

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 TERROR IN THE SNOW

(Continued.)

"Baron Steen," he said, "met with his death on an open path between a shallow duck-pond and a little pavilion. He had fought hard for life, had rolled and struggled with his enemy. There were four or five punctured wounds in his throat and neck, from which he had bled profusely. And now for the thing that killed him—whatever it was. It could not have fled down the cliff path, for the boat's crew waiting below had heard the screams, and had come running up by that way. They were with him when we arrived, and assured me they had seen nothing. It could not have turned to the right or left, for, though the paths had been swept clean—doubtless by the baron's orders, for he would not desire his way of escape to be easily traced—the snow on either side lay in unbroken levels. It could only have retired by the yew avenue, and it did not break through the hedge. That, again, the snow proved clearly. So, we may take it, that whatever the thing may have been which you saw—it killed Baron Steen; further, it escaped into the house—this, you will remember, we decided in the garden. Let us imagine it was a man—that you were deceived by the uncertain light. His clothes must of necessity have been drenched in blood. He could not have struggled so fiercely with his victim and escaped those fatal signs. Yet, he cannot have burned his clothes, for the fires are downstairs where people were passing. Nor can he have washed them, for neither the bath rooms nor the bedroom basins have been recently used. I have spent some time in searching boxes and wardrobes with no result. Stranger still, as far as my limited information goes, every one in the house can prove an alibi—save two."

"And who are they?" I asked eagerly.

"Mr. Henderson, the baron's valet—and yourself."

"Inspector Peace—" I began angrily.

"Tut, tut, my dear Mr. Phillips. I was merely stating the facts. Mr. Henderson's case, however, presents an interesting feature, for he has run away."

"Run away," I said. "Then that settles it."

"Not altogether, I'm afraid. I think it is more a matter of theft than murder with Mr. Henderson."

I stared at him in silence as he sat there, with his little hands clasped upon his lap, a picture of irritating composure.

"Peace," I said, struggling to control my voice. "What are you hiding from me? It is something inhuman, unnatural that has done this dreadful thing."

The little detective stretched himself, yawned, and then rose to his feet.

"I have no opinion except that I think you had better go to bed. Don't lock your door, for I may find time for an hour's sleep on your sofa before morning."

The news was out after breakfast—the news that led to mild hysterics and scurrying of lady's-maids to the packing of boxes, and the chastened sorrow of those gentlemen who owed the baron money. Through all the turmoil of the morning moved the little detective, the most sympathetic of men. It was he who apologized so humbly for the locked doors of the bath-rooms; he who superintended the lighting of fires, and the making of the beds, and the packing of trunks for the station so closely that the housemaids were convinced that he entertained a secret passion for each one of them; it was he who announced Henderson's robbery of the gold plate, following it by information as to the culprit's arrest. The establishment had by this time become convinced that Henderson was the murderer, and breathed relief at the news.

They had brought the body of Baron Steen to the house early in the morning—it had been laid in the garden pavilion on its first discovery.

With death in so strange a form present among us, I was disgusted by the noise and bustle, the gossip and chatter amongst the guests of the dead man. I wandered off in search of the one person who had seemed sincerely affected by the news, the young secretary, Maurice Terry. He was nowhere to be found. A servant

whom I inquired told me that the secretary had kept to his bed, being greatly unnerved by the tragedy, and I strolled up the stairs again on an errand of consolation. The door was locked, and there came no answer to my continued tapping.

"Terry," I called through the keyhole. "It is I, Phillips; won't you let me in?"

"I have a key that will fit, if you will kindly stand aside," suggested a modest voice.

I rose from my knees to find the inspector at my elbow.

"It would be a gross intrusion," I told him. "If he wishes to be alone with his sorrow, we have no right to disturb him."

"He is seriously ill."

"By borrowing a gardener's ladder and looking through his window. He is unconscious, or was ten minutes ago."

A skillful twist or two with a bit of wire and the key was pushed from the lock. The duplicate opened the door. Peace walked into the room, and I followed at his heels.

On his bed, fully dressed, lay poor Terry, with a face paler than his pillows. His breath came and went in short, painful gasps. One hand strayed continuously about his throat, groping and plucking at his collar with feverish unrest. It was a very painful spectacle.

