

MEMOIRS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES,

BY A. CONAN DOYLE.

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THE ADVENTURE OF THE SPECKLED BAND

(Continued.)

"Ah, but I sleep more heavily than you."

"Well, it is of no great consequence, at any rate."

She smiled back at me, closed my door, and a few moments later I heard her key turn in the lock."

"Indeed!" said Holmes. "Was it your custom always to lock yourselves in at night?"

"Always."

"And why?"

"I think that I mentioned to you that the doctor kept a cheetah and a baboon. We had no feeling of security unless our doors were locked."

"No, I have not. It must be those wretched gypsies in the plantation."

"Very likely. And yet if it were on the lawn I wonder that you did not hear it also."

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forget. "Oh, my God! Helen! It was the band! The speckled band!" There was something else which she would faint have said, and she stabbed with her finger into the air in the direction of the doctor's room, but a fresh convulsion seized her and choked her words. I rushed out, calling loudly for my stepfather, and I met him hastening from his room in his dressing-gown. When he reached my sister's side she was unconscious, and, though he and I tried to revive her, she died.

"No, she was in her nightdress. In her right hand was found the charred stump of a match and in her left a match box."

"Showing that she had struck a light."

"Was your sister dressed?"

"No, she was in her nightdress. In her right hand was found the charred stump of a match and in her left a match box."

"Showing that she had struck a light."

"What do you think that this unfortunate lady died of, then?"

"It is my belief that she died of pure fear and nervous shock, though what it was that frightened her I cannot imagine."

"Were there gypsies in the plantation at the time?"

"Yes, there are nearly always some there."

"Ah, and what did you gather from this allusion to a band—a speckled band?"

"Sometimes I have thought that it was merely the wild talk of delirium sometimes that it may have referred to some band of people, perhaps to these very gypsies in the plantation. I do not know whether the spotted handkerchiefs which so many of them wear over their heads might have suggested the strange adjective which she used."

Holmes shook his head like a man who is far from being satisfied.

"These are very deep waters," said he. "Pray go on with your narrative."

"Two years have passed since then, and my life has been until lately lonelier than ever. A month ago, however, a dear friend, whom I have known for many years, has done me the honor to ask my hand in marriage. His name is Percy Armitage—second son of Mr. Armitage, of Crane Water, near Reading. My stepfather has offered no opposition to the match, and we are to be married in the course of the spring. Two days ago some repairs were started in the west wing of the building, and my bedroom wall has been pierced, so that I have had to move into the chamber in which my sister died and to sleep in the very bed in which she slept. Imagine then, my thrill of terror, when, last night, as I lay awake, thinking over her terrible fate, I suddenly heard in the silence of the night the low whistle which had been the herald of her own death. I sprang up and lit the lamp, but nothing was to be seen in the room. I was too shaken to go to bed again however, so I dressed, and as soon as it was daylight I slipped down, got a dogcart at the Crown Inn, which is opposite, and drove to Leatherhead whence I have come on this morning with the one object of seeing you and asking your advice."

"You have done wisely," said my friend. "But have you told me all?"

"Yes, all."

"He investigated the case with great care, for Dr. Roylott's conduct had long been notorious in the county, but he was unable to find any satisfactory cause of death. My evidence showed that the door had been fastened upon the inner side, and the windows were blocked by old-fashioned shutters with broad iron bars, which were secured every night. The walls were carefully sounded and were shown to be quite solid all round, and the flooring was also thoroughly examined, with the same result. The chimney is wide, but it is barred up by four large staples. It is certain, therefore, that my sister was quite alone when she met her end. Besides, there were no marks of any violence upon her."

"How about poison?"

"The doctors examined her for it, but without success."

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"My sister appeared at the opening, her face blanched with terror."

he poured brandy down her throat and sent for medical aid from the village, all efforts were in vain, for she slowly sank and died without having recovered her consciousness. Such was the dreadful end of my beloved sister."

and looked about her when the alarm took place. That is important. And what conclusions did the Coroner come to?"

"Miss Roylott, you have not. You are screening your stepfather."

"Why, what do you mean?"

"For answer Holmes pushed back the fill of black lace which framed the hand that lay upon our visitor's knee. Five little livid spots, the marks of four fingers and a thumb were printed upon the white wrist."

"You have been cruelly used," said Holmes.

The lady colored deeply and covered over her injured wrist. "He is a hard man," she said, "and perhaps he hardly knows his own strength."

There was a long silence during which Holmes leaned his chin upon his hands and stared into the crackling fire.

"This is a very deep business," he said at last. "There are a thousand details which I should desire to know before I decide upon our course of action. Yet we have not a moment to lose. If we were to come to Stoke Moran today, would it be possible for us to see over these rooms without the knowledge of your stepfather?"

"As it happens he spoke of coming into town today upon some important business. It is probable that he will be away all day, and that there would be nothing to disturb you. We have a housekeeper now, but she is old and foolish, and I could easily get her out of the way."

"Excellent. You are not averse to this trip, Watson?"

"By no means."

"Then we shall both come. What are you going to do yourself?"

"I have one or two things which I would wish to do now that I am in town. But I shall return by the 12 o'clock train, so as to be there in time for your coming."

