

IT WILL OUT

OR,
A GREAT MYSTERY.

CHAPTER III.

I confess that I was considerably startled by this fresh proof of the practical nature of my companion's theories. My respect for his powers of analysis increased wondrously. There still remained some lurking suspicion in my mind, however, that the whole thing was a prearranged episode, intended to dazzle me, though what earthly object he could have in taking me in was past my comprehension. When I looked at him he had finished reading the note, and his eyes had assumed the vacant, lack-luster expression which showed mental abstraction.

"How in the world did you deduce that?" I asked.

"Deduce what?" said he, retreating. "Why, that he was a retired sergeant of marines."

"I have no time for trifles," he replied brusquely; then, with a smile, "Excuse my rudeness. You broke the thread of my thoughts; but perhaps it is as well. So you actually were not able to see that that man was a sergeant of marines?"

"No, indeed."

"It was easier to know it than to explain why I know it. If you were asked to prove that two and two made four, you might find some difficulty, and yet you are quite sure of the fact. Even across the street I could see a great blue anchor tattooed on the back of the fellow's hand. That smacked of the sea. He had a military carriage, however, and regulation side-whiskers. There we have the marines. He was a man with some amount of self-importance and a certain air of command. You must have observed the way in which he held his head and swung his cane. A steady respectable, middle-aged man, too, on the face of him—all facts which led me to believe that he had been a sergeant."

"Wonderful!" I ejaculated.

"Commonplace," said Holmes, though I thought from his expression that he was pleased at my evident surprise and admiration. I said just now that there were no criminals. It appears that I am wrong—look at this! He threw me over the note which the commissionaire had brought.

"Why," I cried, as I cast my eye over it, "this is terrible!"

This is the letter which I read to him.

"My Dear Mr. Sherlock Holmes:—There has been a bad business during the night at 3 Lauriston Gardens, off the Brixton Road. Our man on the beat saw a light there about two in the morning, and as the house was an empty one, suspected that something was amiss. He found the door open, and in the front room, which is bare of furniture, discovered the body of a gentleman, well dressed, and having cards in his pocket bearing the name of Enoch J. Drebbler, Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A. There had been no robbery, nor is there any evidence as to how the man met his death. There are marks of blood in the room, but there is no wound upon his person. We are at a loss as to how he came into the empty house; indeed, the whole affair is a puzzle. If you can come round to the house any time before twelve, you will find me there. I have left everything in statu quo until I hear from you. If you are unable to come I shall give you fuller details, and would esteem it a great kindness if you would favor me with your opinion. Yours faithfully,

TOBIAS GREGSON."

"Gregson is the smartest of the Scotland Yards," my friend remarked; "he and Lestrade are the pick of a bad lot. They are both quick and energetic, but conventional—shockingly so. They have their knives into one another too. They are as jealous as a pair of professional beauties. There will be some fun over this case if they are both put upon the scent."

I was amazed at the calm way in which he rippled on.

"Surely there is not a moment to be lost," I cried; "shall I go and order you a cab?"

"I am not sure about whether I shall go. I am the most unbecomingly lazy devil that ever stood in shoe leather—that is, when the fit is on me, for I can be spry enough at times."

"Why it is just such a chance as you have been longing for."

"My dear fellow, what does it matter to me? Suppose I unravel the whole matter, you may be sure that Gregson, Lestrade & Co., will pocket all the credit. That comes of being an unofficial personage."

"But he begs you to help him."

"Yes. He knows that I am his superior, and acknowledges it to me; but he would cut his tongue out before he would own it to any third person. However, we may as well go and have a look. I shall work it out on my own hook. I may have a laugh at them, if I have nothing else. Come on!"

He hustled on his overcoat, and bustled about in a way that showed that an energetic fit had superseded the apathetic one.

"Get your hat," he said.

"You wish me to come?"

"Yes, if you have nothing better to do."

A minute later we were both in a hansom, driving furiously for the Brixton Road.

It was a foggy, cloudy morning, and a dun-colored veil hung over the house-tops, looking like the reflection of the mud-colored streets beneath. My companion was in the best of spirits, and prattled away about Cremona fiddles, and the difference between a Stradivarius and an Amati. As for myself, I was silent, for the dull weather and the melancholy business upon which we were engaged depressed my spirits.

"You don't seem to give much

thought to the matter in hand," I said, at last, interrupting Holmes's musical disquisition.

