## THE RETURN OF SHERLOCK HOLMES BY SIR A. CONAN DOYLE

NO. 3. - THE ADVENTURE OF THE SOLITARY CYCLIST

FROM the years 1894 to 1901 inclusive Mr. Sherlock Holmes was a very busy man. It is safe to say that there was no public-case of any difficulty in which he was not consulted during those eighty years, and there were hundreds of private cases, some of them of the most intricate and extraordinary character, in which he played a prominent part. Many startling successes and a few unavoldable failures were the outcome of this long period of continuous work. As I have preserved very full notes of all these cases, and was myself personally engaged in many of them, it may be imagined that it is no easy task to know which I should select to lay before the public. I shall, however, preserve my formes rule, and give the preference to those cases which derive their interest not so much from the brittality of the crime as from the ingenuity and dramatic quality of the solution. For this reason I will now lay before the reader the facts connected with Miss Violet Smith, the ROM the years 1894 to 1901 in- and everything promised well. Mr. clusive Mr. Sherlock Holmes was Carruthers was very kind and very a very busy man. It is safe to musical, and we had most pleasant a very busy man. now lay before the reader the facts connected with Miss Violet Smith, the solitary cyclist of Charlington, and the curious sequel of our investigation, which culminated in unexpected tragedy. It is true that the circumstance did not admit of any striking illustradid not admit of any striang lituatra-tion of those powers for which my friend was famous, but there were some points about the case which made it stand out in those long records of crime from which I gather the ma-terial for these little narratives.

terial for these little narratives.
On referring to my notebook for the
year 1825. I find that it was upon
Saturday, the 22d of April, that we
first heard of Miss Violet Smith. Her visit was, I remember, extremely un-welcome to Holmes, for he was im-mersed at the moment in a very ab-struse and complicated problem con-cerning the peculiar persecution to which John Vincent Harden, the wellknown tobacco millionaire had been aubjected. My friend, who loved above things precision and concentration of thought, resented anything which distracted his attention from the mat-ter in hand. And yet, without a harshess which was foreign to his nature, it was impossible to refuse to listen to the story of the young and beautiful woman, tall, graceful and queenly, who presented herself at Baker street late in the evening, and implored his assistance and advice. It was vain to assistance and advice. It was vain to urge that his time was already fully occupied, for the young lady had come with the determination to tell her story, and it was evident that nothing short of force could get her out of the room until she had done so. With a restered air and a somewhat weary resigned air and a somewhat weary smile, Holmes begged the beautiful in-truder to take a seat, and to inform us what it was that was troubling ber. "At least it cannot be your health," said he, as his keen eyes darted over her, "so ardent a bicyclist must be full

own feet, and I observed the slight roughening of the side of the sole caused by the friction of the edge of

"Yes, I bicycle a good deal, Mr. Holmes, and that has something to do with my visit to you today."

My friend took the lady's ungleved hand, and examined it with as close an attention and as little sentiment as a secretar wends above to a specimen.

scientist would show to a specimen. You will excuse me. I am sure. It is business," said he, as he dropped it. I nearly fell into the error of supposing that you were typewriting. Of course, it is obvious that it is music. You observe the spatulate finger-ends, which is common to both prothe face, however,"—she gently turned it towards the light—which the type-writer does not generate. This lady

Yes, Mr. Holmes, I teach music country, I presume from your complexion.

"Yes, sir, near Farnham, on the ber-rs of Surrey."
"A beautiful neighborhood, and full

of the most interesting associations you remember. Watson, that it was near there that we took Archie Stam-ford, the forger. Now, Miss Violet, what has happened to you near Farn-ham, on the borders of Surrey." The young lady, with great clearness

and composure, made the following curious statement:"My father is dead. Mr. Holmes. He

was James Smith, who conducted the or-chestra at the old-Imperial Theater. My mother and I were left without a relathe world except one uncle Raiph Smith, who went to Africa 25 years ago, and we have never had a word from him since. When father died, we were left very poor, but one day we were told that there was an advertisement in the Times inquiring for You can imagine how excited we were, for we thought that some one had left us a fortune. We went at once to the lawyer whose name was given in the paper. There we met two gentlemen. Mr. Carruibers and Mr. Woodley, who were home on a visit who were home on a visit from South Africa. They said that my was a friend of theirs, that he had died some months before in great to bunt up his relations, and see tha they were in no want. It se strange to us that Uncle Ralph, It seemed took no notice of us when he was alive, should be so careful to look after us when he was dead, but Mr. Carruthers explained that the reason was that my uncle had just heard of the death of his brother, and so felt responsible Excuse me," said Mr. Holmes.

