ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES.

BY A. CONAN DOYLE.

"Well, if we can't, we can't," said Holmes, cheerfully.

"Perhaps she could not or would not have told you much."

"I did not wish her to tell me anything. I only wanted to look at her. However, I think that I have got all that I want. Drive us to some decent hotel, cabby, where we may have some lunch, and afterwards we shall drop down upon friend Lestrade at the police station."

We had a pleasant little meal together, during which Holmes would talk about nothing but violins, narrating with great exultation how he had purchased his own Stradivarius, which was worth at least five hundred guineas, at a Jew broker's in Tottenham Court Road, for fifty-five shillings. This led him to Paganini, and we sat for an hour over a bottle of claret while he told me anecdote after anecdote of that extraordinary man. The afternoon was far advanced and the hot glare had softened into a mellow glow before we found ourselves at the police station. Lestrade was waiting for us at the door.

"A telegram for you, Mr. Holmes," said he.

"Ha! It is the answer!" He tore it open, glanced his eye over it, and crumpled it into his pocket. "That's all right," said he.

"Have you found out anything?"

"I have found out everything!"

"What!" Lestrade stared at him in amazement. "You are joking."

"I was never more serious in my life. A shocking crime has been committed, and I think that I have now laid bare every detail of it."

"And the criminal?"

Holmes scribbled a few words upon the back of one of his visiting cards and threw it over to Lestrade.

"That is it," he said; "you cannot effect an arrest until to-morrow night at the earliest. I should prefer that you would not mention my name at all in connection with the case, as I choose to be associated only with those crimes which present some difficulty in their solution. Come on, Watson." We strode off together to the station, leaving Lestrade still staring with a delighted face at the card which Holmes had thrown him.

"The case," said Sherlock Holmes, as we chatted over cigars that night in our rooms at Baker Street, "is one where, as in the investigations which you have chronicled under the names of the 'Study in Scarlet' and of the 'Sign of Four,' we have been compelled to reason backward from effects to causes. I have written to Lestrade asking him to supply us with the details which are now wanting, and which he will only get after he has secured his man. That he may be safely trusted to do, for although he was absolutely devoid of reason, he is as tenacious as a bulldog when he once understands what he has to do, and indeed it is just this tenacity which has brought him to the top at Scotland Yard."

"Your case is not complete, then?" I asked.

"It is fairly complete in essentials. We know who the author of the revolting business is, although one of the victims still escapes us. Of course you have formed your own conclusions."

"I presume that this Jim Browner, the steward of a Liverpool boat, is the man whom you suspect?"

"Oh! it is more than a suspicion."

"And yet I cannot see anything save very vague indications."

"On the contrary, to my mind, nothing could be more clear. Let me run over the principal steps. We approached the case, you remember, with an absolutely blank mind, which is always an advantage. We had formed no theories. We were simply there to observe and to draw inferences from our observations. What did we see first? A very placid and respectable lady, who seemed quite innocent of any secret, and a portrait which showed me that she had two younger sisters. It instantly flashed across my mind that the box might have been meant for one of these. I set the idea aside as one which could be disproved or confirmed at our leisure. Then we went to the garden, as you remember, and we saw the very singular contents of the little yellow box.

"The string was of the quality which is used by sail-makers aboard ship, and at once a whiff of the sea was perceptible in our investigation. When I observed that the knot was one which is popular with sailors, that the parcel had been posted at port, and that the male ear was pierced for an ear-ring, which is so much more common among sailors than landsmen, I was quite certain that all the actors in the tragedy were to be found among our seafaring classes.

"When I came to examine the address of the packet I observed that it was to Miss S. Cushing. Now the oldest sister would, of course, be Miss Cushing, and although her initial was 'S.,' it might belong to one of the others as well. In that case we should have to commence our investigation from a fresh basis altogether. I therefore went into the house with the intention of clearing up this point. I was about to assure Miss Cushing that a mistake had been made, when you may remember that I came suddenly to a stop. The fact was that I had just seen something which filled me with surprise and at the same time narrowed the field of our inquiry immensely.