"No data yet," he answered. "It is a capital mistake to theorize before you have all the evidence. It biases the judgment."

"You will have your data soon," I remarked, pointing with my finger; "this is the Brixton Road, and that is the house, if I am not very much mistaken."

"So it is. Stop, driver, stop!" We were still a hundred yards or so from it, but he insisted upon our alighting, and we finished our journey upon foot.

No. 3 Lauriston Gardens wore an ill-omened and minatory look. It was one of four which stood back some little way from the street, two being occupied and two empty. The latter looked out with three tiers of vacant, melancholy windows, which were blank and dreary, save that here and there a "To Let" card had developed like a cataract upon the bleared panes. A small garden sprinkled over with a scattered eruption of sickly plants separated each of these houses from the street, and was traversed by a narrow pathway, yellowish in color, and consisting apparently of a mixture of clay and gravel. The whole place was very sloppy from the rain which had fallen through the night. The garden was bounded by a three-foot brick wall with a fringe of wood rails upon the top, and against this wall was leaning a stalwart police constable, surrounded by a small knot of loafers, who craned their necks and strained their eyes in the vain hope of catching some glimpse of the proceedings within.

I had imagined that Sherlock Holmes would have at once hurried into the house and plunged into a study of the mystery. Nothing appeared to be further from his intention. With an air of nonchalance which, under the circumstances seemed to me to border upon affectation, he lounged up and down the pavement and gazed vacantly at the ground, the sky, the opposite houses, and the line of railings. Having finished his scrutiny, he proceeded slowly down the path, or, rather, down the fringe of grass which flanked the path, keeping his eyes riveted upon the ground. Twice he stopped, and once I saw him smile and heard him utter an exclamation of satisfaction. There were many marks of footsteps upon the wet, clayey soil, but since the police had been coming and going over it, I was unable to see how my companion could hope to learn anything from it. Still, I had had such extraordinary evidence of the quickness of his perceptive faculties that I had no doubt that he could see a great deal which was hidden from me.

At the door of the house we were met by a tall, white-faced, flaxen-haired man, with a note-book in his hand, who rushed forward and wrung my companion's hand with effusion.

"It is indeed kind of you to come," he said; "I have had everything left untouched."

"Except that!" my friend answered, pointing to the pathway. "If a herd of buffaloes had passed along there could not be a greater mess. No doubt, however, you had drawn your own conclusions, Gregson, before you permitted this."

"I have had so much to do inside the house," the detective said, evasively. "My colleague, Mr. Lestrade, is here. I had relied upon him to look after this."

Holmes glanced at me, and raised his eyebrows sardonically.

"With two such men as yourself and Lestrade upon the ground, there will not be much for a third party to find out," he said.

Gregson rubbed his hands in a self-satisfied way.

"I think that we have done all that can be done," he answered; "it's a queer case, though, and I knew your taste for such things."

"You did not come here in a cab?" asked Sherlock Holmes.

"No, sir."

"Nor Lestrade?"

"No, sir."

"Then let us go and look at the room."

With which inconsistent remark he strode on into the house, followed by Gregson, whose features expressed his astonishment.

A short passage, bare-planked and dusty, led to the kitchen and offices. Two doors opened out of it to the left and to the right. One of these had obviously been closed for many weeks. The other belonged to the dining-room, which was the apartment in which the mysterious affair had occurred. Holmes walked in, and I followed him with that subdued feeling at my heart which the presence of death inspires.

It was a large, square room, looking all the larger for the absence of all furniture. A vulgar, flaring paper adorned the walls, but it was blotched in places with mildew, and here and there great strips had become detached and hung down, exposing the yellow plaster beneath. Opposite the door was a showy fireplace, surmounted by a mantle-piece of imitation white marble. On one corner of this was stuck the stump of a red wax-candle. The solitary window was so dirty that the light was hazy, and uncertain, giving a dull-gray tinge to everything, which was intensified by the thick layer of dust which coated the whole apartment.

