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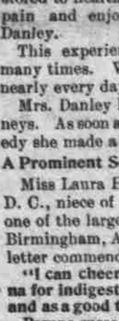

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A STUDY IN SCARLET

BY A. CONAN DOYLE.

CHAPTER VI—Continued.

After a very brief pause the detective continued:

"Of course, after that there was nothing more to be done. I found out where Lieutenant Charpentier was, took two officers with me and arrested him. When I touched him on the shoulder and warned him to come quietly with us, he answered us as bold as brass: 'I suppose you are arresting me for being concerned in the death of that scoundrel Drebber,' he said. We had said nothing to him about it, so that his alluding to it had a most suspicious aspect."

"Very," said Holmes.

"He still carried the heavy stick which the mother described him as having with him when he followed Drebber. It was a stout oak cudgel."

"What is your theory, then?"

"Well, my theory is that he followed Drebber as far as the Brixton road. When there a fresh altercation arose between them, in the course of which Drebber received a blow from the stick in the pit of the stomach, perhaps, which killed him without leaving any mark. The night was so wet that no one was about, so Charpentier dragged the body of his victim into the empty house. As to the candle and the blood and the writing on the wall and the ring, they may all be so many tricks to throw the police on to the wrong scent."

"Well done!" said Holmes in an encouraging voice. "Really, Gregson, you are getting along. We shall make something of you yet."

"I flatter myself that I have managed it rather neatly," the detective answered proudly. "The young man volunteered a statement in which he said that after following Drebber some time, the latter perceived him and took a cab in order to get away from him. On his way home he met an old shipmate and took a long walk with him. On being asked where this old shipmate lived, he was unable to give any satisfactory reply. I think the whole case fits together uncommonly well. What amuses me is to think of Lestrade, who had started off upon the wrong scent. I am afraid he won't make much of it. Why, by Jove! here's the very man himself!"

It was, indeed, Lestrade, who had ascended the stairs while we were talking, and who now entered the room. The assurance and jauntiness which generally marked his demeanor and dress were, however wanting.

His face was disturbed and troubled, while his clothes were disarranged and untidy.

He had evidently come with the intention of consulting with Sherlock Holmes, for on perceiving his colleague he appeared to be embarrassed and put out.

He stood in the center of the room, fumbling nervously with his hat, and uncertain what to do.

"This is a most extraordinary case," he said, at last—"a most incomprehensible affair."

"Ah, you find it so, Mr. Lestrade?" cried Gregson, triumphantly. "I thought you would come to that conclusion. Have you managed to find the secretary, Mr. Joseph Stangerson?"

"The secretary, Mr. Joseph Stangerson," said Lestrade, gravely, "was murdered at Halliday's Private Hotel about 6 o'clock this morning."

CHAPTER VII.

Light in the Darkness.

The intelligence with which Lestrade greeted us was so momentous and so unexpected that we were all three fairly dumfounded.

Gregson sprang out of his chair and upset the remainder of his whisky and water.

I stared in silence at Sherlock Holmes, whose lips were compressed and his brows drawn down over his eyes.

"Stangerson, too!" he muttered, "The plot thickens"

"It was quite thick enough before," grumbled Lestrade, taking a chair. "I seem to have dropped into a sort of council of war."

"Are you—are you sure of this piece of intelligence?" stammered Gregson.

"I have just come from his room," said Lestrade. "I was the first to discover what had occurred."

"We have been hearing Gregson's view of the matter," Holmes observed. "Would you mind letting us know what you have seen and done?"

"I have no objection," Lestrade answered, seating himself. "I freely confess that I was of the opinion that Stangerson was concerned in the death of Drebber. This fresh development has shown me that I was completely mistaken. Full of the one idea, I set myself to find out what had become of the secretary. They had been seen together at Euston Station about half past eight on the evening of the third. At two in the morning Drebber had been found in the Brixton Road. The question which confronted me was to find out how Stangerson had been employed between 8:30 and the time of the crime and what had become of him afterward. I telegraphed to Liverpool, giving a description of the man and warning them to keep a watch upon the American boats. I then set to work calling upon all the hotels and lodging houses in the vicinity of Euston. You see, I argued that if Drebber and his companion had become separated the natural course of the latter would be to put up somewhere in the vicinity for the night and then hang about the station again next morning."

"They would be likely to agree on some meeting-place beforehand," remarked Holmes.

"So it proved. I spent the whole of yesterday evening in making inquiries entirely without avail. This morning I began very early, and at eight o'clock I reached Halliday's Private Hotel, in Little George street. On my inquiry as to whether a Mr. Stangerson was living there, they an once answered me in the affirmative.

