The Hound of the Baskervilles

Another Adventure of Sherlock Holmes. BY A. CONAN DOYLE.

Author of "The Green Flag" and "The Great Boer War" Copyright (1902) by A. Conan Doyle.

A half moon broke through the rifts

And yet it was not quite the last. I seeking for the sleep which would not come. Far away a chiming clock struck out the quarters of the hours, upon the old house. And then suddenly, in the very dead of the night, there came a sound to my ears, clear, resonant, and unmistakable. It was the sob of a woman, the muffled, strangl- have something to report to Sherlock sion.' ing gasp of one who is torn by an un- Holmes controllable sorrow. I sat up in beand listened intently. The noise could not have been far away and was cer- time was propitious for my excursion. tainly in the house. For half an hour It was a pleasant walk of four miles I waited with every nerve on the alert, along the edge of the moor, leading but there came no other sound save the chimney clock and the rustle of the ivy on the wall.

CHAPTER VII.

The fresh beauty of the following morning did something to efface from our minds the grim and grey impression which had been left upon both of us by our first experience of Baskerville Hall. As Sir Henry and I sat at breakfast the sunlight flooded in through the high mullioned windows. throwing watery patches of color from the coats of arms which covered them. The dark panelling glowed like bronze in the golden rays, and it was hard to realize that this was indeed the chamber which had struck such a

"I guess it is ourselves and not the



we are fresh and well, so it is all grey, lonely road, that my friend might cheerful once more."

you, for example, happen to hear some- my shoulders. one, a woman I think, sobbing in the night?"

was half asleep fancy that I heard me by name. I turned, expecting to see something of the sort. I waited quite a Dr. Mortimer, but to my surprise it time, but there was no more of it, so was a stranger who was pursuing me. I concluded that it was all a dream." He was a small, slim, clean-shaven, that it was really the sob of a woman."

away." He rang the bell and asked ing a straw hat. A tin box for botanical Barrymore whether he could account specimens hung over his shoulder and that the pallid features of the butler of his hands. turned a shade paler still as he listen-

and I can answer for it that the sound could not have come from her.

And yet he lied as he said it, for it chanced that after breakfast I met Mrs. Barrymore in the long corridor with the sun full upon her face. She was a Mr. Stapleton was a naturalist. But large, impassive, heavy-featured wom: how did you know me?" an with a stern set expression of the night, and if she did so her hus- thought that I would overtake you and band must know it. Yet he had taken introduce myself. I trust that

********** 1 drew aside my curtains before I the obvious risk of discovery in dewent to bed and looked out from my claring that it was not so. Why had window. It opened upon the grassy he done this? And why did she weep space which lay in front of the hall so bitterly? Already round this paledoor. Beyond, two copses of trees faced, handsome, black-bearded man moaned and swung in a rising wind. there was gathering an atmosphere of mystery and of gloom. It was he who of racing clouds. In its cold light I saw had been the first to discover the body beyond the trees a broken fringe of of Sir Charles, and we had only his rocks, and the long, low curve of the word for all the circumstances which melancholy moor. I closed the curtain, led up to the old man's death. Was it feeling that my last impression was in possible that it was Barrymore after all whom we had seen in the cab in Regent Street? The beard might well found myself weary and yet wakeful, have been the same. The cabman had tossing restlessly from side to side, described a somewhat shorter man, but such an impression might easily have been erroneous. How could I settle the point for ever? Obviously the first but otherwise a deathly silence lav thing to do was to see the Grimpen postmaster, and find whether the test telegram had really been placed in Barrymore's own hands. Be the answer what it might, I should at least

> Sir Henry had numerous papers to examine after breakfast, so that the me at last to a small grey hamlet, in which two larger buildings. which

Dr. Mortimer, stood high above the rest. The postmaster, who was also the village grocer, had a clear recollection of the telegram.

telegram delivered to Mr. Barrymore exactly as directed."

"Who delivered it?" "My boy here. James, you delivered that telegram to Mr. Barrymore at the Hall last week, did you not?" "Yes, father, I delivered it."

"Into his own hands?" I asked. "Well, he was up in the loft at the time, so that I could not put it into his own hands, but I gave it into Mrs. gloom into our souls upon the evening Barrymore's hands, and she promised to deliver it at once."