All these details I observed afterward. At present my attention was centered upon the single grim, motionless figure, which lay stretched upon the boards, with vacant, sightless eyes staring up at the discolored ceiling. It was that of a man about forty-three or forty-four years of age, middle-sized,

broad-shouldered, with crisp, curling black hair, and a short, stubby beard. He was dressed in a heavy broadcloth frock-coat and waistcoat, with light-colored trousers and immaculate collar and cuffs. A top-hat, well brushed and trim, was placed on the floor beside him. His hands were clinched, and his arms thrown abroad, while his lower limbs were interlocked as though his death struggle had been a grievous one. On his rigid face there stood an expression of horror, and, as it seemed to me, of hatred, such as I have never seen upon human features. This malignant and terrible contortion combined with the low forehead, blunt nose, and prognathous jaw, gave the dead man a singularly simious and ape-like appearance which was increased by his writhing unnatural posture. I have seen death in many forms, but never has it appeared to me in a more fearsome aspect than in that dark, grimy apartment, which looked out upon one of the main arteries of suburban London. Lestrade, lean and ferret-like as ever, was standing by the doorway, and greeted my companion and myself.

"This case will make a stir, sir," he remarked. "It beats anything I have seen, and I am no chicken."

"There is no clew," said Gregson. "None at all," chimed in Lestrade. Sherlock Holmes, approached the body and kneeling down, examined it intently.

"You are sure that there is no wound?" he asked, pointing to numerous gouts and splashes of blood which lay all around.

"Positive!" cried both detectives.

"Then, of course, this blood belongs to a second individual—presumably the murderer, if murder has been committed. It reminds me of the circumstances attendant on the death of Van Jansen, in Utrecht, in the year '34. Do you remember the case, Gregson?"

"No, sir."

"Read it up—you really should. There is nothing new under the sun. It has all been done before."

As he spoke, his nimble fingers were flying here, there and everywhere, feeling, pressing, unbuttoning, examining, while his eyes wore the same far-away expression which I have already remarked upon. So swiftly was the examination made that one would hardly have guessed the minuteness with which it was conducted. Finally, he sniffed the dead man's lips, and then glanced at the soles of his patent-leather boots.

"He has not been moved at all?" he asked.

"No more than was necessary for the purpose of our examination."

"You can take him to the mortuary now," he said. "There is nothing more to be learned."

Gregson had a stretcher and four men at hand. At his call they entered the room, and the stranger was lifted and carried out. As they raised him, a ring tinkled down and rolled across the floor. Lestrade grabbed it up and stared at it with mystified eyes.

"There's been a woman here," he cried. "It's a woman's wedding-ring."

He held it out, as he spoke, upon the palm of his hand. We all gathered round him and gazed at it. There could be no doubt that that circle of plain gold had once adorned the finger of a bride.

"This complicates matters," said Gregson. "Heaven knows, they were complicated enough before!"

"You're sure it doesn't simplify them?" observed Holmes. "There's nothing to be learned by staring at it. What did you find in his pockets?"

"We have it all here," said Gregson, pointing to a litter of objects upon one of the bottom steps of the stairs. "A gold watch, No. 97,163, by Barraud, of London. Gold Albert chain, very heavy and solid. Gold ring, with Masonic device. Gold pin—bull-dog's head, with rubies as eyes. Ruffian-leather card-case, with cards of Enoch J. Drebbler, of Cleveland, corresponding with the E. J. D. upon the linen. No purse, but loose money to the extent of seven pounds thirteen. Pocket edition of Boccaccio's 'Decameron,' with name of Joseph Stangerson upon the fly-leaf. Two letters—one addressed to E. J. Drebbler and one to Joseph Stangerson."

"At what address?"

"American Exchange, Strand—to be left till called for. They are both from the Guion Steamship Company, and refer to the sailing of their boats from Liverpool. It is clear that this unfortunate man was about to return to New York."

"Have you made any inquiries as to this man Stangerson?"

"I did it at once, sir," said Gregson. "I have had advertisements sent to all the newspapers, and one of my men has gone to the American Exchange, but he has not returned yet."

"Have you sent to Cleveland?"

"We telegraphed this morning."

"How did you word your inquiries?"

"We simply detailed the circumstances, and said that we should be glad of any information which could help us."

"You did not ask for particulars on any point which appeared to you to be crucial?"

"I asked about Stangerson."

"Nothing else? Is there no circumstance on which this whole case appears to hinge? Will you not telegraph again?"

"I have said all I have to say," said Gregson, in an offended voice.

Sherlock Holmes chuckled to himself, and appeared to be about to make some remark, when Lestrade, who had been in the front room while we were holding this conversation in the hall, reappeared upon the scene, rubbing his hands in a pompous and self-satisfied manner.