When was this interview? Last December—four months age."

Woodley seemed to me to be a most odious person. He was forever making eyes at me-a coarse, puffyfaced, red moustached young man, with his hair plastered down on each side of his forehead. I thought that he was perfectly hateful-and I was sure that Cyril would not wish me to know such

"Oh, Cyril is his name!" said Holmes,

The young lady blushed and laughed. Dear me, how did I get to talking about him? What I wished to say was that Mr. Woodley was perfectly odieus, but that Mr. Carruthers, who was a much older man, was more agreeable. He was a dark, sallow, finding that we were very poor, he suggested that I should come and h music to his only daughter, aged ny mother, on which he suggested that I should so home to her every week-end, and he offered me a hundred a year, which was certainly splendid pay. So it ended by my accepting, and I went down to Chiltern Grange, about six miles from Farnham. Mr. Carruthers was a widower but he had , engaged a lady house-keeper, a very respectable, elderly persum called Mrs. Dixon, to look after his establishment. The child was a dear.

me to ask your advice today. You velopment, Miss Smith. I am very busy

"There was this dreadful man, Wood-ley, if you can call him an admirer." "No one else?" Our fair client seemed a little con-

"Who was he?" asked Holmes "Who was he?" asked Holmes.
"Oh, it may be a mere fancy of mine;
but it had seemed to me sometimes
that my employer. Mr. Carruthers,
takes a great deal of interest in me.
We are thrown rather together. I
play his accompaniments in the evening. He has never said anthing. He is a perfect gentleman. But a girl always knows."
"Ha!" Holmes looked grave. "What

does he do for a living?"

"He is a rich man."

"No carriages or horses?"

"Well, at least he is fairly well-todo. But he goes into the city two or
three times a week. He is deeply interested in South Africa gold shares.

"You will let me know any fresh de-



must know that every Saturday foremon I ride on my bicycle to Farnham some inquiries into your case. In the Station, in order to get the 12:22 to town. The road from Chiltern Grange is a lonely one, and at one spot it is particularly so, for it lies for over a mile between Charlington Heath upon one side and the woods which its round ture that such a girl should have folture that such a girl should have foltured to the such as the s Charlington Hall upon the other. rould not find a more lonely tract of road anywhere, and it is quite rare to neet so much as a cart, or a peasant, you reach the high road near until you reach the high road heat. Crooksbury Hill. Two weeks ago I was passing this place, when I chanced to look back over my shoulder, and about 100 yards behind me I saw a man, also on a bleyele. He seemed to be a middle-aged man, with a short, dark heard. I looked back before I reached Farnham, but the man was gone, so I thought no more about it. But you can imagine how surprised I was, Mr. Holmes, when, on my return on the Monday, I saw the same man on the same stretch of road. My astonishment was increased when the incl dent occurred again, exactly as before, on the following Saturday and Monday. He always kept his distance and did not molest me in any way, but still it certainly was very odd. I mentioned it to Mr. Carruthers, who seemed inter-ested in what I said, and told me that he had ordered a horse and trap, so that in future I should not pass over these lonely roads without some com-The Borse and trap were to have

come this week, but for some reason they were not delivered, and again and to cycle to the station. That was You can think that I this morning. You can think that looked out when I came to Charlington far from me than I could not clearly see his face, but it was certainly some-one whom I did not know. He was tressed in a dark suit with a cloth cap. The only thing about his face that I could clearly see was his dark beard. Today I was not alarmed, but I was filled with curiosity, and I determined to find out who he was and what he wanted. I slowed down my machine. but he slowed down his. ped altogether, but he stopped also Then I laid a trap for him. There is a sharp turning of the road, and I pedalled very quickly round this, and then I stopped and waited. I expected him to shoot round and pass me before he could stop. But he never appeared. Then I went back and looked round the corner. I could see a mile of road, but he was not on it. To make it the more extraordinary, there was no side road at this point down which he could have gone.

have gone."

Helmes chuckled and rubbed his bands. "This case certainly presents some features of its own," said he. "How much time clapsed between your turning the corner and your discovery that the road was clear?"

"The or three minutes."