"Did you see Mr. Barrymore?" "No, sir; I tell you he was in the

"If you didn't see him, how do you know he was in the loft?" "Well, surely his own wife ought to know where he is," said the postmast-

er, testily. "Didn't he get the telegram? If there is any mistake it is for Mr. Barrymore himself to complain." It seemed hopeless to pursue the in-

quiry any farther, but it was clear that in spite of Holmes's ruse we had no proof that Barrymore had not been in London all the time. Suppose that it were so-suppose that the same man had been the last who had seen Sir Charles alive, and the first to dog the new heir when he returned to England. What then? Was he the agent of others or had he some sinister design of his own? What interest could he have in persecuting the Baskerville family? I thought of the strange warning clipped out of the leading article of the Times. Was that his work or was it possibly the doing of someone who was bent upon counteracting his schemes? The only conceivable motive was that which had been suggested by Sir Henry, that if the family could be scared away a comfortable and permanent home would be secured for the Barrymores. But surely such an explanation as that would be quite inadequate to account for the deep and subtle scheming which seemed to be weaving an invisible net round the young baronet. Holmes himhouse that we have to blame!" said self had said that no more complex the baronet. "We were tired with our case had come to him in all the long journey and chilled by our drive, so series of his sensational investigations. we took a grey view of the place. Now I prayed, as I walked back along the

soon be freed from his preoccupations "And yet it was not entirely a ques- and able to come down to take this tion of imagination," I answered. "Did heavy burden of responsibility from Suddenly my thoughts were interrup ted by the sound of running feet be-"That is curious, for I did when I hind me and by a voice which called "I heard it distinctly, and I am sure prim-faced man, flaxen-haired and leanjawed, between thirty and forty years "We must ask about this right of age, dressed in a grey suit and wear-

for our experience. It seemed to me he carried a green butterfly-net in one "You will, I am sure, excuse my pri sumption, Dr. Watson," said he, as h "There are only two women in the came panting up to where I stood. house, Sir Henry," he answered, "One "Here on the moor we are homely folk is the scullery-maid, who sleeps in and do not wait for formal introducthe other wing. The other is my wife, tions. You may possibly have heard my name from our mutual friend, Morti-

I am Stapleton, of Merripit me as much," said I, "for I knew that

"I have been calling on Mortimer, mouth. But her tell-tale eyes were red and he pointed you out to me from the and glanced at me from between swel: window of his surgery as you passed. len lids. It was she, then, who wept in As our road lay the same way

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Henry is none the worse for his jour

kind, but I need not tell you that means a very great deal to the countryside. Sir Henry has, I suppose, no superstitious fears in the matter?"

"I do not think that it is likely?" "Of course you know the legend of the fiend dog which haunts the fam-

"It is extraordinary how credulous the peasants are about here! Any number of them are ready to swear that they have seen such a creature upon the moor," He spoke with a smile, but seemed to read in his eyes that he took the matter more seriously. "The story took a great hold upon the imagination of Sir Charles, and I have no doubt that it led to his tragic end."

"But how?" "His nerves were so worked up that the appearance of any dog might have had a fatal effect upon his diseased heart. I fancy that he really did see something of the kind upon that last night in the Yew Alley. I feared that some disaster might occur, for I was very fond of the old man, and I knew that his heart was weak."

"How did you know that?" "My friend Mortimer told me." "You think, then, that some dog pursued Sir Charles, and that he died fright in consequence?"

"Have you any better explanation?" "I have not come to any conclu-"Has Mr. Sherlock Holmes?"

The words took away my breath for an instant, but a glance at the placid face and steadfast eyes of my companion showed that no surprise was in-"It is useless for us to pretend that

we do not know you, Dr. Watson," said "The records of your detective proved to be the inn and the house of have reached us here, and you could not celebrate him without being known yourself. When Mortimer told me your name he could not deny your identity. If you are here, then it fol-"Certainly, sir," said he, "I had the lows that Mr. Sherlock Holmes is interesting himself in the matter, and I am naturally curious to know what view he may take."

"I am afraid that I cannot answer that question." "May I ask if he is going to honor

us with a visit himself?" "He cannot leave town at present. He has other cases which engage his don't believe such nonsense as that?"

"What a pity! He might throw some light on that which is so dark to us. But as to your own researches, there is any possible way in which I can be of service to you I trust that you will command me. If I had any

indication of the nature of your suspicions, or how you propose to investigate the case, I might perhaps even now give you some aid or advice." "I assure you that I am simply here

upon a visit to my friend Sir Heary, and that I need no help of any kind." "Excellent!" said Stapleton. "You

are perfectly right to be wary and discreet. I am justly reproved for what I feel was an unjustifiable intrusion, and I promise you that I will not mention the matter again.'

