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the cheatnuis were just beginning to burst into their five-fold leaves. For two hours we rambled about together, in slience for the most part, as befits two men who know each other infi-mately. It was nearly 5 o'clock before we were back in Baker street once mane.

more. "Eeg pardon, sir." said our page-boy, as he opened the door. "There's been a gentleman here asking for you, sir." Holmes glanced reproachfully at me. "So much for afternoon walks!" said he. "Has this gentleman gone, then?"

Yes, sir.

"So much for afternoon walks." sain he, "Has this gentleman gone, then?" "Tas sir." "Didn't you ask him in?" "Yes, sir, he came in." "How long did he walt?" "Haif an hour, sir. He was a very restless gentleman, sir, a-walkin' and a-stampin' all the time he was here. I was waltin' outside the door, sir, and I could hear him. At last he out into the passage, and he cries, Is that man never goin' to come? Those were his very words, sir. "You'll only need to wait a little longer.' says L. Then II was defined and the the back before long.' And with that he ups and he outs, and sil could say wouldn't hold him back." "Well, well, you did your best." said Hoimes, as we walked into our room. "It's very annoying, though, Watson. I was badly in need of a case, and this looks, from the man's impatience, as if it were of importance. Hullo! that's not your pipe on the table. He must have left his behind him. A nice old brier with a good long stem of, what the tobacconists call amber. I wonder how many real amber mouthpleces there are in London? Some people think that a fly in it is a sign. Well, he must have been, disturbed in his mind to leave a pipe behind him which he era-dently values highly." "How do you know that he values it highly." I asked. "Well, I should put the original cost of the pipe at seven and eixpence. Now it has, you see, been twice mended, omes in the wooden stem and once in the amber. Each of these mends done, as you observe, with ailver bands, must

amber. Each of these mends, done, as you observe, with sliver bands, must have cost more than the pipe did orig-inally. The man must value the pipe highly when he prefers to patch it rather than buy a new one with the

"Anything else?" I asked, for Holmes was turning the pipe about in his hand, and staring at it in his peculiar

ensive way. He held it up and tapped on it with is long, thin forefinger, as a prohis long, thin forefinger, as a pro-

was still puzzing over it when I heard the door gently close again, and her footsteps coming up the stairs. "Where in the world have you been,

Effic? I asked as she entered. "She gave a violent start and a kind of gasping cry when I spoke, and that cry and start troubled me more than all cry and start troubled me more than all the rest, for there was something inde-scribably guilty about them. My wife had always been a woman of a frank, open nature, and it gave me a chill to see her slinking into her own room, and crying out and wincing when her own husband spoke to her. "You awake, Jack" she cried, with a nervous laugh. Why, I thought that nothing could awake you." "Where have you been?" I asked sternly.

"I don't wonder that you are sur-prised, said she, and I could see that her fingers were trembling as she un-did the fastenings of her mantle. "Why, did the fastenings of her manite. 'Why, I never remember having done such a thing in my life before. The fact is that I felt as though I were choking, and had a perfect longing for a breath of fresh air. I really think that I should have fainted if I had not gone' out. I stood at the door for a few min-utes, and now I am quite myself again.' "All the time that she was telling me this story she never once looked in my direction, and her voice was quite un-like her usual tones. It was evident to me that she was eaving what was