"Two or three minutes."
"Then he could not have retreated down the road, and you say that there are no side roads?

"None." Then he certainly took a footpath on me side or the other."
"It could not have been on the side f the heath, or I should have seen

"So, by the process of exclusion, we arrive at the fact that he made his way toward Charlington Hall, which, as I understand, is situated in its own grounds on one side of the road. Apything else?"

Nothers We University

thing else! "Nothing, Mr. Holmes, save that I was so perpieced that I felt I should not be happy until I had seen you and mes sat in silence for some Ht-

"Where is the gentleman to whom you are engaged?" he asked at last.

just now, but I will find time to make

"It is part of the settled order of Na-ture that such a girl should have fol-lowers," said Holmes, as he pulled at his mediative pipe. "but for choice not on bleycles in lonely country roads. Some secretive lover, beyond all doubt. But there are curious and suggestive details about the case, Watson That he should appear only at that

"Exactly. Our first effort must be to find who are the tenants of Charlington Hall. Then, again, how about the con-nection between Carruthers and Woodley, since they appear to be men of such a different type? Hew came they both to be so keen upon looking up Ralph Smith's relations? One more point. What sort of a menage is it which pays double the market price for a government but does not been for a governess, but does not keep orse, although six miles from the sta-on? Odd, Watson—very odd." "You will go down?"

"No, my dear fellow, you will go down. This may be some trifling in-trigue, and I cannot break my other nportant research for the sake of at Monday you will arrive early at Parnham; you will conceal yourself ear Charlington Heath; you will obnear Charlington the control of the pants of the hall, you will come back to me and report. And now, Watson, not another word of the matter until to me and report. have a few solid stepping stones which we may hope to get across

our solution. We had ascertained from the lady that she went down upon the Monday by the train which leaves Waterloo at F:50, so I started early and caught the 9:12. At Farnham Station I had no difficulty in being directed to Charlington Heath. It was impossible to mistake the scene of the youn lady's adventure, for the road runs be tween the open heath on one side and an old yew hedge upon the other, surrounding a park which is studded with magnificent trees. There was a main gateway of lichen-studded stone, each pillar surmounted by mouldering heraldic emblems, but besides this cen-tral carriage drive I observed several points where there were gaps in the nedge, and paths leading through them. The house was invisible from the road, but the surroundings all spoke of gloom and decay.

The heath was covered with golden patches of flowering gorse, gleaming magnificently in the light of the bright Spring sunshine. Behind one of these clumps I took up my position, so as to command both the gateway of the hall and a long stretch of the road upon either side. It had been deserted when I left it, but now I saw a cyclis riding down it from the opposite di-rection to that in which I had come. He was clad in a dark suit, and I saw that he had a black beard. On reaching the end of the Charlington grounds, he sprang from his machine and led it through a gap in the hedge, disappearing from my view.

A quarter of an hour passed, and

then a second cyclist appeared. This time it was the young lady coming from the station. I saw her look about her as she came to the Charlington hedge. An instant later the man emerged from his hiding-place, sprang upon his cycle, and followed her. In all the broad landscape these were the only moving figures, the graceful girl sitting very straight upon her ma-chine, and the man behind her bending low over his handle-bar with a Saturday I come up to town, and I do curiously furtive suggestion in every not intend to return. Mr. Carruthers movement. She looked back at him has got a trap, and so the dangers of

ever, and darted off in desperate flight. Presently she came back up the road again, her head haughtly in the rpad again, her head haughtly in the air, not deigning to take any fur-ther notice of her silent attendant. He had turned also, and still kept his dis-tance until the curve of the road hid them from my sight. I remained in my hiding-place, and it was well that I did so, for presently the man reappeared, cycling slowly back. He turned in at the hall gates, and dismovinted from his machine. For

and dismounted from his machine. For some minutes I could see him standing among the trees. His hands were raised, and he seemed to be settling his necktle. Then he mounted his cycle, and rode away from me down cycle, and rode away from me down the drive towards the hall. I ran across the heath and peered through the trees. Far away I could catch glimpses of the old gray building with its bristling Tudor chimneys, but the drive ran through a dense shrubbery, and I saw no more of my man. and I saw no more of my man. However, it seemed to me that I had