"As a medical man, you are aware, Watson, that there is no part of the body which varies so much as the human ear. Each ear is, as a rule, quite distinctive, and differs from all other ones. In last year's Anthropological Journal you will find two short monographs from my pen upon the subject. I had, therefore, examined the ears in the box with the eyes of an expert, and had carefully noted their anatomical peculiarities. Imagine my surprise, then, when, on looking at Miss Cushing, I perceived that her ear corresponded exactly with the female ear which I had just inspected. The matter was entirely beyond coincidence. There was the same shortening of the pinna, the same broad curve of the upper lobe, the same convolution of the inner cartilage. In all essentials it was the same ear.

"Of course I at once saw the enormous importance of the observation. It was evident that the victim was a blood relation, and probably a very close one. I began to talk to her about her family, and you remember that she at once gave me some exceedingly valuable details.

"In the first place, her sister's name was Sarah, and her address had, until recently, been the same, so that it was quite obvious how the mistake had occurred, and whom the packet was meant for. Then we heard of this steward, married to the third sister, and learned that he had at one time been so intimate with Miss Sarah that she had actually gone up to Liverpool to be near the Browners, but a quarrel had afterwards divided them. This quarrel had put a stop to all communications for some months, so that if Browner had occasion to address a packet to Miss Sarah, he would undoubtedly have done so at her old address.

"And now the matter had begun to straighten itself out wonderfully. We had learned of the existence of this steward, an impulsive man of strong passions—you remember that he threw up what must have been a very superior berth, in order to be nearer to his wife—subject, too, to occasional fits of hard drinking. We had reason to believe that his wife had been murdered, and that a man—presumably a seafaring man—had been murdered at the same time. Jealousy, of course, at once suggests itself as the motive for the crime. And why should these proofs of the deed be sent to Miss Sarah Cushing? Probably because during her residence in Liverpool she had some hand in bringing about the events which led to the tragedy. You will observe that this line of boats calls at Belfast, Dublin, and Waterford; so that, presuming that Browner had committed the deed, and had embarked at once upon his steamer, the *May Day*, Belfast would be the first place at which he could post his terrible packet.

"A second solution was at this stage obviously possible, and although I thought it exceedingly unlikely, I was determined to elucidate it before going further. An unsuccessful lover might have killed Mr. and Mrs. Browner, and the male ear might have belonged to the husband. There were many grave objections to this theory, but it was conceivable. I therefore sent off a telegram to my friend Algar, of the Liverpool force, and asked him to find out if Mrs. Browner were at home, and if Browner had departed in the *May Day*. Then we went on to Wallington to visit Miss Sarah.

"I was curious in the first place, to see how far the family ear had been reproduced in her. Then, of course she might give us very important information, but I was not sanguine that she would. She must have heard of the business the day before, since all Croyden was ringing with it, and she alone could have understood whom the packet was meant for. If she had been willing to help justice she would probably have communicated with the police already. However, it was clearly our duty to see her, so we went. We found that the news of the arrival of the packet—for her illness dated from that time—had such an effect upon her as to bring on brain fever. It was clearer than ever that she understood its full significance, but equally clear that we should have to wait some time for any assistance from her.

"However, we were really independent of her help. Our answers were waiting for us at the police station, where I had directed Algar to send them. Nothing could be more conclusive. Mrs. Browner's house had been closed for more than three days, and the neighbors were of opinion that she had gone South to see her relatives. It had been ascertained at the shipping offices that Browner had left aboard of the May Day, and I calculate that she is due in the Thames to-morrow night. When he arrives he will be met by the obtuse but resolute Lestrade, and I have no doubt that we shall have all our details filled in.

Sherlock Holmes was not disappointed in his expectations. Two days later he received a bulky envelope, which contained a short note from the detective, and a typewritten document which covered several pages of foolscap.

"Lestrade has got him all right," said Holmes, glancing up at me. "Perhaps it would interest you to hear what he says."