direction, and her voice was quite un-like her usual tones. It was evident to me that she was easing what was faise. I said nothing in reply, but urned my face to the wall, sick at heart, with my mind filled with thousand venomous doubts and sup-cions. What was it that my wife was concealing from me? Where had si me that she was not in the house, the per-content of the usual was in that is and sup-cions. What was it that my wife was concealing from me? Where had to me that is should have no peace will it has was not in the house, and saw to it did so I happened to glance out of night I tossed and tumbled, framing across the biled in the last. To add have gone to the city that day, but I was too disturbed in my mind to be able to pay attention business matters. My wife seemed to business matters and in could be to pay attention business matters. My wife seemed to business matters and in the direction of the coltage. Then, of course I saw eracily what it all meant the uses to matter and tumbled, framing wind to be able to pay attention business matters. My wife seemed to business matters and i could be and the mind hurride across, determined to business matters. My wife seemed to business matters whelf, and i could be all the servant to call her if I should from the little questioning glances which has been speak-ing the inne, but I did not stop the back to the back to the servant to call her if I should to be able to pay attention in business matters. My wife seemed to bus have the business the built in the mill have the and the mail to curve the add the matter once and the mail to curve the add the matter once and the matter once and the matter once and the trank the add the matter once and the matter once and the matter once and the trank of the the matter once and the matter once and the trank of the the matter once and the matter once and the matter once and the trank the add the matter once and t he as upset as mywelf, and 1 could see from the little questioning glances which she kept shooting at me that she understood that I disbelleved her state-ment, and that she was at her wits' end what to do. We hardly exchanged a word during breakfast, and immediate-iy afterwards I went out for a walk, that I might think the matter out in the fresh morning aftthat I might think the matter out in the fresh morning air. "I went as far as the Crystal Palace, spent an hour in the grounds, and was back in Norhury by I o'clock. It hap-pened that my way took me past the cottage, and I stopped for an instant to look at the windows, and to see if I could catch a glimpse of the strange face which had looked out at me on the day before. As I stood there, im-agine my surprise, Mr. Holmes, when the door suddenly opened and my with alked out. "I was struck dumb with astonish-"I was struck dumb with astonish-ment at the sight of her; but my emo-tions were nothing to those which showed hemselves upon her face when our eyes met. She seemed for an in-stant to wish to shrink back inside the house again: and then, seeing how unelees all concealment must be, she came forward, with a very white face came forward, with a very white face and frightened eyes which belied the smile upon her lips. "'Ah. Jack,' she said. 'I have just been in to see if I can be of any assist-ance to our new neighbors. Why do you look at me like that, Jack? You are not angry with me? "'So,' said I, 'this is where you went during the night'



THAT CREATURE "CREED GRANT MUNRO.

* are in thought or word or deed. And now, since last Monday, there has suddenly provide that there is something in her life and in her thoughts of which I know as litits as if solved I suddenly became aware that a face was watching me out of one of the upper windows. "I don't know what there was about that face, Mr. Holmes, but it acemed to early down my back. I was some litits as if she were the woman who broshes by me in the street. We are estranged, and I want to know why, "Now there is one thing that I want

sternly.

in his habits, and with no need to prac

the economy." My friend threw out the information in a very off-hand way, but I saw that he cocked his eye at me to see if I had

followed his reasoning. "You think a man must be well-to-de if he amokes a seven-shilling pipe." said L

This is Grosvenor mixture at eightpence an ounce," Holmes answered, knocking a little out on his paim. "As he might get an excellent smoke for half the price, he has no need to practice economy.

"He has been in the habit of lighting "He has been in the habit of lighting his pipe at lamps and gas-jets. You can see that it is quite charred all down one side. Of course a match could not have done that. Why should a man hold a match to the side of his pipe? But you cannot light it at a lamp without getting the bowl charred. And it is all on the right of the And it is all on the right side of the pipe. From that I gather that he is a left-handed man. You hold your own pipe to the lamp, and see how naturally you, being right-handed, hold the left you. aide to the flame. You might do it once the other way, but not as a con-stancy. This has always been held so. Then he has bitten through his amber. side to the flame. You might do it once the other war, but not as a con-atancy. This has always been held so. Then he has bitten through his amber. It takes a muscular, energetic fellow, and one with a good set of teeth, to do that. But if I am not mistaken I hear him upon the stair, so we shall have semething more interesting than his pipe to study." An instant later our door opened, and a tall young man entered the room. He was well but quietly dressed in a dark gray suit, and carried a brown wideawake in his hand. I should have put him at about 18, though he was really some years older. "T beg your pardon," maid he, with some embarrassment; "I suppose I ehould have knocked. The faci is that I am a little upset, and you must put it all down to that." He passed his hand ower his forehead like a man who is half dased, and then fell rather than

is half dazed, and then fell rather than

"I can see that you have not slept for a night or two," said Holmes, in his easy, genial way. "That tries a man's nerves more than work, and more even than pleasure. May I ask how I

can help you?" "I wanted your advice, sir. I don't know what to do, and my whole life

seems to have gone to pleces." "You wish to employ me as a con-sulting detectives" "Not that only. I want your opinion