done a fairly good morning's work, and I walked in high spirits to Farnham. The local agent could tell me nothing about Charlington Hail, and referred me to a well-known firm in Pall Mall. There I halted on my way home, and met with courtesy from the representative. No, I could not have. Charlington Hall for the Summer. I was just too late. It had been let about month ago. Mr. Williamson was the spectable, elderly gentleman. The po-lite agent was afraid he could say no more, as the affairs of his clients were not matters which he could discuss. Mr. Sherlock Holmes listened with attention to the long report which I was able to present to him that evening, but it did not elicit that word of urt praise which I had hoped for, and hould have valued. On the contrary, his austere face was even more severe than usual as he commented upon the things that I had done and the things

that I had not. "Your hiding-place, my dear Watson, was very faulty. You should have been behind the hedge, then you would have had a close view of this interesting person. As it is, you were some hundreds of yards away, and can tell me she does not know the man; I am convinced she does. Why, otherwise, should he be so desperately anxious that she should not get so near him as to see his features? You describe Concealment again, you see. You really have done remarkably badly. He returns to the house, and you want to find out who he is. You come to a London house agent!"

"What should I have done?" I cried, with some hear.

"What should I have done?" I cried, with some heat.

"Gone to the nearest public-house. That is the center of country gossip. They would have told you every name, from the master to the scullery maid. Williamson? It conveys nothing to my mind. If he is an elderly man he is not this active cyclist, who sprints away from that young lady's athletic pursuit. What have we gained by your expedition? The knowledge that the girl's story is true. I never doubted it. That there is a connection between

it. That there is a connection between it. That there is a connection between the cyclist and the hall. I never doubted that, either. That the hall is tenanted by Williamson. Who's the better for that? Well, well, my dear sir. don't look so depressed. We can do little more until next Saturday, and in the meantime I may make one or two inquiries myself."

Next morning, we had a note from

Next morning, we had a note from Miss Smith, recounting shortly and accurately the very incidents which I had seen, but the pith of the letter lay in the postscript: "I am sure that you will respect my

confidence, Mr. Holmes, when I tell ve that my place here has become diffioult, owing to the fact that my em ployer has proposed marriage to me. I am convinced that his feelings are most deep and most honorable. At the same time, my promise is of course given. He took my refusal very seriously, but also very gently. You can understand, however, that the sit-uation is a little strained."

"Our young friend seems to be get-The case certainly presents more features of interest and more possibility of development than I had originall thought. I should be none the in the country, and I am in-clined to run down this afternoon and test one or two theories which I have

Holmes' quiet day in the country had a singular termination, for he arrived at Baker street late in the evening with a cut lip and a discolored lump upon his forehead, besides a general air of dissipation which would have made of dissipation which would have made his own person the fitting object of a scotland Yard investigation. He was mmensely tickled by his own adven-ures, and laughed heartily as he recounted them.

"I get so little active exercise that it is always a treat," said he. "You are aware that I have some proficiency in the good old British sport of boxing. Occasionally, it is of service; today, for example, I should have come to very ignominious grief without it." I begged him to tell me what had oc-

had already recommended to your no-tice, and there I made my discreet in-quiries. I was in the bar, and a garrulous landlord was giving me all that wanted. Williamson is a white-bearded man, and he lives alone with a sma staff of servants at the Hall. There some rumor that he is or has been clergyman, but one or two incidents of his short residence at the Hall struck me as peculiarly unecclesiastical. I have already made some inquiries at a ders, whose career has been a singular-ly dark one. The landlord further informed me that there are usually weekend visitors—a warm lot, sir—at the
Hall, and especially one gentleman
with a red mustache, Mr. Woodley by
name, who was always there. We had
got as far as this, when who should
walk in his the gentleman himself. walk in but the gentleman himself, who had been drinking his beer in the tap-room and had heard the whole con-What did Who was I? want? What did I mean by asking questions? He had a fine flow of lan-guage, and his adjectives were very vigorous. He ended a string of abuse by a vicious backhander, which I falled to entirely avoid. The next few min-utes were delicious. It was a straight left against a slogging ruffian. I emerged as you see me. Mr. Woodley went home in a cart. So ended my country trip, and it must be confessed that, however enjoyable, my day on the Survey border has not been much more profitable than your own."

brought us another The Thursday letter from our client.
"You will not be surprised, Mr.
Holmes," said she, "to hear that I am leaving Mr. Carruthers' employment. Even the high pay cannot reconcile me to the discomforts of my situation. On

for he appears to have had an accident, and he is much disfigured. I saw him out of the window, but I am glad to out of the window, but I am glad to say I did not meet him. He had a long talk with Mr. Carruthers, who seemed much excited afterwards. Woodley must be staying in the neighborhood, for he did not sleep here, and yet I caught a glimpse of him again this morning, slinking about in the shrubbery. I would sooner have a savage wild animal loose about the place. I loathe and fear him more than I can say. How can Mr. Carruthers endure such a creature for a moment? However, all my troubles will be over on ever, all my troubles will be over on Saturday."

dog-cart. Then a look of amazement came over his face.

