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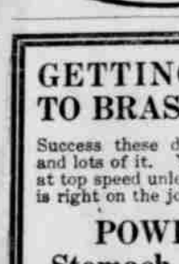

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The Chronicles of Addington Peace

By B. FLETCHER ROBINSON

Co-Author with A. Conan Doyle of "The Hound of the Baskervilles," &c.

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THE STORY OF AMAROFF THE POLE

(Continued.)

The serjeant stepped forward and whispered. The man was sufficiently satisfied, for he dropped the slide at once, and the door swung back to admit us; the hairy-faced porter bowing a welcome in polite submission. The inspector led the way up the stairs, and I followed at his heels. The serjeant had disappeared.

It was a broad, low room in which we found ourselves, the rafters of the roof unhidden by the plaster of a ceiling. Round the walls on benches ranged behind tables a dozen men sat smoking and drinking. The chatter of talk faded away as we entered. In silence they stared at us, calmly, judiciously, without fear or curiosity. I could not have imagined a more composed and resolute company. I felt that I carried myself awkwardly, as an impertinent intruder should; but the inspector sauntered across the room to a bar on the further side as calmly as if he were the oldest and most valued member in the club.

A pale-faced man with a stained and yellow beard rose from his seat behind the glasses. His eyes were fixed on Peace with a weak, pathetic expression like a dog in pain.

"Good evening, Mr. Greatman," said the inspector. "Can I have a word with you?"

"Yes, sir, if you will kindly step into my private room," he answered in excellent English, opening a hatch in the bar. "This is the way, sir, if you will follow me."

We walked after him down a short passage and stopped before the darkness of an open door. A spurt of a match and the gas jet flared upon a bare chamber, hung with a gaudy paper and furnished with half a dozen wooden chairs set round a deal table in the center. In place of a carpet, our feet grated upon a smooth sprinkling of that grey sand which may still be found in old-fashioned inns. It was here then, if the detectives were not mistaken, that this crime had found a climax, this sordid murder not thirty hours old.

"If you would like a fire, gentlemen," suggested Greatman, "I can easily fetch some coals."

"Pray do not trouble yourself," said the inspector, politely. "My name is Peace, of the Criminal Investigation Department, and I called to inquire if you can tell me anything concerning the murder of the sculptor, Amaroff."

"I know nothing."

"That is strange, seeing that he was strangled in this very room."

"Here?" cried the Pole, with a stare of unbelief changing into sudden terror. "Here—in my room."

"So I believe," said Peace.

The man swayed for an instant, grasping at the back of a chair, and then dropped to the ground, moaning, his face covered with his hands. In that crouching figure before us was written the extremity of despair.

"Come, come, Greatman, pull yourself together," said the inspector, tapping him kindly on the shoulder. "If you are innocent, there is no need to make all this fuss."

"It was Nicolin who lied to me," he cried, looking up with bewildered eyes.

"Very probably," said Peace, "it is a habit with him."

"Yet it was I, miserable that I am, who made the meeting between them. Before Heaven, it was with the innocence of a child. If those my comrades of the club but knew——"

He hesitated, his eyes searching the room in sudden terror.

"Oblige me by seeing that we have no comrades already at the keyhole, Mr. Phillips," said Peace.

There was no one at the door; no one in the dark passage; and when I in a crumpled heap returned I found that Peace had lifted the caretaker to a chair, where he sat.

"You can trust us," the detective was saying. "Believe me, Greatman, it will be best for yourself that you hide nothing."

And so with many fierce cries and protestations, this poor creature began his story.

It was Nicolin, it seemed, who had discovered that Greatman, the caretaker of the Brutus Club, was one and the same with the forger, Ivan Kroll, of Odessa, who had been wanted by the Russian police for close upon twelve years. But having a shrewd head on his shoulders, Nicolin made no immediate use of his knowledge. For forgery a man might be extradited from England. Once in Russia the charge would be altered to nihilism, and then—Siberia. It was not pleasant for the caretaker of a nihilist club to be at the mercy of a black-bearded spy lounging on the step outside. "It was that which drove me to the brandy," said poor Greatman, alias Kroll.

About the end of August there began, he continued, a duel of wits between the two men, Amaroff and Nicolin, the reasons and causes of which did not, if he might be permitted to say, concern us. Nicolin's career was dependent on his success. For him, failure spelt permanent disgrace. Yet it was Amaroff who was playing with his opponent as a cat with a mouse, confusing and surprising him at every turn, driving him, indeed, when time grew pressing, into desperate measures. At the last he formed a plan, did Nicolin, a scheme worthy of his most cunning brain.