"Not that only. I want your opinion as a judicious man-as a man of the world. I want to know what I ought to do next. I hope to God you'll be able to tell me." He spoke in little, sharp, jerky out-bursts, and it seemed to me that to speak at all was very painful to him, and that his wit all through was over-idize his insiliations.

and that hie wit all through was over-riding his inclinations. "It's a very delicate thing," said he, "One does not like to speak of one's domestic affairs to strangers. It seems dreadful to discuss the conduct of one's wife with two man whom I have never seen before. It's hourible to have to do it. But I've got to the end of my isther, and I must have sdvice." "My dear Mr. Grant Munro----" hether, and I must have advice." "Some day, perhaps, but not just at "My dear Mr. Grant Munro---" be-in Holmes. Our visitor sprang from his chair. I gave her a check, and I never thought

He head it up and tapped on it with his long, thin forefinger, as a pro-fussor might who was lecturing on a bone. "Pipes are occasionally of extraor-dinary interest," said be. "Nothing has more individuality, save perhaps watches and bootinces. The indications here, however, are neither very marked nor very important. The owner is ob-with an excellent set of teeth, carsless in his habits, and with no need to practrying to analyze my impressions. I could not tell if the face were that of a man or a woman. It had been too far from me for that. But its color was what had impressed me most. It was But there's this secret between is, and we can never be the same until

let me have the facts, Mr. Munro," said Holmes, with some impatience.

fortably off, and that she had a capital of about four thousand five hundred pounds, which had been so well invest-ed by him that it returned an average

what had impressed me most. It was of a livid chalky white, and with some-thing set and rigid about it which was shockingly unnatural. So disturbed was I that I determined to see a little more of the new inmates of the cottage. "I'll tell you what I know about Efficie history. She was a widow when I met her first, though quite young-only 25. Her name then was Mrs. Hebron. She went out to America when I approached and knocked at the d which was instantly opened by a tall, waunt woman with a harsh, forbidding he was young, and lived in the town of Atlanta, where she married this Hebron, who was a lawyer with a good practice. They had one child, but the yellow fever broke out badly in the

FOR GOD'S OAKE, DON'T JACK!" SHE CRIED.

"What may you be wantin'? she asked, in a Northern accent. "I am your neighbor over yonder.' said I, nodding towards my house. I see that you have only just moved in, so I thought that if I could be of any place, and both husband and child died of it. I have seen his death certificate. This sickened her of America, and she came back to live with a maiden aunt came back to live with a maiden aur, at Pinner, in Middlesex. I may men-tion that her husband had left her com-

evening, though I tried to think of other things, my mind would still turn to the apparition at the window and the rudeness of the woman. I determined rudeness of the woman. I determined to say nothing about the former to my wife, for , she is a nervous, highly strung woman, and I had no wish that



So, said 4, this is the second 'I have not been here before."

"'I have not been here before." "How can you tell me what you know is false?" I cried. 'Your very voice changes as you speak. When have I ever kept a secret from you? I shall enter that cottage, and I shall probe the matter to the bottom." "No, no, Jack, for God's sake?" she gasped in uncontrollable emotion. Then, as I approached the door, she seized my sleeve and pulled me back with con-vulaive strength. "I implore you not to do this. Jack."