"MY DEAR MR. HOLMES,—In accordance with the scheme which we had formed in order to test our theories"—"the 'we' is rather fine, Watson, is it not?"—"I went down to the Albert Dock yesterday at 6 p. m., and boarded the ss. May Day, belonging to the Liverpool, Dublin, and London Steam Packet Company. On inquiry, I found that there was a steward on board of the name of James Browner, and that he had acted during the voyage in such an extraordinary manner that the captain had been compelled to relieve him of his duties. On descending to his berth, I found him seated upon a chest, with his head sunk upon his hands, rocking himself to and fro. He is a big, powerful chap, clean shaven, and very swarthy—something like Aldridge, who helped us in the bogus laundry affair. He jumped up when he heard my business, and I had my whistle to my lips to call a couple of river police, who were round the corner, but he seemed to have no heart in him, and he held out his hands quietly enough for the darbies. We brought him along to the cells, and his box as well, for we thought there might be something incriminating; but, bar a big sharp knife, such as most sailors have, we got nothing for our trouble. However, we find that we shall want no more evidence, for, on being brought before the inspector at the station, he asked leave to make a statement, which was, of course, taken down, just as he made it, by our short hand man. We had three copies typewritten, one of which I inclose. The affair proves, as I always thought it would, to be an extremely simple one, but I am obliged to you for assisting me in my investigation. With kind regards, yours very truly,

G. LESTRADE."

"Hum! The investigation really was a very simple one," remarked Holmes; "but I don't think it struck him in that light when he first called us in. However, let us see what Jim Browner has to say for himself. This is his statement, as made before Inspector Montgomery at the Shadwell Police Station, and it has the advantage of being verbatim:

"Have I anything to say? Yes, I have a deal to say. I have to make a clean breast of it all. You can hang me, or you can leave me alone. I don't care a plug which you do. I tell you I've not shut an eye in sleep since I did it, and I don't believe I ever will again until I get past all waking. Sometimes it's his face, but most generally it's hers. I'm never without one or the other before me. He looks frowning and black-like but she has a kind o' surprise upon her face. Ay, the white lamb, she might well be surprised when she read death on a face that had seldom looked anything but love upon her before.

"But it was Sarah's fault, and may the curse of a broken man put a blight on her and set the blood rotting in her veins! It's not that I want to clear myself. I know that I went back to drink, like the beast that I was. But she would have forgiven me; she would have stuck as close to me as a rope to a block if that woman had never darkened our door. For Sarah Cushing loved me—that's the root of the business—she loved me, until all her love turned to poisonous hate when she knew that I thought more of my wife's foot-mark in the mud than I did of her whole body and soul.

"There were three sisters altogether. The old one was just a good woman, the second was a devil, and the third was an angel. Sarah was thirty-three and Mary was twenty-nine when I married. We were just as happy as the day was long when we set up house together, and in all Liverpool there was no better woman than my Mary. And then we asked Sarah up for a week, and the week grew into a month, and one thing led to another until she was just one of ourselves.

"I was blue-ribbon at that time, and we were putting a little money by, and all was as bright as a new dollar. My God! Whoever would have thought that it could have come to this? Whoever would have dreamed it?

"I used to be home for the week-ends very often, and sometimes, if the ship was held back for cargo, I would have a whole week at a time, and in this way I saw a deal of my sister-in-law Sarah. She was a fine tall woman, black and quick and fierce, with a proud way of carrying her head, and a glint from her eye like the spark from a flint. But when little Mary was there I had never a thought for her, and that I swear as I hope for God's mercy.

"It had seemed to me sometimes that she liked to be alone with me, or to coax me out for a walk with her, but I had never thought anything of that. But one evening my eyes were opened. I had come up from the ship, and found my wife out, but Sarah at home. 'Where's Mary?' I asked. 'Oh, she has gone to pay some accounts.' I was impatient, and paced up and down the room. 'Can't you be happy for five minutes without Mary, Jim?' says she. 'Its a bad compliment to me that you can't be contented with my society for so short a time. 'That's all right, my lass,' said I, putting out my hand towards her in a kindly way, but she had it in both hers in an instant, and they burned as if they were in a fever. I looked into her eyes, and I read it all there. I frowned and drew my hand away. Then she stood by my side in silence for a bit, and then put up her hand and patted me on the shoulder. 'Steady old Jim!' said she; and with a mocking laugh, she ran out of the room.