We had come to a point where a narrow grassy path struck off from the road and wound away across the moor. A steep, boulder-sprinkled hill lay ·upon the right which had in bygone days been cut into a granite quarry. The face which was turned towards us brambles growing in its niches. From plume of smoke.

"A moderate walk along this moorpath brings us to Merripit House," said the curiosity to go inside. he. "Perhaps you will spare an hour that I may have the pleasure of intro- inhabited?" ducing you to my sister."

My first thought was that I should be by Sir Henry's side. But when I remembered the pile of papers and bills with which his study table was littered. It was certain that I could not expressly said that I should study the Yes, you will find some very singular character and ideals, was very dear to Stapleton's invitation, and we turned . together down the path.

"It is a wonderful place, the moor,"

"You know it well, then?" "I have only been here two years. The residents would call me a new comer. We came shortly after Sir Charles settled. But my tastes led me to explore every part of the country round, and I should think that there are few men who know it better than

"Is it so hard to know?" "Very hard. You see, for example, this great plain to the north here, with the queer hills breaking out of it. Do you observe anything remarkable "It would be a rare place for a gal-

"You would naturally think so and the thought has cost several their lives before now. You notice those bright green spots scattered thickly over it?"

"Yes, they seem more fertile than Stapleton laughed.

"That is the great Grimpen Mire," said he. "A false step yonder means death to man or beast. Only yesterday I saw one of the moor ponies wander into it. He never came out, I saw his head for quite a long time craning

The Georgian

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shoe re-soled

out of the bog-hole, but it sucked him down at last. Even in dry seasons it is it not for the sent a danger to cross it, but after these beautiful cark ea

(1) AN YOUR THE TANK (1)

upwards and a dreadful cry echoed over the moor. It turned me cold with seemed to be stronger than mine. "It's gone!" said he. "The mire has him, Two in two days, and many more, perhaps, for they get in the way of going there in the dry weather, and never know the difference until the mire has them in its clutch. It's a bad place, the great Grimpen Mire."

"And you say you can penetrate it?" "Yes, there are one or two paths foot upon the moor again." which a very active man can take. I have found them out."

"But why should you wish to go into so horrible a place?" "Well, you see the hills beyond? They are really islands cut off on all sides by the impassable mire, which

has crawled round them in the course of years. That is where the rare plants among the mares-talls yonder? We are and the butterflies are, if you have the very rich in orchids on the moor, wit to reach them. "I shall try my luck some day."

He looked at me with a surprised

out of your mind," said he. "Your blood would be upon my head. I assure you that there would not be the least greeting was not altogether a cordial chance of your coming back alive. It is one. only by remembering certain complex landmarks that I am able to do it."

"Halloa!" I cried. "What is that?" it swelled into a deep roar, and then me. sank back into a melancholy, throb- "You have introduced yourselves, l bing murmur once again. Stapleton can see." looked at me with a curious expression in his face.

"Queer place, the moor!" said he. "But what is it?" "The peasants say it is the Hound

of the Baskervilles calling for its prey. Baskerville." I've heard it once or twice before, but never quite so loud.'

I looked round, with a chill of fear in my heart, at the huge swelling plain, mottled with the green patches of rushes. Nothing stirred over the vast expanse save a pair of ravens, which croaked loudly from a tor behind us. "You are an educated man. You

of so strange a sound?" "Bogs make queer noises sometimes.

ing, or something." "No, no, that was a living voice." "Well perhaps it was. Did you ever hear a bittern booming?" "No, I never did."

"It's a very rare bird-practically days, but now put into repair and turnextinct-in England now, but all things are possible upon the moor. Yes, I should not be surprised to learn that what we have heard is the cry of the

last of the bitterns." "It's the weirdest, strangest thing that ever I heard in my life." "Yes, it's rather an uncanny place altogether. Look at the hill-side yon-

der. What do you make of those?" The whole steep slope was covered with grey circular rings of stone, a score of them at least. "What are they? Sheep-pens?" "No, they are the homes of our wor-

thy ancestors. Prehistoric man lived thickly on the moor, and as no one in formed a dark cliff, with ferns and particular has lived there since, we find all his little arrangements exactly over a distant rise there floated a grey as he left them. These are his wigwams with the roofs off. You can even see

"But it is quite a town. When was it

"Neolithic man-no date." "What did he do?"