"I will send for a doctor at once," I whispered, stepping to the bell. But Peace held up a warning hand.

"Come here," he said. "I have something to show you."

With movements as tender as a woman's he unfastened the man's collar and slipped out the stud. Then he paused. The eyes that watched me had turned cold and hard.

"If it is as I suspect, you may be called as a witness. Do you object?"

"Yes; but I shall not leave you on that account."

"Very well," he said, as he opened the shirt and the vest beneath it.

Smearing and patched in dark etching upon the white skin was a broad stain of blood, of dried and clotted blood, the life's blood of a man.

"He is wounded," Peace, I cried. "Poor fellow, he must have nearly bled to death."

"Do not alarm yourself," said the inspector, dryly. "It is the blood of Baron Steen."

A week had gone by, and I was sitting alone in my Keble Street rooms, when Peace walked in, with a heavy traveling coat over his arm.

"Thank Heaven, you have come at last," I cried. "How is Maurice Terry?"

"Dead—poor fellow," he said, with an honest sorrow in his voice. "Yet, after all, Mr. Phillips, it was the best that could have happened to him."

"And his story—the causes—the method?" I demanded.

"It has taken some hard work, but the bits of the puzzle are fitted together at last. You wish to hear it, I suppose?"

"According to your promise," I reminded him.

"It is a case of unusual interest," he said. "Though it bears a certain similarity to the Gottstein trial at Kiel in '89."

He paused to light his big pipe, and then sat back in his chair, with his eyes fixed in abstract contemplation.

"I was convinced that the murderer was in the house; and that he had entered by the side door, towards which you had seen him pass. When studying the spot I made a discovery of some importance. Steen had left by the same exit. Also he had reason to fear some person in that wing, for he had turned from the path and made a circuit over the grass. I had already noted his broad-toed boots when examining his body—and the footprints in the snow were unmistakable. Who was his enemy in that wing? It was a problem to be solved."

"I discovered no stained clothing, and no signs of its cleansing or destruction. From what information I could gather, all the house party had been in the roulette-room save you yourself; and all the servants had been at the dance save Henderson and a man waiting on the guests. But in the course of my search the footman who accompanied me discovered that a quantity of gold plate was missing. It was reasonable to imagine that Henderson was the thief. Probably the confidential valet had learnt of the baron's projected flight and of the warrant for his arrest. It was a moment for judicious robbery, the traces of which would be covered by the confusion of the news. But was

Henderson also a murderer? I did not think so. The death of his master was the one thing which would wreck his scheme. In the early morning I interviewed the farmer on whose car he had driven into Norbridge. He told me that, acting on orders he had received from Henderson, he met that person at the corner of the stables at eleven o'clock precisely—five minutes before the murder occurred. That finally eliminated the valet from the list.

"On my return from the farm I examined the gardens again with great minuteness. At the corner of the little pavilion, about fifteen feet from where the body had lain, there was a patch of bloody snow. This puzzled me a good deal, until the solution offered itself that the murderer had tried to wash his hands in the snow, the water of the pond being frozen hard. Yet his clothing would also bear the stain. What had he worn that showed so white to you in the starlight? Could it have been that he wore no clothes at all?"

"A naked man! The suggestion was full of possibilities."

"It was fortunate that I had brought assistants to help me in Steen's capture. Their presence gave me a wider scope, for they were both good men. I left them to search the pavilion and laurels for the clothing, which the murderer might have concealed when he realized how fatal was its evidence. As I walked back to the house I began to understand the situation more clearly. The main drive, curving down the slope of the park, was in view of a tall man coming up by the yew walk. The murderer might have noticed our approach. What more natural than that he should have bent double as he ran, thus obtaining the cover of the left-hand hedge, which was not more than four to five feet high? Did not this answer to your description of the thing you had seen? It would have been cold work for him. I made a note to be on the look-out for chills."

"For a couple of hours I devoted myself to speeding those guests who caught the eleven-thirty train. I do not think a trunk left for the station of which I have not a complete inventory. Indeed, the baron's creditors have to thank me for the return of several trifles of value, which were included, accidentally, no doubt, in the ladies' dressing-bags."