"This, then, he did," ended the poor caretaker. "He came to me—I who had so great love and honor for Amaroff, my friend, I whom he had turned from crime and aided to earn a wage in honesty—he came to me and he says: 'Kroll, in my pocket is a warrant that will send you back to the snow places in the East; do you fear me, my good Kroll?' And I feared him. 'See, now,' he said, 'we desire to see your friend Amaroff for a little talk. We cannot harm him here in this mad country. Contrive a trick, bring him into your private room behind the bar. Give us the key of the yard door that we may come secretly to him—and afterwards you will hear no more of Siberia from me. Do you consent?'

"Gentlemen, I believed him, also having fear of the snow places; and I consented.

"So Amaroff answered my call, and with some excuse I left him in this room. It was at a time when few members were in the club—about seven of the clock. And that, as I live, is all I have to tell. I waited at my seat behind the bar. I saw nothing, heard nothing—and at last when I went to my room, behold it was empty! I tried to suspect no wrong—but I did not sleep that night. In the morning I saw in the papers that Amaroff, my friend, was dead, and how he died I could not tell."

"So Nicolin won the game," suggested Peace, softly. "And there will be no regrettable incident when the Czar enters Paris the day after to-morrow."

"Of that I have no knowledge," said Greatman; but I saw a sudden resolution shine in his face that seemed to put new heart into the man.

"Well, Mr. Phillips," said the inspector, turning upon me with a warning quiver of the left eyelid, "it is to meet Nicolin at the studio by seven tomorrow morning. We must get to bed early."

"Certainly," I said. I was rather out of my depth, but I take myself this credit that I did not show it.

"Then do you search the studio to-morrow?" asked Greatman.

"Yes—it has been arranged."

"But will you not first arrest this Nicolin, this murderer?"

"My dear Mr. Greatman," said the inspector, "you have told us your story, and I thank you for your confidence. But I advise you now to leave things alone. I will see justice done—don't be afraid about that. For the rest, please to keep a silent tongue in your head—it will be safer. There is still Siberia for Ivan Kroll just as there may be dangers from your friends in the club yonder for Julius Greatman, who arranged so indiscreet a meeting in his private room. Good night to you."

The caretaker did not reply, but opening the door, bowed us into the passage that led to the big room. We had not taken half a dozen steps when I looked back over my shoulder, expecting to see him behind us. But he had vanished.

"He's gone," I whispered, gripping my companion by the arm.

"I know, I know. Keep quiet."

As we stood there listening, I heard the sudden clatter of boots upon a stairway, and then silence.

"It appears to me that we shall have an interesting evening," said Addington Peace.

A twist in the passage, a turn through a door, and we were rattling down the back stairs and out into a moonlit yard. In the denser darkness under the walls I made out a double row of big barrows, from which there came a subtle aroma in which stale fish predominated. From amongst them a tall shadow arose and came slipping to our side.

"He's off, sir," said the serjeant, for it was he. "Rushed by, shaking his fist and talking to himself like a madman. Where has he gone, do you think?"

"To Amaroff's studio; and we must get there before him. The nearest cab rank, if you please, Jackson."

We ran through the yard, hustled up the narrow streets, lost ourselves, as far as I was concerned, in a maze of alleys, and finally shot out into a roaring thoroughfare, crowded with a strolling population. No cab was in sight. Opposite the lamps of the underground station the inspector stopped us.

"It would be quicker," he said, with a jerk of the head, and we turned into the booking-office and galloped down the stairs. Luck was with us, and we tumbled into a carriage as the train moved away.

We were not alone, and we journeyed in silence. Station after station slipped by, until at last we were in the southwestern district again. My excitement increased as we fled up the stairs of the South Kensington station. Here was a new sensation, keen virile, natural; here was a race worth the trouble it involved. I did not understand; but I knew that on our speed much depended. Indeed, I could have shouted aloud, but for the influence of those two quiet, unemotional figures that trotted on either hand.

I regretted nothing—an hour of this was worth a year of artistic contemplation.

At the corner we found a hansom and soon were rattling down the King's Road. When the cab stopped to the inspector's order, it was not as I expected, at the corner of Harden Place, but a street preceding it. Down this we walked quickly until we came upon a seedy-looking fellow with a red muffler about his neck, leaning against the wall.

I was surprised when we halted in front of him.

"Good evening, Harrison," said the inspector. "Anything to report?"

"They're there, sir. They came about ten minutes ago. Job and Turner are watching the door in Harden Place, and I came here."

"They didn't see any of you?"

"No, sir, I am sure of it."

"You had better join the others in Harden Place. Keep within hearing and if I whistle, kick in the side door of the studio—it can be done. There is a man who I fancy will have a key to the door that is due in about five minutes. If I have not whistled before he arrives, let him through. You understand?"

"Yes, sir."

The detective faded discreetly into the darkness, while the inspector turned to me.

"There may be complications, Mr. Phillips, and no slight danger. I must ask you to go home."