"He grazed his cattle on these slopes, a man of my temperament was meand he learned to dig for tin when the chanical and uninteresting, but the bronze sword began to supersede the privilege of living with youth, of helpstone axe. Look at the great trench in ing to mould those young minds and help him with those. And Holmes had the opposite hill. That is his mark. of impressing them with one's own neighbors upon the moor. I accepted points about the moor, Dr. Watson. Oh, me. However, the fates were against excuse me an instant! It is surely us. A serious epidemic broke out in Cyclopides."

said he, looking round over the un- across our path, and in an instant much of my capital was irretrievably dulating downs, long green rollers, Stapleton was rushing with extraor- swallowed up. And yet, if it were not with crests of jagged granite foaming dinary energy and speed in pursuit of for the loss of the charming companup into fantastic surges. "You never it. To my dismay the creature flew ionship of the boys, I could rejoice over Stapleton," said I. "I am Sir Henry's tire of the moor. You cannot think the straight for the great mire, and my ac- my own misfortune, for, with my friend, and his welfare is a very close wonderful secrets which it contains. quaintance never paused for an in- strong tastes for botany and zoology, I concern of mine. Tell me why it was It is so vast, and so barren, and so mys- stant, bounding from tuft to tuft be- find an unlimited field of work here, that you were so eager that Sir Henry



"Go back," she said, "go straight back

hind it, his green net waving in the kervilles, all these things tinged my air. His grey clothes and jerky, zigzag, thoughts with sadness. Then on the irregular progress made him not unlike top of these more or less vague impressome huge moth himself. I was stand- sions there had come the definite and ing watching his pursuit with a mix- distinct warning of Miss Stapleton, deture of admiration for his extraordin- livered with such intense earnestness ary activity and fear lest he should that I could not doubt that some grave lose his footing in the treacherous and deep reason lay behind it. I resistmire, when I heard the sound of steps, ed all pressure to stay for lunch, and I and turning round found a woman near set off at once upon my return jourme upon the path. She had come from ney, taking the grass-grown path by the direction in which the plume of which we had come. smoke indicated the position of Merri- It seems, however, that there must pit House, but the dip of the moor had have been some short cut for those hid her until she was quite close.

I could not doubt that this was the ed the road I was astounded to see Miss Stapleton of whom I had been Miss Stapleton sitting upon a rock by told, since ladies of any sort must be the side of the track. Her face was few upon the moor, and I remembered beautifully flushed with her exertions, that I had heard someone describe her | and she held her hand to her side. as being a beauty. The woman who ap- "I have run all the way in order to proached me was certainly that, and cut you off, Dr. Watson," said she. "I of a most uncommon type There could had not even time to put on my hat. I not have been a greater contrast be- must not stop, or my brother may miss tween brother and sister, for Stapleton me. I wanted to say to you how sorry was neutral tinted, with light hair and I am about the stupid mistake I made grey eyes, while she was darker than in thinking that you were Sir Henry.
any brunette whom I have seen in England—slim, elegant, and tall. She had have no application whatever to you." a proud, finely cut face, so regular that | "But I can't forget them.

it might have seemed

I could only stare at her in stuple

surprise. Her eyes blazed at me, and she tapped the ground impatiently P.

"I cannot explain." She spoke in low, eager voice, with a curious lisp in her utterance. "But for God's sake de what I ask you. Go back and never set "But I have only just come."

"Man, man!" she cried, "Can you not tell when a warning is for your own good? Go back to London! Start to-night! Get away from this place at all costs! Hush, my brother is coming! Not a word of what I have said. Would you mind getting that orchid for me though, of course, you are rather late to see the beauties of the place." Stapleton had abandoned the chase and came back to us breathing hard

"For God's sake put such an idea and flushed with his exertions. "Halloa, Beryl!" said he, and seemed to me that the tone of his

"Well, Jack, you are very hot. "Yes, I was chasing a Cyclopides. Ec is very rare and seldom found in the A long, low moan, indescribably sad, late autumn. What a pity that I should swept over the moor. It filled the whole have missed him!" He spoke unconair, and yet it was impossible to say cernedly, but his small light eyes whence it came. From a dull murmur glanced incessantly from the girl to

"Yes. I was telling Sir Henry that

it was rather late for him to see the true beauties of the moor." "Why, who do you think this is?" "I imagine that it must be Sir Henry

"No, no," said I. "Only a humble commoner, but his friend. My name is

Dr. Watson. A flush of vexation passed over her expressive face. "We have been talking at cross purposes," said she. "Why, you had not very much time for talk," her brother remarked, with

the same questioning eyes. "I talked as if Dr. Watson were a said I. "What do you think is the cause resident instead of being merely a visitor," said she, "It cannot much matter to him whether it is early or It's the mud settling, or the water ris- late for the orchids. But you will come on, will you not, and see Merripit

House? A short walk brought us to it, a bleak moorland house, once the farm of some grazier in the old prosperous

ed into a modern dwelling. An orchard surrounded it, but the trees, as is usual upon the moor, were stunted and nipped, and the effect of the whole place was mean and melancholy. We were admitted by a strange wizened, rustycoated old man servant, who seemed in keeping with the house. Inside, however, there were large rooms furnished with an elegance in which I seemed to recognize the taste of the lady. As I looked from their window at the interminable granite-flecked moor rolling unbroken to the farthest horizon could not but marvel at what could have brought this highly educated man and this beautiful woman to live in such a place.