"Halloa! Stop there!" he shouted, holding his bleycle to block our road.

"Where did you get that dog-cart? Pull up, man! he yelled, drawing a pistol from his side pocket. "Pull up, I say, or, by George, I'll put a bullet into your horse."

Holmes threw the reins into my lap and suring down from the cart.

Holmes threw the reins into my lap and sprang down from the cart.

"You're the man we want to see. Where is Miss Violet Snith?" he said, in his quick, clear way.

"That's what I'm asking you. You're in her dog-cart. You ought to know where she is."

"We met the dog-cart on the road."

There was no one in it. We drove back to help the young lady."
"Good Lord! Good Lord! what shall I



lay morning, and make sure that this | and we'll save her, if I have to leave

curious and inclusive investigation has no untoward ending."

I confess that I had not up to now taken a very serious wiew of the case. Holmes followed him and I, leaving the no untoward ending."

I confess that I had not up to now taken a very serious riew of the case, which had seemed to me rather grotesque and bizarre than dangerous. That a man should lie in wait for and follow a very handsome woman is no un-heard-of thing, and if he has so little audacity that he not only dared not address her, but even fied from her approach, he was not a very formidable assailant. The rufflan Woodley was a very different person, but, except on one occasion, he had not molested our client, and now he visited the house of Carruthers without intruding upon her presence. The man on the bicycle was oubtless a member of those week as ever. It was the severity of Holmes manner, and the fact that he slipped a revolver into his pocket, before leaving our rooms which impressed me with feeling that tragedy might prove to lurk behind this curious train of events.
A rainy night had been followed by

A rainy night had been followed as glorious morning, and the heath-covered country-side, with the glowing clumps of flowering gorse, seemed all the more beautiful to eyes which were weary of the duns and drabs and slate-greys of London. Holmes and I walked along the broad, sandy road inhaling the fresh morning air, and rejoicing in the music of the birds and the fresh breath of the Spring. From a rise of he road on the shoulder of Crooksbury Hill, we could see the grim Hall brist ling out from amidst the ancient cake, which, old as they were, were still younger than the building which they urrounded. Holmes pointed down long tract of road which wound, a red-dish yellow band, between the brown of the heath and the budding green the woods. Far away, a black dot, wo Holmes gave an exclamation of

impatience.
"I have given a margin of half dn
"I have given a margin of half dn
"I have given a margin of half dn hour," said he. "If that is her trap, she must be making for the earliest train. I fear, Watson, that she will be past Charlington before we can possibly

From the instant that we passed the rise, we could no longer see the we hastened onwards at such a pacthat my sedentary life began to tell upon me, and I was compelled to fall behind. He, and I was compelled to fall behind. Holmes, however, was always in train-ing, for he had inexhaustible stores of nervous energy upon which to draw. His springy step never slowed until suddenly when he was a hundred yards in front of me, he halted, and I saw him thrown up his hand with a gesture of grief and despair. At the same instant in empty dog-cart, the horse cantering the reins trailing, appeared rou curve of the road and rattled swiftly to-

"Too late, Watson, too late!" cried Holmes, as I ran panting to his side. "Fool that I was, not to allow for that earlier train! It's abduction, Watson-abduction! Murder! Heaven knows what! Block the road! Stop the horse! That's right. Now, jump in, and let us sea if I can repair the consequences of my own blunder."

We had sprung into the dog-cart, and Holmes, after turning the horse, gave it a sharp cut with the whip, and we flew back along the road. As we turned the curve, the whole stretch of road tween the Hall and the heath opened up. I grasped Holmes arm.
"That's the man!" I gasped.

That's the man; I gasped.

A solitary cyclist was coming toward us. His head was down and
his shoulders rounded, as he put every ounce of energy that he possessed on to the pedals. He was flying like a racer. Suddenly he raised his bearded face, saw us close to him and pulled

"NO SHE'S YOUR WIDOW."

