Oh! I don't care, any kind."
Grocer—(Handing him the package), "35c. Thanks." Exit customer.
The customer "didn't care." What would you have done had you been the grocer? Given him good fresh stock at a fair profit, or some old brand you wished to get rid of at a large profit? If he was a good grocer he would have done the former, if bad, the latter. WE would do just what the grocer did, but we don't know what he did.

If we had been the Customer we would have asked for

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