"No doubt you are the gentleman he was expecting, they said. 'He had been waiting for a gentleman for two days.'

"'Where is he now?' I asked.

"'He is upstairs in bed. He wished to be called at nine.'

"It seemed to me that my sudden appearance might shake his nerves and lead him to say something unguarded. The Boots volunteered to show me the room; it was on the second floor, and there was a small corridor leading up to it. The Boots pointed out the door to me, and was about to go down stairs again, when I saw something that made me feel sickish, in spite of my twenty years' experience. From under the door there curled a little red ribbon of blood, which had meandered across the passage and formed a little pool along the skirting at the other side. I gave a cry which brought the Boots back. He nearly fainted when he saw it. The door was locked on the inside, but we put our shoulders to it and knocked it in. The window of the room was open, and beside the window, all huddled up, lay the body of a man in his night-dress. He was quite dead, and had been for some time, for his limbs were rigid and cold. When we turned him over the Boots recognized him at once as being the same gentleman who had engaged the room under the name of James Stangerson. The cause of death was a deep stab in the left side, which must have penetrated the heart. And now comes the strangest part of the affair. What do you suppose was above the murdered man?"

I felt a creeping of flesh and a presentiment of coming horror, even before Sherlock Holmes answered.

"The word 'Rache," written in letters of blood," he said.

"That was it." said Lestrade, in an awstruck voice; and we were all silent for a while.

There was something so methodical and so incomprehensible about the deeds of this unknown assassin, that it imparted a fresh ghastliness to his crimes.

My nerves, which were steady enough on the fieldof battle, tingled as I thought of it.

"The man was seen," continued Lestrade. "A milkboy passing on his way to the dairy, happned to walk down the lane which leds from the mews at the back of the hotel. He noticed that a ladder, which usually lay there, was raised againstone of the windows of the second flor, which was wide open. After passing, he looked back and saw a man desend the ladder. He came down so quitly and openly that the boy imagined him to be some carpenter or joiner at work in the hotel. He took no partiular notice of him, beyond thinking in his own mind that it was early for him to be at work. He has an impressio that the man was tall, had a reddish face, and thought it was early for him to be at work. He must have stayed in the room some little time afterthe murder, for we found blood-stained water in the basin, where he had washed his hands, and marks on the sheet, where he had deliberately wipedhis knife."

I glanced at Holmes on hearing the description of the murderer which tallied so exactly with his own.

There was, however, no trace of exultation or satisfaction upon his face.

"Did you findnothing in the room which could furish a clew to the murderer?" he asked.

"Nothing. Stagerson had Drebber's purse in his pocet, but it seems that this was usual, as he did all the paying. There waseighty-odd pounds in it, but nothing had been taken. Whatever the motives of these extraordinary crimes, robbery is certainly not one of them. There were no papers or memoranda in the murdered man's pockets, except a single telegram, dated from Cleveland aboua month ago, and containing the wors, 'J. H. is in Europe.' There was no name appended to this message."

"And there was nothing else?" Holmes asked.

"Nothing of any importance. The man's novel, which he had read himself to slee, was lying upon the bed, and his pipe was on a chair beside him. There was a glass of water on the table, and on the window sill a small chip ointment box containing a couple of pills."

Sherlock Holmes sprang from his chair with an exclamation of delight.

"The last link," he cried, exultantly. "My case is complete."

The two detetives stared at him in amazement.

"I have nown my hands," my companion said confidently, "all the threads which have formed such a tangle. There are, of course, details to be filled in, but I am certain of all the main facts, from theime that Drebber parted from Stangrson at the station, up to the discovry of the body of the latter, as if I had seen them with my own eyes. I will give you proof of my knowledge. Could you lay your hands upon those pills?"

"I have them," said Lestrade, producing a small white box: "I took them and the purse and the telegram, intending to have them put in a place of safety at the police station. It was the merest chance my taking these pills, for I am bound to say that I do not attach any importance to them."

"Give them here," said Holmes. "Now, doctor," turning to me, "are those ordinary pills?"

They certainly were not. They were of a pearly gray color, small, round, and almost transparent against the light.

"From their lightness and transparency, I should imagine that they are soluble in water," I remarked.

"Precisely so," answered Holmes. "Now, would you mind going down and fetching that poor little devil of a terrier which has been bad so long, and which the landlady wanted you to put out of its pain yesterday?"