"After the carriages had started I went in search of Terry, and discovered that he had not left his room. Equally to the point, his windows looked down upon the spot where the baron made his detour over the grass while escaping. I became interested in this young man. The score was creeping up against him. A ladder

from an obliging gardener allowed me to observe him from the window. A visit to the housekeeper gave me a duplicate key to his door. What happened in the room you know, Mr. Phillips."

"But, the motive—why did he kill his patron?" I asked him eagerly.

"I doubt if we shall ever learn the truth on that point," he said. "As far as I can make out, Steen was directly responsible for the ruin and disgrace of Terry's father. Probably the son did not fully realize this when the baron, with a pity most unusual in the man, gave him the secretaryship. But of all participation in the fight he was certainly innocent, for he was in bed at the time."

"In bed!" I cried.

"Don't interrupt, if you please. What happened I take to be as follows: Terry was in bed when the old man tried to creep past his window. Somehow he heard him, and, looking out, understood what was up. Perhaps that rascal Henderson had told him the truth about his father; perhaps Steen had promised him compensation—he had a mother and sister dependent on him—which promise the financier meant to avoid, along with many more serious obligations, by running away. At any rate, passion, revenge, the sense of injustice—call it what you like—took hold of the lad. He caught up the first handy weapon; it chanced to be a dagger paper-knife—dangerous things, I hate them—and rushed down a back staircase and through the side door in pursuit of his enemy."

"When that had happened, which happened, the fear that comes to all amateurs in crime took him by the throat. He wiped his hands in the snow; he tore off his sleeping suit—that is how I know he had been in bed—and thrust it, with its terrible evidences of murder, into the thatch of the little pavilion. We found it there a day later. Then he started back to the house as naked as a baby. "He saw us running down the hill, and made for the side door, bending double behind the hedge. Who were we? Had we noticed him? Believe me, Mr. Phillips, whether he had held the murder righteous or no, it was only the rope he saw dangling before him. Might not the alarm be given at any moment? He dared not wash himself, and the stains had dried upon him. He hurried on his clothes, shivering in the chill that had struck home, and so to the safest place he could find—the roulette-table."

"It is well that he died," I said simply.

"It saved the law some trouble," remarked the inspector, with a grim little nod at the wall.

(CHRONICLES TO BE CONTINUED.)

"GIVES BACK WHAT IS GIVEN
Life, in the Main, is Just and Almost Inevitably Returns Good for Good."

The echo is the principle of life. You get back from the world the message you give it.

Neither this nor any other truth is true in all particulars; very often you receive evil for your good and good for your evil, harsh words when you sent forth only kindness, and injustice in return for your deeds honest and well meant, but like all truths it is true in general.

In fact, the essence of every truth is a generalization which the mind is able to pick from a mass of confusing particulars.

Is it a cold, hard-hearted, unfeeling world to you? Then I very much fear that you have given to it a selfish, narrow, egotistic heart.

Is it a tolerably good sort of place, and do you find men and women as a rule just and kindly disposed? You must have been yourself an honest and generous nature.

Haven't you had days when everything seemed to go wrong? You said you must have gotten out of bed with the wrong foot first. You have fumbled all you undertook, your fingers have been all thumbs, and everyone about you has seemed smitten with the grouch.

In all this you have been but seeing yourself as in a glass. It is your ugly mood that dims the shining surface of a really pleasant world.

Nothing is so unerring as the total universe. Time and nature seem now and then slipshod, and do things unjust and uncalled for, but they always make it up in the long run and pay every soul back a hundred cents on the dollar.—Woman's World.

Andrew Lang's Handicap.

The London Spectator says that Andrew Lang always had poor health, and most of his work was done when he was tired and sick. This being the case, it is easy to understand and forgive his frequent crankiness.

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Naval Officers Knew Just How to Treat Officious Lawyer Who Was "Butting In."

Courts martial are not infrequently held on battleships in the Charlestown navy yard. Sometimes a sailor will send for a Boston attorney to defend him, although this tendency is discouraged by the officers. Most attorneys know they have no absolute right to practice in a naval court, and can do so only by permission of the court, but occasionally a lawyer goes aboard who does not realize this fact.

A sailor who was charged with gambling had retained an attorney to get him off. This attorney, who had never had such a case before, went briskly into the officers' wardrobe, where the court was sitting, and without waiting on ceremony began to address the court in a blustering manner.

"Just a minute," interrupted the presiding officer. "Who are you?"