"I implore you not to do this. Jack." she cried. I swear that I will tell you everything some day, but nothing but misery can come of it if you enter that cottage." Then, as I tried to shake, her off, she clung to me in a frenzy of entrests

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abown and nurried across, determined to end the matter once and forever. I saw my wife and the maid hurrying back along the lane, but I did not stop to speak with them. In the cottage lay the secret which was casting a shadow over my life. I vowed that, come what might, it should be a secret no longer. I did not even knock when I reached it, but turned the handle and rushed into

the passage. "It was all still and quiet upon the

It was all still and guiet upon the ground floor. In the kitchen a kettle was singing on the fire, and a large black cat lay colled up in the basket; but there was no sign of the woman whom I had seen before. I ran into the whom I had seen before. I ran into the other room, but it was equally deserted. Then I rushed up the stairs, only to find two other rooms empty and desert-ed at the top. There was no one at all in the whole house. The furniture and pictures were of the most common and vulgar description, save in the one chamber at the window of which I had

chamber at the window of which I had seen the strange face. That was com-fortable and elegant, and all my sus-pleions rose into a fierce, bitter flame when I saw that on the mantelpiece stond a copy of a full-length photo-graph of my wife, which had been taken at my request only three months asc.

"I stayed long enough to make I stayed long enduan to analytic tain that the house was absolutely empty. Then I left it, feeling a weight at my heart such as I had never had before. My wife came out into the hall as I entered my house; but I was too hurt and angry to speak with her, and pushing past her, I made my way

"How long is it since your wife asked you for a hundired pounds?" "Nearly two months."

"Have you ever seen a photograph of her first husband?"

"No; there was a great fire at At-lanta very shortly after his death, and all her papers were destroyed." "And yet she had a certificate of death. You say that you saw it.

"Yes; she got a duplicate after the fire Did you ever meet anyone who knew

her in America'

"Did she ever talk of revisiting the place!

"No." "Or get letters from it?" "No.

"Thank you. I should like to think over the matter a little now. If the cottage is now permanently deserted we may have some difficulty. If, on the other hand, as I fancy it more like-ly, the inmates were warned of your coming, and left before you entered yesterday then they may be back now, and we should clear it all up easily. Let me advise you, then, to return to Norbury, and to examine the windows of the cottage again. If you have rea-son to believe that it is inhabited, do not force your way in, but send a wire to my friend and me. We shall be with you within an hour of receiving it, and we shall then very soon get to the bottom of the business." "And if it is still empty?" "In that case I shall come out tothe other hand, as I fancy it more like

"In that case I shall come out to-morrow and talk it over with you. Goodby, and above all, do not fret until you know that you really have cause for it."

'I am afraid that this is a bad business, Watson," said my companion, as he returned after accompanying Mr. Grant Munro to the door, "What do yot make of it?"

yot make of it?" "It had an ugly sound," I answered. "Yea, There's blackmall in it, or I am much mistakan." "And who is the blackmaller?" "Well, it must be the cerature who lives in the only comfortable room in the place, and has her photograph above his fireplace. Upon my word, Waison, there is something very attractive about that livid face at the window, and I would not have missed the case for

would not have missed the case for worlds."

worlds." "You have a theory?" "Yes, a provisional one. But I shall be surprised if it does not turn out to be correct. This woman's first husband is in that cottage." "Why do you think so?" "How eise can we explain her fren-

"Why do you think so?" "How else can we explain her fren-iled anxlety that her second one should not enter it? The facts, as I read them, are something like this: This woman was married in America. Her husband developed some hateful qual-lities; or shall we say that he contracted some loathsome disease, and became a leper or an imbedie? She flies from him at last, returns to England, changes her name, and starts her life, as she him at last, returns to England, changes her name, and starts her life, as she thinks, afresh. She has been married three years, and believes that her po-sition is quite secure, having shown her husband the desth certificate of some man whose name she has as-sumed, when suddenly her whereabouts is discovered by her first husband: or. we may suppose, by some unscrupulous woman who has stached herself to the invalid. They write to the wife,

tation. "They are still there, Mr. Holmes," said he, laying his hand hard upon my friend's sleeve. "I saw lights in the cottage as I came down. We shall settle it now once and for all." "What is your plan, then?" asked Holmes, as he walked down the dark tree-lined road. "I on soins to force my way in and