"I shall do nothing of the sort."

"Mutiny," he said; but I could see that he was smiling. "You are rather a fraud, Mr. Phillips—rather a fraud, you know. There is more of a fighter than a dilletante in you, after all. Come, then, over you go."

(CHRONICLES TO BE CONTINUED.)

"COME, COME, GREATMAN, PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER," SAID THE INSPECTOR

She Says We're Much Too Slender.

A Russian princess who is now in Washington has created a commotion in social circles by criticising the American women for being much too thin. "American women of good breeding are slender to the point of emaciation," says the princess. "They hurry too much, that is the reason. Everywhere you see the American, whether she is going shopping, visiting or elsewhere, she is moving fast, as if she did not have a second to lose." The princess doesn't seem to realize that just now the one aim of the American woman is the extreme slenderness which she finds so unlovely.

For a New Umbrella.

Before using a new umbrella inject a small quantity of vaseline into the hinge portions of the frame. Vaseline will not spread like oil and spoil the covering, and is a sure preventive against rust. Wet umbrellas should be stood on their handles to dry; this allows the water to run out of them, instead of into the part where the silk and ribs meet, thus causing the metal to rust and the silk to rot.

AS TO TAILOR MADES

Basque Coat Is Seen Everywhere on These Costumes.

Revival of the Newmarket and the Directoire Is Also Noted—Trimness Always the Main Thing to Be Attained.

NEW YORK.—Every woman is at present discussing the new tailor mades. They loom so large on the modistic horizon and the details are just now so enthralling that there is scarcely a tea table where the subject does not rise to the surface above the clatter of the teacups during the hour between 4:30 and 5:30. Those, too, who have been too precipitate in choosing their outfits for the coming months are repenting at leisure, in view of the tempting models over which the tailor is expending much thought and attention.

The basque coat is making its appearance to such an extent that it can no longer be ignored. Everywhere one sees it.

The accordion plaited basque has struck the newest note of all. It is chiefly to be seen in conjunction with the velvet suit, and is, of course, only possible to the woman of tall, slight figure, who has nothing to fear from the introduction of superfluous fullness, the basque being about fourteen inches deep and plaited as closely as the young debutante's ball gown of the eighties. In nearly every other case the fronts of the basque are cut away, while there is more than a mere suggestion of the Newmarket coat which was worn twenty-five years ago. In the pocket flaps which appear on the seam of the basque, the manner in which the latter is split up in the middle of the back, and in the trim tautness of the whole costume.

With the revival of the Newmarket there is, beside, the revival of the directoire. The tall, slim woman looks her best in the little cutaway coat, with its long postilion coattails, its upstanding turnover collar, and its huge striped revers. These latter are a feature of the coats in almost all styles for winter wear.

But where is the Robespierre collar where the morning costume is concerned.

Want of Trimness Gone.

Every woman who looked confidently for these features of fashion among the new styles is metaphorically rubbing her eyes at their sudden disappearance.

Gone, in fact, is everything which seems to suggest a certain sloppiness of style or want of trimness. Once again we have our collar bands concealing the throat as completely as we revealed it in the summer and surmounted, as the season advanced, with a tiny strip of fur, which, against the pink and creamy smoothness of a good skin, will act as a most potent and valuable beautifier. The new and curious relics of ornamentation as regards these collars is supplied by a little square of flimsy lace, hardly larger than a doily, which hangs suspended from the top of the collar in front over the vest like a bib which has been attached under the chin.

And here, indeed, is the new note modified and softened into feminine guise, but unquestionably following the masculine idea, nevertheless.

The tailor suit which is to be first in favor and most in demand is the suit which faithfully follows the lines of a man's morning coat in some thick and heavy but plain and fairly smooth material, while the skirt is of striped suiting, such as supplies the correct trousers with the morning coat. Failing this strict adherence to a man's fashions, there are numbers which are being made in two materials, the coat being perhaps fashioned of corduroy velvet with a thick heavy rib, and the skirt of plain cloth, or the new "wall paper" velvet, which has a pattern stamped lightly upon it, but not embossed, so that it suggests a flat wall paper design and which is also worn with a cloth skirt.

Mole is, curiously enough, once again the popular color. One sees quantities of mole suits, just as one did five years ago, and with these there are waistcoats of bright tomato red or tangerine cloth or velvet trimmed with tarnished gold or silver braid, and perhaps a few buttons.

Three-Quarter Length Coat.

The three-quarter length coat bids fair to replace the long coat of last season and some of the models are attractive enough to insure the success of this new fashion. Those of clothing trimmed with fur seem particularly good in that they may do double duty, serving for both day and evening wear. Quite the prettiest Paris design up to date is one carried out in old rose colored broadcloth or simple but new lines. This model is edged about neck, hem and sleeves with black fox fur bands of varying widths and a matching muff is carried, giving a correct finishing detail to which the French woman always gives careful attention. Cut on kimono lines with diagonal closing in front, the sleeves are cut separate and attached flatly to the coat shoulders without running off the corners.