"I am Mr. Rudolph Smithers," the attorney replied, "and I am a member of the Massachusetts bar."

"Oh, you are Mr. Smithers, are you?" continued the officer. "Then you are the man whom the orderly wants to see." He called the orderly.

"What does the orderly want of me?" asked the attorney in a superior tone.

"Nothing very much," replied the chief justice; "he merely wants to show you off the ship."

Cheerful Breakfasters.

People are nearly always nice when one gets to know them and pierces through the husks of artificiality, which they wear before the world. I detest heaps of people that I have only met at dinner, but I think I like everybody that I have ever had breakfast with.—Ellen Thornycroft Fowler.

Small Chance for Him.

A Brooklyn man's wife has eighteen rocking chairs. There's one man who doesn't dare to sneak into the house late at night.

Furniture Polish.
Beeswax and turpentine is a capital polish for furniture which is not French polished. To make it, shred half an ounce of beeswax very fine and add to it a quarter of a part of spirits of turpentine. Stir well and put aside until the next day. Then stir again and let it stand for another day, when it will be ready for use. Never melt beeswax and turpentine over a hot fire, as it is highly inflammable.

Raises the Dough Better!
25c Pound Can All Grocers

Kingly Life.
And so the kingly life is a life in quest of big things. Everyone is painfully familiar with the temptation to fritter away life in interests that are small and mean. There are those who spend their strength in seeking money. The concentrated purpose of their days is a quest for gold. They are zealous for artificial gems and they miss the goodly pearls.—J. H. Lowett, D.D.

Mothers will find Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup the best remedy to use for their children during the teething period.

Breaking It Gently.
"I hev come to tell yez, Mrs. Malone, that yer husband met with an accident." "An' what is it, now?" wailed Mrs. Malone. "He was overcome by the heat, mum." "Overcome by the heat, was he? An' how did it happen?" "He fell into the furnace over at the foundry, mum."—Tit-Bits.

Riches in Poverty.
How slight a thing is poverty; what riches, nay treasures untold, a man may possess in the midst of it, if he does but seek them aright.—Coleridge.

"All In, Down and Out"

It's in the Spring you always feel that way. The system is overloaded with winter impurities, the blood is sluggish and the bowels clogged.

HOSTETTER'S STOMACH BITTERS

is an ideal medicine for all spring ailments and a trial now will convince you. Be sure it's Hostetter's.

HOW I MADE MY HAIR GROW

Woman With Marvelously Beautiful Hair Gives Simple Home Prescription Which She Used With Most Remarkable Results.

I was greatly troubled with dandruff and falling hair. I tried many advertised hair preparations and various prescriptions, but they all signally failed: many of them made my hair greasy so it was impossible to comb it or do it up properly. I think that many of the things I tried were positively injurious and from my own experience I cannot too strongly caution you against using preparations containing wood alcohol and other poisonous substances. I believe they injure the roots of the hair. After my long list of failures, I finally found a simple prescription which I can unhesitatingly state is beyond doubt the most wonderful thing for the hair I have ever seen. Many of my friends have also used it, and obtained wonderful effects therefrom. It not only is a powerful stimulant to the growth of the hair and for restoring gray hair to its natural color, but it is equally good for removing dandruff, giving the hair life and brilliancy, etc., and for the purpose of keeping the scalp in first-class condition. It also makes the hair easier to comb and arrange in nice form. I have a friend who used it two months and during that time it has not only stopped the falling of his hair and wonderfully increased its growth, but it practically restored all of his hair to its natural color. You can obtain the ingredients for making this wonderful preparation from almost any druggist. The prescription is as follows:

Bay Rum, 6 oz.; Menthol Crystals, 1/2 drachm; Lavona de Composee, 2 oz. If you like it perfumed add a few drops of To-Kalon Perfume, which mixes perfectly with the other ingredients. This, however, is not necessary.

Apply night and morning; rub thoroughly into the scalp.

Go to your druggist and ask for an eight ounce bottle containing six ounces of Bay Rum; also one-half drachm of Menthol Crystals, and a two-ounce bottle of Lavona de Composee. Mix the ingredients yourself at your own home. Add the Menthol Crystals to the Bay Rum and then pour in the Lavona de Composee and add the To-Kalon Perfume. Let it stand one-half hour and it is ready for use.