"Mr. Gregson," he said, "I have just made a discovery of the highest importance, and one which would have been overlooked had I not made a careful examination of the walls."

To Be Continued.

CLEAR AS MUD.

Mrs. Bibbs, suspiciously—I don't see how it is that type-writer girl of yours manages to dress better than I can.

Mr. Bibbs—Why, you see, she works for a living, and you don't.

GUN TO FIGHT BALLOONS.

New Idea in Ordnance Which has Been Evolved by the United States War Department.

A balloon gun, or rather a gun to demolish balloons, is the last evolution in artillery, and as in the case of so many of the world's death dealing contrivances, it comes from that supposedly most unwarlike of countries the United States.

The gun has just been completed, having been constructed by a firm of ordnance-makers, from plans drawn at the Rock Island Arsenal. It is purely an experiment, and if it proves efficient others like it will be built.

The U.S. War Department has been for some time investigating the problem of fighting-balloons, inasmuch as the latter are destined unquestionably to be an important factor in the warfare of the not-distant future. The balloon gun is mounted on a wagon and so placed upon "universal" bearings as to be aimed instantly at any point from zenith to horizon. After the manner of the machine weapon, it throws a continuous stream of projectiles like water turned on from a hose, and no gas exposed to its discharge for many months could possibly stay aloft.

The projectiles are conical and of solid steel, having no bursting charge, and weigh a pound apiece. A hollow conical stand fastened to the floor, of the wagon supports the gun, the arrangement being such that when it has to be aimed directly upward the marksman must lie beneath it. Its effective range is

A MILE AND A QUARTER.

Military experts whose opinions deserve respect express the belief that the next war between any two great powers, will evolve the perfected fighting-balloon—perfected, that is to say, up to the point of being an efficient engine of destruction. Already there has been devised a so-called aerial torpedo, which bears about the same relation to the future war-balloon that is borne by the Whitehead torpedo to the modern torpedo-boat.

This aerial torpedo is a small balloon which carries, suspended beneath it, about thirty pounds of dynamite or other high explosive done up in a suitable package. In its neck it has a small metal cylinder containing a simple electrical contrivance which will produce a spark at any time for which the instrument is set in advance.

The direction and force of the wind being ascertained the little balloon may be floated over a fortress or armed camp, and, if its mechanical apparatus has been set correctly, the spark will at the proper moment set fire to the gas in the balloon, causing the latter to explode and to drop its deadly load.

It has been ascertained by recent experiments in Germany that shrapnel can be used against balloons with great effect at moderate ranges, and the War Department contemplates making similar trials with its new balloon gun, in which actual balloons will be floated and employed, as targets. This will involve the destruction of a good many gas bags which cost money, but in recent years Uncle Sam has not paused at liberal expenditure of cash where military knowledge was to be secured. Millions of dollars' worth of guns and armor plate have been destroyed at the proving grounds to find out how many times the former could be fired without losing their usefulness and what shocks could be withstood by the latter.

WIDOWS AND BACHELORS.

Men and women have such different views on some subjects. Take matrimony, for instance. When a widower chooses a second helpmate he looks about him for a spinster, but a widow doesn't care two straws for a bachelor. She prefers a widower with a fund of domestic experience to draw on. These are facts. Statistics prove them. As a general thing the man who spends one-half of his time in memorizing statistics and the other half firing them at his friends—or rather his enemies, he has no friends—is an unmitigated nuisance, but he is, withal, a useful and even necessary evil, and we tolerate him with resignation. There are oases in the desert of his tiresomeness. Once in a while when floundering in the depths of his varied information he tells us something we would have never known, or perhaps would not even have thought of had we not been blessed by his untiring diligence.

One of the choice morsels of information recently gleaned is the above-mentioned peculiarity of the sexes when hunting substitutes for lost partners. Statistics do not explain why this condition exists, but the statistician does. In fact he offers several explanations. Like the man at the show, you can pay your money and take your choice. In the first place, he says, a man who has lost his other half is much more anxious to marry than a woman. Indeed, so enamored is he of the matrimonial state that he is willing to give it not only a second, but even a third or fourth trial if necessary, and each time he chooses a spinster. This the statistician partly accounts for by stating that as the female population greatly exceeds the male, each man feels that it is his bounden duty to assist as many women as possible into their true sphere of the possible circle.