"And you may expect us early in the afternoon. I myself have some small business matters to attend to. Will you wait for breakfast?"

"No, I must go. My heart is lightened already since I have confided my troubles to you. I shall look forward to seeing you again this afternoon." She dropped her thick veil over her face and glided from the room.

"And what do you think of it all, Watson?" asked Sherlock Holmes, leaning back in his chair.

"It seems to me to be a most dark and sinister business."

"Dark enough and sinister enough."

"Yet if the lady is correct in saying that the flooring and walls are sound, and that the door, window and chimney are impassable, then her sister must have been undoubtedly alone when she met her mysterious end."

"What becomes, then, of these nocturnal whistles, and what of the very peculiar words of the dying woman?"

"I cannot think."

"When you combine the ideas of whistles at night, the presence of a band of gypsies who are on intimate terms with this old doctor, the fact that we have every reason to believe that the doctor has an interest in preventing his stepdaughter's marriage, the dying allusion to a band, and, finally, the fact that Miss Helen Stoner heard a metallic clang, which might have been caused by one of those metal bars which secured the shutters falling into their place. I think that there is good ground to think that the mystery may be cleared along those lines."

(To be continued.)

Love may be blind, but unfortunately it's neither deaf nor dumb.

Piles

To prove to you that Dr. Chase's Ointment is a certain and absolute cure for each and every form of itching, bleeding and protruding piles, the manufacturers have guaranteed it. See testimonials in the daily press and ask your neighbors what they think of it. You can use it and get your money back if not cured. 60c a box at all dealers or EDMANSON, BATES & Co., Toronto.

Dr. Chase's Ointment

MAY NOT ACCEPT

Quite Improbable that McArthur and McVey Will Take the \$15,000 Bonus Offered.

It is not probable that McArthur & McVey will accept the city's proposal of \$15,000 and no extras. In an interview last evening Mr. McVey did not appear to think that the agreement would be signed. He said that while the matter had not come up for final consideration between the contractors he, for one, did not think he could accept.

They would be willing to go on with section 1 and section 2 as far as Ellerey Brook, but from that point to the lake the plans laid before them had proved so misleading—the test pits and borings being quite incorrect—that they could not complete that portion unless they received a bonus on the material taken out.

They had already lost heavily on that part of the section on account of the rock encountered. The proposed payment of \$15,000 would not enable them to finish the contract and come out without a loss.

Mr. McVey was not prepared to say what would be done if they declined to accept the new proposal. They were willing to shoulder some of the cost, he said, but they expected the city to give them a fair price for the enormous amount of additional work they had to do.

As regards finishing the work by Nov. 1 the state of the weather would greatly affect the progress made. A rainy fall would render it almost impossible to get through, especially when the right class of men for the work were so hard to find.

Mr. McVey spoke earnestly and in evident good faith of his desire to see the work completed this year. "We are willing to do all we can," he said. "I have had 22 years experience in all kinds of work and hitherto I have always made a success. I see by the papers that one of the aldermen wants to see us go on 'like men.' It is easy to talk, it is difficult to do. We don't seem to get any credit for what we have done. Section 1 is now the most advanced section of the four, and by the middle of September I estimate it will be completed. There are about 7,000 feet of the woodstave pipe now in position and we are making rapid progress."

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YELLOW FEVER

New Orleans is Convinced That the Disease is Checked In That City and Regards the Situation as Encouraging.

NEW ORLEANS, Aug. 22.—With the fever checked in the city, and plans under way to prevent further re-infection from the country, the local situation is still encouraging. Of the new disease centers eight are above Canal street, one in Rosa Park, a fashionable residence park opening into St. Charles avenue, a well known citizen and member of Governor Blanchard's staff being the victim. Another case is at a boys' college far down town, one of the employes being stricken.

Rev. Father Avelino, pastor of St. Maurice church, is another patient reported today. Of the deaths, only one occurred up town.

The news from outside the city shows the continued seriousness of the situation. Definite information was received from Dr. J. A. Devron, the State Board physician sent to Leeville, at the mouth of Bayou Lafouche, a few days ago. His report shows that the first news received from there was not exaggerated. During two days of work he found 69 positive cases of fever; 33 suspicious cases, and 145 cases of dengue.

Patterson reports 15 new cases and no deaths.

Hanson city reports six new cases; Kenner one; and Sarpey plantation two.

There was one death on Elizabeth plantation in Yborville.

St. Rose, in St. Charles parish, has two cases, and one is dead.

Corrine plantation in St. Bernard parish, below the city, reports one death, that of an Italian boy.

Mississippi city reports three new cases, and states that the report that the state board has declared the fever epidemic there is unfounded.

Sherbrooke, Aug. 22.—(Special)—At Lambton (Que.) on the Quebec Central Railway, fire today destroyed twenty-nine houses, church, convent and Presbytery. The burnt houses formed one-third of the village.

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grow into big, rosy, sturdy children on Nestlé's Food. It agrees with baby's delicate stomach — nourishes baby's fragile system — protects baby against colic and cholera infantum — and brings baby safely through the dreaded "second summer."

Nestlé's Food

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Is Nature's Remedy for Tired, Fagged-out and Run-down Men or Women

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