Some of the new one piece dresses that are worn under the three-quarter length coats are real style innovations. A one piece frock on tailored lines ideal for a short, stout figure, is of black velvet opening over a white full length vest front that shows bib fashion above the empire belt. Below the black velvet empire belt is placed one of folded white satin, so that the becoming empire effect is retained while the natural waist line is defined by the vest belt. While satin buttons and overbound buttonholes close the white satin front and the black velvet strap fastens under a cord ornament. Plaited wrist ruffles of white net are almost covered by plaited black chiffon.

More elaborate in workmanship is another gown with skirt of oddly draped black satin, as if the train had been drawn toward the front. The upper part of the corsage is red moire. This introduces also the once popular peleine collar, a fashion detail noted in many of the late models. This peleine collar, a fashion detail noted in many of the late models. This peleine is lined and piped with black satin; the revers and cuffs are of the same material.

Style Lines Break Traditions.

A curious point of the afternoon gown is the way the style lines break the usual traditions. The neck of the dress is cut lower than is usual in day time models; deep, transparent yokes are left unlined or with a single sheer thickness of chiffon, and the ankle peeps startlingly through the crossed skirt draperies or slashed seams.

The muff of this winter is to continue the prestige gained for its predecessors of last year and previous ones and is to be worn morning, noon, or night. There are evening muffs as well as day muffs, and muffs for every occasion, for the car, pedestrianism, the theaters, visiting, and so forth.

Why does not some one revive the girdle muff, the muff shown in an old drawing of an English woman of 1588? It is depicted as a trifle of a muff, a mere fairly when compared with the giants of today. But it has a more than passing charm about from the girdle and would own the merit of always being there when wanted and not easily lost. Alas! the modern muff is of a truly vagrant behavior.

The great big fat muff is the smart one of the day and the basis upon which others are designed. Made of tailless ermine, it is given a border ing of skunk and a demure little black velvet bow through which a few sprigs of heather are thrust.

To agree with the ermine and skunk muff a quaint looking tippet and cap are worn. The tippet has a high, fold over collar, and it and the cap are decorated with skunk. Another black velvet bow is added, centered like the first, with mother-of-pearl slide.

One variation of the flat muff has a triangular front and another has double points.

A third has rounded corners and is trimmed with a broad band of opossum, finished at one side by a plaque of handsome embroidery in the bright peasant colors of Bulgaria.

The rest of the muff is carried out in black panne, of which material the cap is made. A throatlet of opossum completes the trio in the case.

The bolster muff recalls the fashions of the time of Charles II. There is on record a muff of that period that sounds delightfully smart. It was made of yellow silk with a black fur edging, and another developed in miniver has a modern note about it, for it was trimmed with a blue rosette.

Walking Costume.

Cloth, serge, tweed, or any firm woolen fabric could be employed to advantage in the costume illustrated.

The skirt has a double wrapped seam down center of front; trimmed above the rounded corners with buttons, a piece of material fills in the opening.

The coat is a little high-waisted, and has the joining of basque to bodice part hidden by a patent leather belt buckled in front; buttons trim down center of front, also the collar and sleeves.

Felt hat, trimmed with velvet and a feather mount.

Materials required: 5 yards 42 inches wide, 1 dozen large and 1½ dozen small buttons, 5 yards silk for lining coat.

Box Table.

A handy place to keep doilies, embroideries and crochet material, patterns, etc., can be made of four cheese boxes, well washed and dried and lined with any suitable material, according to a writer in the Modern Priscilla. Use a cord at the top edge of the box to cover the edge of lining. The legs are made of eight pieces of half round molding, each two feet long. Two strips of the molding are used side by side for each leg and are attached to the boxes with screws. One leg is hinged so that the case can be opened between first and second boxes, the next leg sawed completely off at the same point, and the next one half way. You can stain paint or varnish it when complete. A nice finish for the top would be one of the box lids. Make a cushion to fit onto it. To use the other lids get material for four legs and nail the lids five inches apart to the legs. This is handy for setting things to cool, etc.

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For a Rubber Plant.

When the leaves turn yellow and fall off the plant is dying. Feed it a tablespoonful of olive oil every two weeks. Also wash the plant once a week with warm soapsuds, letting the warm suds moisten the earth thoroughly. Sprinkle every other day. This same treatment should be used on ferns.

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WILTON WHEELER, Morris, Ala.

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G. G. JONES, Baldwin, L. I., writes:—"I used Sloan's Liniment for broken sinews above the knee cap caused by a fall and to my great satisfaction was able to resume work in less than three weeks after the accident."

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