To dissenters from this philanthropic view the statistician offers another suggestion to the effect that a man likes to be "boss" in his own home, and having learned from experience that after a woman has been married a few years she is pretty apt to take the reins of the household in her own hands, he prefers some one who is still uninitiated, so that he may enjoy at least a few months of lording it before she gets broken in. Whether either of these hypotheses is correct it would be impossible to state positively, but certain it is that a widower fights as strenuously against an alliance with a bereaved representative of the opposite sex as did Mr. Pickwick when threatened with matrimonial entanglement with Mrs. Bardell, and quite frequently with less gratifying success.

During the year the statistician studied matrimonial reports of the most populous districts of the eastern and middle states and discovered that in that section and during that time 46,343 widowers took 46,343 spinsters unto themselves to love, cherish and protect, while only 6,325 widows were so honored. As that arrangement disposed of but a small proportion of lonely females, 10,625 of them were forced to find solace by taking as many single gentlemen from the realms of bachelorhood and transforming them into obedient benedicts.

Whether these facts will be of any special benefit to anybody, neither the scribe nor the statistician pretends to say. They are merely given for what they are worth as conditions of life.

A Victim of Neuralgia

MRS. ROBERTS, OF MONTREAL TELLS A WONDERFUL STORY.

She Was a Sufferer for Some Seven Years, and Medical Treatment Failed to Give Her More Than Temporary Relief—A Herald Reporter Investigates the Case. From the Herald, Montreal.

"I thought it was something wonderful when I went three days without being sick," said Mrs. Annie Roberts to a representative of the Montreal Herald, referring to her remarkable recovery from an illness of over seven long years. Mr. and Mrs. Roberts reside at 34 Wolfe street, Montreal, and the reporter was cordially welcomed when he went to enquire as to the truth of the report that Mrs. Roberts had been restored to health through the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. Mr. and Mrs. Roberts came to Canada from England a little more than five years ago, and Mrs. Roberts' illness began while still in the Old Country. "I was really the victim of a combination of troubles," says Mrs. Roberts. "For several years, neuralgia with all its excruciating pains, has been my almost constant attendant. Added to this I was attacked with rheumatism and palpitation of the heart, and for the last five years, was not able to get out of doors during the winter months. Sometimes I felt as though those terrible pains in my head would drive me mad; my nerves were all unstrung and a knock at the door would send me nearly crazy. I was treated at different times by four doctors since coming to Montreal, but without any lasting good, and I had given up hope of ever being better on this side of the grave. A friend of mine whose father had been helpless for two years, but was restored by Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, urged me to try them. My husband asked the doctor who was attending me what he thought of them, and the doctor replied that he believed them to be a good medicine. This persuaded me to begin their use. No one who sees me now can form any idea of my condition when I began taking Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and I had only taken three boxes when I began to recover. But seven years of pain had nearly shattered my constitution and I did not look for a speedy recovery, and I was more than gratified to find that after I had used I think about a dozen and a half boxes, I was fully restored to health. It seemed all the more wonderful because the doctors both in England and here never done more than give me temporary relief, and their treatment was much more expensive. The past summer was the first in years that I really enjoyed life, and I was able to go on a visit to Radnor Forges. Dr. Williams' Pink Pills have also been of much benefit to my daughter Violet. She is just nine years old, but she suffered a great deal from pains in the back and sick headache, but the pills have made her feel all right again."

"I never fail to recommend Dr. Williams' Pink Pills when any of my friends are ill," said Mrs. Roberts. "While visiting at Radnor Forges, I urged a young lady friend who has long been a sufferer from curvature of the spine, and obstinate constipation to try them, and they have done her a vast amount of good."

The reporter confesses that Mrs. Roberts' story is a wonderful one. That she is now thoroughly well is clear from her face, her manner and her happy spirit. Mr. and Mrs. Roberts are intelligent and reliable people. Mr. Roberts is head engineer in the biscuit works of Viaw & Frere, the wealthiest firm in this line in the Dominion, and he fully endorses the good words his wife has to say in favor of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. In fact, he says the speedy cure they wrought in his wife's case has saved him many dollars.

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills have no purgative action, and so do not weaken the body. They build up the blood by supplying it with the elements which enrich it, and strengthen the nerves. In this way they cure all diseases having their origin in poor and watery blood. Always refuse the Pink colored imitations which some dealers offer. See that the full name Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People is on every package you buy. If in doubt, send direct to the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont., and they will be mailed post paid at 50¢ a box, or six boxes for \$2.50.