"Queer spot to choose, is it not?" said he, as if in answer to my thought. his hearth and his couch if you have "And yet we manage to make ourselves fairly happy, do we not, Beryl?" "Quite happy," said she, but there

was no ring of conviction in her words. "I had a school," said Stapleton. "It was in the north country. The work to the school and three of the boys died. A small fly or moth had fluttered It never recovered from the blow, and and my sister is as devoted to Nature should return to London. as I am. All this, Dr. Watson, has "A woman's whim, Dr. Watson, out of our window."

"It certainly did cross my mind that perhaps, than for your sister. "No, no, I am never dull," said she, with me, Miss Stapleton, for ever since

ies, and we have interesting neighbors. come like that great Grimpen Mire, Dr. Mortimer is a most learned man with little green patches everywhere in his own line. Poor Sir Charles was also an admirable companion. We guide to point the track, Tell me then knew him well, and miss him more than I can tell. Do you think that should intrude if I were to call this afternoon and make the acquaintance of Sir Henry?"

"Then perhaps you would mention that I propose to do so. We may in our humble way do something to make things more easy for him until he becomes accustomed to his new surroundings. Will you come upstairs, Dr. Watson, and inspect my collection of leidoptera? I think it is the most complete one in the south-west of England. By the time that you have looked through them lunch will be almost

But I was eager to get back to my charge. The melancholy of the moor the death of the unfortunate pony, the weird sound which had been associated with the grim legend of the Bas-

who knew it, for before I had reach-

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Something brown was rolling and had raised my hat, and was about to New Williams, New Home and Raymond tossing among the green sedges. Then make some explanatory remark, when All goods guaranteed, and prices and a long, agonized, writhing neck shot her own words turned all my thoughts terms right. No fake sales but solid

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been brought upon your head by your When you know me better you will unexpression as you surveyed the moor derstand that I cannot always give reasons for what I say or do." "No. no. I remember the thrill in it might be a little dull-less for you, your voice. I remember the look in your eyes. Please, please, be frank

I have been here I have been conscious "We have books, we have our stud- of shadows all round me. Life has beinto which one may sink and with no what it was that you meant, and I will promise to convey your warning to Sir An expression of irresolution passed

for an instant over her face, but her "I am sure that he would be delight- eyes had hardened again when she an-"You make too much of it, Dr. Wat-

son," said she, "My brother and I were very much shocked by the death of Bir Charles. We knew him very intimately, for his favorite walk was over the moor to our house. He was deeply impressed with the curse which hung over his family, and when this tragedy came I naturally felt that there must be some grounds for the fears which he had expressed. I was distressed therefore when another member of the family came down to live here, and I felt that he should be warned of the danger which he will run That was all which I intended to con-

But what is the danger?" "You know the story of the hound?" "I do not believe in such nonsense." "But I do. If you have any influence with Sir Henry, take him away from a place which has always been fatal to his family. The world is wide. Why should be wish to live at the place of

"Because it is the place of danger. be impossible to get him to move." "I cannot say anything definite, for I do not know anything definite."

than this when you first spoke to me,

why should you not wish your brother

to overhear what you said? There is nothing to which he, or anyone else, could object."
"My brother is very anxious to have the Hall inhabited, for he thinks that it is for the good of the poor folk upon table. One page is missing, but other the moor. He would be very angry if wise they are exactly as written and he knew that I had said anything

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which might induce Sir Henry to go away. But I have done my duty now That is Sir Henry's nature. I fear that and I will say no more. I must get unless you can give me some more back, or he will miss me and suspect definite information than this it would that I have seen you. Good-bye!" She turned, and had disappeared in a few minutes among the scattered boulders, while I, with my soul full of vague "I would ask you one more question, fears, pursued my way to Baskerville Miss Stapleton. If you meant no more Hall.

CHAPTER VIII.

From this point onwards I will follow the course of events by transcribing my own letters to Mr. Sherlock Holmes which lie before me on the table. One page is missing, but other (Continued on page (ares)

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