"Well, from that time Sarah hated me with her whole heart and soul, and she is a woman who can hate, too. I was a fool to let her go on biding with us—a besotted fool—but I never said a word to Mary, for I knew it would grieve her Things went on much as before, but after a time I began to find that there was a bit of a change in Mary herself. She had always been so trusting and so innocent, but now she became queer and suspicious, wanting to know where I had been and what I had been doing, and whom my letters were from, and what I had in my pockets, and a thousand such follies. Day by day she grew queerer and more irritable, and we had causeless rows about nothing. I was fairly puzzled by it all. Sarah avoided me now, but she and Mary were just inseparable. I can see now how she was plotting and scheming and poisoning my wife's mind against me, but I was such a blind beetle that I could not understand it at the time. Then I broke my blue-ribbon and began to drink again, but I think I should not have done it if Mary had been the same as ever. She had some reason to be disgusted with me now, and the gap between us began to be wider and wider. And then this Alec Fairbairn chipped in, and things became a thousand times blacker.

"It was to see Sarah that he came to my house first, but soon it was to see us, for he was a man with winning ways, and he made friends wherever he went. He was a dashing, swaggering chap, smart and curled, who had seen half the world, and could talk of what he had seen. He was good company, I won't deny it, and he had wonderful polite ways with him for a sailor man, so that I think there must have been a time when he knew more of the poop than the forecastle. For a month he was in and out of my house, and never once did it cross my mind that harm might come of his soft, tricky ways. And then at last something made me suspect, and from that day my peace was gone forever.

"It was only a little thing, too. I had come into the parlor unexpected, and as I walked in at the door I saw light of welcome on my wife's face. But as she saw who it was it faded again, and she turned away with a look of disappointment. That was enough for me. There was no one but Alec Fairbairn whose step she could have mistaken for mine. If I could have seen him then I should have killed him, for I have always been like a madman when my temper gets loose. Mary saw the devil's light in my eyes, and she ran forward with her hands on my sleeve. 'Don't, Jim, don't,!' says she. 'Where's Sarah?' I asked. 'In the kitchen,' says she. 'Sarah,' says I, as I went in, 'this man Fairbairn is never to darken my door again.' 'Why not!' says she. 'Because I order it.' 'Oh!' says she, 'if my friends are not good enough for this house, then I am not good enough for it either.' 'You can do what you like,' says I, 'but if Fairbairn shows his face here again, I'll send you one of his ears for a keepsake.' She was frightened by my face, I think, for she never answered a word, and the same evening she left my house.

"Well, I don't know now whether it was pure deviltry on the part of this woman, or whether she thought that she could turn me against my wife by encouraging her to misbehave. Anyway, she took a house just two streets off, and let lodgings to sailors. Fairbairn used to stay there, and Mary would go round to have tea with her sister and him. How often she went I don't know, but I followed her one day, and as I broke in at the door, Fairbairn got away over the back garden wall, like the cowardly skunk that he was. I swore to my wife that I would kill her if I found her in his company again, and I led her back with me sobbing and trembling, and as white as a piece of paper. There was no trace of love between us any longer. I could see that she hated me and feared me, and when the thought of it drove me to drink, then she despised me as well.

"Well, Sarah found that she could not make a living in Liverpool, so she went back, as I understand, to live with her sister in Croydon, and things jogged on much the same as ever at home. And then came this last week and all the misery and ruin.

"It was in this way. We had gone on the May Day for a round voyage of seven days, but a hogshead got loose and started one of our plates, so that we had to put back into port for twelve hours. I left the ship and came home, thinking what a surprise it would be for my wife, and hoping that maybe she would be glad to see me so soon. The thought was in my head as I turned into my own street and at that moment a cab passed me, and there she was, sitting by the side of Fairbairn, the two chatting and laughing, with never a thought for me as I stood watching them.

"I tell you, and I give you my word on it, that from that moment I was not my own master, and it is all like a dim dream when I look back on it. I had been drinking hard of late, and the two things together fairly turned my brain. There's something throbbing in my head now, like a docker's hammer, but that morning I seemed to have all Niagara whizzing and buzzing in my ears.

"Well, I took to my heels, and I ran after the cab. I had a heavy oak stick in my hand, and I tell you that I saw red from the first; but as I ran I got cunning too, and hung back a little to see them without being seen. They pulled up soon at the railway station. There was a good crowd round the booking-office, so I got quite close to them without being seen. They took tickets for New Brighton. So did I, but I got in three carriages behind them. When we reached it they walked along the Parade, and I was never more than a hundred yards from them. At last I saw them hire a boat and start for a row, for it was a very hot day, and they thought no doubt, that it would be cooler on the water.