"This is where they came through," said he, pointing to the marks of several feet upon the muddy path. "Hal-loa!! Stop a minute! Who's this in the bush?

horse grazing beside the road, followed

It was a young fellow about 17. dressed like an ostler, with leather cords and galters. He lay upon his back, his knees drawn up, a terrible upon his head. He was insensible, but alive. A glance at his wound told me that it had not penetrated the

"That's Peter, the groom," cried the stranger. "He drove her. The beasts have pulled him off and clubbed him. Let him lie, we can't do him any good, but we may save her from the worst fate that can befall a woman," We ran frantically down the path,

which wound among the trees. We had reached the shrubbery which surrounded the house, when Holmes

illed up. "They didn't go to the house. Here are their marks on the leftside the laurel bushes. Ah! I said

-a scream which vibrated with a frenzy of horror-burst from the thick, with a choke and a gurgle.

"This way! This way! They are in the bowling alley," cried the stranger, darting through the bushes. "Ah, the owardly dogs! Follow me, gentlemen Too late! Too late! by the living Jin-

We had broken suddenly into a love ly glade of greensward surrounded by applient trees. On the farther side of under the shadow of a mighty oak there stood a singular group of three people. One was a woman, our client drooping and faint, a handkerchie round her mouth. Opposite her stood a brutal, heavy-faced, red-moustached young man, his gaitered legs parted vide, one arm akimbo, the othersway ing a riding crop, his whole attitude suggestive of triumphant bravado. Between them an alderly, gray-bearded man, wearing a short surplice over a light tweed suit, had evidently just completed the wedding service, for he ocketed his prayer-book as we ap peared and slapped the sinister bride groom upon the back in jovial con gratulation. They're married!" I gasped.

"Come on!" cried our guide; "come on!" He fushed across the glade, Holmes and I at his heels. As we approached the lady staggered against the trunk of the tree for support. Willamson, the ex-clergyman, bowed to us with mock politeness and the bully, Woodley, advanced with a shout of brutal and exultant laughter.

You can take your beard off, Bob, id he. "I know you, right enough Well, you and your pals have just come in time for me to be able to in-troduce you to Mrs. Woodley."

Our guide's answer was a singular one. He snatched off the dark beard

which had disguised him and threw it on the ground, disclosing a long, sal-low, clean-shaven face below it. Then he raised his revolver and covered the young ruffian, who was advancing upon him with his dangerous riding-

crop swinging in his hand.
"Yes," said our ally, "I am Bob Car-ruthers, and I'll see this woman righted, if I have to swing for it. I told you what I'd do if you molested her, and, by the Lord! I'll be as good as my

'You're too late. She's my wife." "No, she's your widow." His revolver cracked and I saw the

"He is in the Midland Electrical Company, at Coventry."

"He would not pay you a surprise "Have you had any other admirers?"
"Have you had any other admirers?"
"Have you had any other admirers?"
"How Cyril."
"As to the special cause of my leaving ing, it is not merely the strained situation with Mr. Carruthers, but it is the responsance of that odious man, Mr. Woodley. He was always hideous, but he looks more awful than ever now, but he looks more awful than ever now. never heard and pulled out a revolver of his own, but, before he could raise it, he was looking down the barrel of

Holmes' weapon. "Enough of this," said my friend, coldly. "Drop that pistol! Watson, pick it up! Hold it to his head! Thank you. Yourrevolver. You, Carruthers, give me that

"Who are you, then?"
"My name is Sherlock Holmes."

We'll have no more vio-

"Good Lord#" "Good Lords"

"You have heard of me, I see. I will represent the official police until their arrival. Here, you!" he shouted at a frightened groom, who had appeared at the edge of the glade. "Come here. Take this note, as hard as you can ride, to Farnham." He scribbled a few words upon a leaf from his note-book. "Give it to the superintendent at the police station. Until he comes I must detain you all under my personal cuspolice station. Until he comes I must detain you all under my personal cus-

The strong, masterful personality of Holmes dominated the tragic scene and all were equally puppets in his hands. Williamson and Carruthers found themselves carrying the wounded Woodley into the house, and I gave way a to the frightened girl. The my arm to the frightened girl. The injured man was laid on his bed and at Holmes' request I examined him. I carried my report to where he sat in the old tapestry dining-room with his two prisoners before him.

"He will live," said I.