"I am going to force my way in and see for myself who is in the house. I wish you both to be there as wit-

is better that you should not solve the mystery?" "Yes, I am determined." "Well, I think that you are in the right. Any truth is better than in-definite doubt, We had better go up at once. Of course, legally, we are putting ourselves hopelessly in the wrong; but I think that it is worth it." It was a very dark night, and a thin rain began to fall as we turned from the high-road into a narow lane, deep-ly ruited, with hedges on either side. Mr. Grant Munro pushed impatiently forward, however, and we stumbled after him as best we could. "There are the lights of my house," he murmured, pointing to a glimmer among the trees. "And here is the cottage which I am going to enter." We turned a corner in the lane as he spoke, and there was the building closs beside us. A yellow bar falling across the black foreground showed that the door was not quite closed, and one window in the upper story was bright-ly illuminated. As we looked, we saw

"You are quite determined to take this, in spite of your wife's warning that it is better that you should not solve the

nesses.

"For God's sake, don't. Jack!" sha cried. "I had a presentiment that you would come this evening. Think better of it, dear! Trust me again, and you will never have cause to regret it." "I have trusted you too long. Effile," he cried, sternly. "Leave go of me! I must pass you. My friends and I are going to settle this matter ones and forever!" He pushed her to one side, and we followed closely after him. As he threw the door open an old woman ran out in front of him and tried to bar his passage, but he thrust her back, and an instant afterwards we were all upon the stairs. Grant Mun-ro rushed into the lighted room at the top, and we entered at his heels.

were all upon the stairs. Grant and ro rushed into the lighted room at the top, and we entered at his heels. If was a cosy, well-furnished apart-ment, with two candies burning upon the table and two upon the mantel-piece. In the corner, stooping over a desk, there sat what appeared to be a little girl. Her face was turned away as we entered, but we could see that she was dressed in a red frock, and that she had long white gloves on. As she whisked round to us, I gave a cry of surprise and hor-ror. The face which she turned to-wards us was of the strangest livid tint, and the features were absolutely devoid of any expression. An instant later the mystery was explained. Holmes, with a laugh, passed his hand behind the colld's ear, a mask peeled off from her countenance, and there was a little coal-black negress, with all her while teeth finshing in amuse-ment at our amazed faces. I burst out laughing, out of sympathy with her laughing, out of sympathy with her merriment; but Grant Munro stood staring, with his hand clutching his

"My God!" he orled. "What can be

"My God!" he cried. "What can be the meaning of this?" "I will tell you the meaning of it," cried the lady, sweeping into the room with a proud, set face. "You have forced me, against my own judgment, to tell you, and now we must both make the best of it. My husband died at Atlanta. My child survived." "Your child?" She drew a large silver locket from her bosom. "You have never seen this open."

open.

"I understood that it did not open. T understood a spring, and the front hinged back. There was a portrait within of a man strikingly handsome and intelligent-looking, but bearing

hinged back. There was a portrait within of a man strikknig handsome and intelligent-looking, but bearing of his African descent. That is John Hebron, of Atlanta." and the lady, "and a nobler man nev-er waked the earth. I cut myself off from my race in order to wed him, but never once while he lived did I for an instant regret it. I twas our mistor-ture that our only child took after bis we waked the search. I cut waself off for a such matches, and little Lucy is arker far than ever her father was but dark or fair, she is my own dear little creature ran across at the words and nested up against the lady's dreas. "When I left her in America," she con-tives dhat her mother's pet." The house the our servant. Never for and nested up against the lady's dreas. "When I left her in America," she con-tives was and the change might have done her harm. She was given to the one her harm. She was given to the has once been our servant. Never for and instant did I dream of disowning ber as my child. But when chances here you in my way. Jack. and I

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