"It was just as if they had been given into my hands. There was a bit of a haze, and you could not see more than a few hundred yards. I hired a boat for myself, and I pulled after them. I could see the blur of their craft, but they were going nearly as fast as I, and they must have been a long mile from the shore before I caught them up. The haze was like a curtain all round us, and there were three in the middle of it. My God! Shall I ever forget their faces when they saw who was in the boat that was closing in upon them? She screamed out. He swore like a madman, and jabbed at me with an oar, for he must have seen death in my eyes. I got past it, and got one in with my stick that crushed his head like an egg. I would have spared her, perhaps, for all my madness, but she threw her arms round him, crying out to him, and calling him 'Alec.' I struck again, and she lay stretched beside him. I was like a wild beast then that had tasted blood. If Sarah had been there, by the Lord, she should have joined them. I pulled out my knife, and—well, there! I've said enough. It gave me a kind of savage joy when I thought how Sarah would feel when she had such signs as these of what her meddling had brought about. Then I tied the bodies into the boat, stove a plank, and stood by until they had sunk. I knew very well that the owner would think that they had lost their bearings in the haze, and had drifted off out to sea. I cleaned myself up, got back to land, and joined my ship without a soul having a suspicion of what had passed. That night I made up the packet for Sarah Cushing, and next day I sent it from Belfast.

"There you have the whole truth of it. You can hang me, or do what you like with me but you cannot punish me as I have been punished already. I cannot shut my eyes but I see those two faces staring at me—staring at me as they stared when my boat broke through the haze. I killed them quick, but they are killing me slow; and if I have another night of it I shall be either mad or dead before morning. You won't put me alone into a cell, sir? For pity's sake don't, and may you be treated in your day of agony as you treat me now."

"What is the meaning of it, Watson?' said Holmes solemnly, as he laid down the paper "What object is served by this circle of misery and violence and fear? It must tend to some end, or else our universe is ruled by chance, which is unthinkable. But what end? There is the great standing perennial problem to which human reason is as far from an answer as ever."

[THE END.]

Activity of Three North American Volcanoes.

Padernal Peak, situated in the wilds of Rio Arriba County, New Mexico, is reported as now in a violent state of eruption, and is belching forth sulphurous fumes and lava at intervals of about three hours, each lasting about thirty minutes.

This has been going on since the last week in December. The entire top of the mountain, which was almost square and about a mile in extent, is stated to be blown off, and the lava pouring down the sides has already filled up the valley for a half a mile on each side.

A considerable portion of a ruined city of the ancient cliff dwellers will be covered with the slag should the eruptions continue. Padernal Peak is one of the most prominent landmarks of the Territory. The Mexicans say that it burst forth in violent eruption in 1820 and did not cease for nearly a year afterward. It has lain dorment until the present time.

The rumbling noise and lurid light can be plainly heard and seen at Sierra Amarilla, seventy miles distant, and an army of people from there are now at Ariquin to witness the impressive sight.

An earthquake shock felt at Orizaba, Mexico, recently, greatly frightened the people living in the vicinity of the Orizaba volcano.

The town of Orizaba lies about seventy miles by rail southwest of Vera Cruz and about twenty-fire miles south of Mount Orizaba, the snow clad peak of which is said by some to be 17,380 feet above sea level, and by others to be the highest peak in North America.

The residents of Colima, the capital of the Mexican State of that name on the Pacific coast, also feel a nervous apprehension regarding the volcano of Colima, which, reaching a height of about 12,000 feet, looms skyward about thirty miles northeast of the capital. Every night a lurid light illuminates the sky above the mountain, and it is feared that this portends a serious eruption.

The best way to see divine light is to put out your own candle.

Riches never come even by chance to him whose destiny is to be poor.

HOW TO TREAT A WATCH.

You want to know how to care for a fine watch, eh?" said the old watchmaker, as he took off his glasses and wiped them with his handkerchief. "Let me see your watch."

The man handed over his timepiece and the old man examined it carefully.

"Well, sir," he said, finally, "bear in mind continually that a watch is, in its way, almost as delicate a piece of mechanism as the human system. As it is necessary for a man who wishes to keep in good health to take his meals regularly, so it is necessary to feed a watch at regular intervals. You feed a watch by winding it up. Therefore, have a certain hour for winding your watch and never deviate from it.