"What!" cried Carruthers, springing out of his chair. "I'll go upstairs and finish him first. Do you tell me that that girl, that angel, is to be tied to Roaring Jack Woodley for life?"

"You need not concern yourself about that," said Hoimes. "There are two very good reasons why she should, under no circumstances, be his wife. In the first place, we are very safe in "He will live," said I.

In the first place, we are very safe in questioning Mr. Williamson's right to

solemnize a marriage."
"I have been ordained," cried the old rascal.
"And also unfrocked."

"Once a clergyman, always a clergyman."
"I think not. How about the It-

We had a license for the marriage. I have it here in my pocket."
"Then you got it by a trick, But, in any case, a forced marriage is no in any case, a forced marriage is no marriage, but it is a very serious felony, as you will discover before you have finished. You'll have time to think the point out during the next ten years or so, unless I am mistaken. As to you, Carruthers, you would have done better to keep your pistol in your

"I begin to think so, Mr. Holmes, but when I thought of all the precau-tion I had taken to shield this girl from I had taken to saled this gift-for I loved her, Mr. Holmes, and it is the only time that I ever knew what love was—it fairly drove me mad to think that she was in the power of the greatest brute and bully in South the greatest brute and bully in South Africa—a man whose name is a holy terror from Kimberley to Johannesburg. Why, Mr. Holmes, you'll hardly believe it, but ever since that girl has been in my employment I never once let her go past this house, where I knew the rascals were lurking, without following her on my bicycle, just to see that she came to no harm. I kept my distance from her, and I were to see that she came to no harm. I kept my distance from her, and I wore a beard, so that she should not recognize me, for she is a good and high-spirited girl and she wouldn't have stayed in my employment long if she had thought that I was following her about the country roads."

"Why didn't you tell her of her dan-

"Because, then, again, she would have left me, and I couldn't bear to face that. Even if she couldn't love me, as a great deal to me just to see her dainty form about the house and to hear the sound of her voice."
"Well, said I, "you call that love, Mr. Carruthers, but I should call it

selfishness. "Maybe the two things go together. Anyhow, I couldn't let her go. Bealdes, with this crowd about, it was well that she should have someone near to look after her. Then, when the cable

after her. Then, when the cable came, I knew they were bound to make move."
"What cable?" Carruthers took a telegram from his

pocket. "That's it," said he.

"That's II," said he.

It was short and concise:
"The old man is dead."
"Hum!" said Holmes. "I think I see
how things worked, and I can understand how this message would, as you
say, bring them to a head. But while
you wait, you might tell me what you The old reprobate with the surplice

burst into a volley of bad language.
"By Heaven!" said he, "if you squeal
on us, Bob Carruthers, I'll serve you
as you did Jack Woodley. You can bleat about the girl to your heart's content, for that's your own affair, but if you round on your pals plain-clothes copper, it will be the worst day's work that ever you, did."
"Your reverence need not be excited," said Holmes, lighting a cigar-ette." "The case is clear enough against you and all I ask is a few details for my private curiosity. Howagainst you and all I ask is a few details for my private curiosity. However, if there's any difficulty in your telling me, I'll do the talking and then you will see how far you have a chance of holding back your secrets. In the first place, three of you came from South Africa on this game ou Williamson, you Carruthers, and

"Lie number one," said the old man; I never saw either of them until two nonths ago, and I have never been in Africa in my life, so you can put in your pipe and smoke it, Mr. Busy-body Holmes!"

"What he says is true," said Car-"Well, well, two of you came over. "Well, well, two of you came over. His reverence is our own home-made article. You had known Ralph Smith in South Africa. You had reason to believe he would not live long. You found out that his niece would inherit his fortune. How's that—eh?" Carruthers nedded and Williamson

"She was next of kin, no doubt, and you were aware that the old fellow would make no will." "Couldn't read or write," said Car-

ruthers. you came over the two of you, and hunted up the girl. The idea was that one of you was to marry her, and the other have a share of the plunder. For some reason, Woodley was chosen as the husband. Why was that?" "We played cards for her on the

voyage. He won."
"I see. You got the young lady into your service, and there Woodley was to do the courting. She recognized the irunken brute that he was, and would have nothing to do with him. Meanwhile, your arrangement was rather upset by the fact that you had yourself fallen in love with the lady. You

'No, by George, I couldn't? There was a quarrel between you. He left you in a rage, and began to (Concluded on Page 7.)