"In this case there are probably 100 watches. Not one of them is running. On this rack there are eighteen and all are going. I wind them the first thing in the morning, starting with the one in the lower left hand corner. They get their meals regularly.

"You can regulate your own watch if you will only study its peculiarities. See this little arm? Well, if your watch is running slow turn that arm with the blade of your penknife a trifle toward the letter 'F.' If it is running fast turn in the opposite direction toward 'S.' Don't move the arm more than a fraction of an inch, for if that don't suffice, you watch needs a watchmaker's care.

"Don't open the inner case of your watch more than is absolutely necessary. Every time you open it, dust sweeps in upon the works, and it takes very little dust to put a watch out of order. In nine cases out of ten, when a watch is brought to me to be cleaned, I can tell with my glass the business the owner of the watch follows. I examined a watch the other day and told my customer that he worked in wool. He admitted the fact. I had found some small particles of wool in the works of his watch.

"Have a chamois case for your watch, or chamois lining in your watch-pocket. It preserves the case and keeps it from getting scratched. I have heard men say that a watch with a chamois case will keep no better than one without such protection, but that is nonsense.

"If you work near electrical instruments or ride electrical cars, you should have your watch demagnetized. A few years ago such an operation cost a great deal of money. Unprincipled jewelers would tell a customer that in order to make a thorough job of it, every piece in the watch would have to be treated independently, first positively and then negatively, in order to receive a magnetic or electric equilibrium. I have known watchmakers to charge $25 for demagnetizing a watch.

"The real cost is almost nothing. There is a machine for the purpose. You place the watch on the positive side and then on the negative. There is no more work about it than there is in baking a loaf of bread.

"I have heard men say that it was impossible to take a sick watch to a jeweler without being told that the trouble lay in a broken mainspring. But how little men who wear watches know about mainsprings! Broken mainsprings come as a sort of epidemic. Don't laugh, I'm simply telling you a fact. A year ago this Spring I was flooded with watches, the mainsprings of which had snapped. A peculiarity of the breaking was that each of the twenty-five or more turns to the spring was severed, and that the breaks were in a straight line from the centre to the circumference of the spring.

"Every watchmaker in the town had an experience similiar to my own last Spring. We have often compared notes, but we have been unable to account for the epidemics, except upon the hypothesis that atmospheric conditions are the cause.

"What these conditions are remains to be determined. It has been asserted that when the Northern lights are the brightest mainsprings are most apt to snap. You probably remember that last February the aurora borealis was phenomenally brilliant, and yet during the period no watch with a broken mainspring was brought to me. I can't account for the phenomena and I don't believe there is a watchmaker who knows more about it than I do.

"Now let me add a few words as a sort of final. The best as well as the cheapest watch movements in the world are made in England and America. It's all well enough to talk about Swiss watches, but in point of accurate time-keeping there never has been made an expensive Swiss watch that was a whit superior to a good English or American one.

"Wind your watch regularly, regulate it, study its moods in both hot and cold weather, keep the inner case closed, get it demagnetized, and don't call the watchmaker a robber when he tells you that the mainspring of your watch needs renewal."

How To Keep Young.

We find this circulating in the newspapers. The author is unknown to us. It contains much truth.

"Past grief, old angers, revenges, even past pleasures, constantly dwelt upon—all dead, decaying, or decayed thought—make a sepulcher of the soul, a cemetery of the body, and a weather-beaten monument of the face.

"This is age.

"The women who never grow old are the student women—those who daily drink in new chyle through memorizing, thoroughly analyzing, and perfectly assimilating subjects apart from themselves.

"Study is development—is eternal youth.

"The student woman who makes wise use of her acquisitions has no time to corrugate her brow with dread thought of the beauty-destroyer leaping fast behind her.

"Not considered or invited, old age keeps his distance. Brain culture, based on noble motive, means sympathy, heart gentleness, charity, graciousness, enlargement of sense, feeling, power. Such a being cannot become a fossil."

Not toward the years of childhood, but toward the season of youth, should we revert the most longingly, if we come forth out of the latter as innocent as out of the former.

Some stir the fire and poke it out; others make up such a fire that they set the chimney alight, and burn the house down. Too much zeal may be as harmful as too little.

It is our duty to be always happy. True, we may be sorrowful; but if we are unhappy, it is because we have been drinking of some foul stream, and not of our fountain of joy—God Himself—[Chapman.