I went downstairs and carried the dog upstairs in my arms. Its labored breathing and glazing eye showed that it was not far from its end.

Indeed, its snow white muzzle proclaimed that it had already exceeded the usual term of canine existence. I placed it upon a cushion on the rug.

"I will now cut one of these pills in two," said Holmes, and drawing his penknife, he suited the action to the word. "One half we return into the box for future purposes. The other half I will place in this wine glass, in which is a teaspoonful of water. You perceive that our friend, the doctor, is right, and that it readily dissolves."

"This may be very interesting," said Lestrade, in the injured tone of one who suspects that he is being laughed at. "I can not see, however, what it has to do with the death of Mr. Joseph Stangerson."

"Patience, my friend, patience. You will find in time that is has everything to do with it. I shall now add a little milk to make the mixture palatable, and on presenting it to the dog you will find that he laps it up readily enough."

As he spoke he turned the contents of the wine glass into a saucer and placed it in front of the terrior, who speedily licked it dry.

Sherlock Holmes' earnest demeanor had so far convinced us that we all sat in silence, watching the animal intently and expecting some startling effect.

None such appeared, however. The dog continued to lie stretched upon the cushion, breathing in a labored way, but apparently neither the better nor the worse for its draught.

Holmes had taken out his watch, and as minute followed minute without result, an expression of the utmost chagrin and disappointment appeared upon his features.

He gnawed his lip, drummed his fingers upon the table and showed every other symptom of acute impatience.

So great was his emotion that I felt sincerely sorry for him, while the two detectives smiled derisively, by no means displeased at this check which he had met.

"It can't be coincidence," he cried at last, springing from his chair and pacing wildly up and down the room: "it is impossible that is should be a mere coincidence. The very pills which I suspected in the case of Drubber are actually found after the death of Stangerson. And yet they are inert. What can it mean? Surely my whole chain or reasoning cannot have been false. It is impossible! And yet this wretched dog is none the worse. Ah, I have it, I have it!"

With a perfect shriek of delight he rushed to the box, cut the other pill in two, dissolved it, added milk, and presented it to the terrier.

The unfortunate creature's tongue hardly seemed to have been moistened in it before it gave a convulsive shiver in every limb, and lay as rigid and lifeless as if it had been struck by lightning.

Sherlock Holmes drew a long breath and wiped the perspiration from his forehead.

"I should have more faith," he said: "I ought to know by this time that when a fact appears to be opposed to a long train of deductions it invariably proves to be capable of bearing some other interpretation. Of the two pills in that box one was the most deadly poison and the other was entirely harmless. I ought to have known that before ever I saw the box at all."

This last statement appeared to me to be so startling that I could hardly believe that he was in his sober senses.

There was the dead dog, however, to prove that his conjecture had been correct.

It seemed to me that the mists in my own mind were gradually clearing away, and I began to have a dim, vague perception of the truth.

"All this seems strange to you," continued Holmes, "because you failed at the beginning of the inquiry to grasp the importance of the single real clew which was presented to you. I had the good fortune to seize upon that, and everything which has occurred since then has served to confirm my original supposition, and, indeed was the logical sequence of it. Hence, things which have perplexed you and made the case more obscure have served to enlighten me and to strengthen my conclusions. It is a mistake to confound strangeness with mystery. The most commonplace crime is often the most mysterious, because it presents no new or special features from which deductions may be drawn. This murder would have been infinitely more difficult to unravel had the body of the victim been simply found lying in the roadway without any of those outer and sensational accompaniments which have rendered it remarkable. These strange details, far from making the case more difficult, have really had the effect of making it less so."

(To be Continued.)

Things That May Interest You.

Over a million persons die yearly in Europe of consumption.

Five hundreda nd eighty-seven distinct languages are spoken in Europe.

Forty-five hours constitute a week's work for women and girls in New Zealand.

Seventy-eight profit sharing schemes, affecting 53,526 workpeople, were in operation last year in this country.

Madame Isacescu, the Vienese lady swimmer, is training for another attempt to swim the English channel.

Out of 2,599 murders of Christians in Turkey last year there were only 61 cases in which the murderers were punished.

The longest railway run in the world without changing is on the Canadian Pacific, from Halifax to Vancouver, 3,662 miles.

The biggest orchard in the world is near Santa Barbara, Cal. It covers 1,700 acres and contains 31,000 fruit and nut trees.

The amount of heat generated by a man's body in a day's work is sufficient to raise 63 pounds of water from freezing to oiling point.

Lord Kelvin, who is now 78 years of age, is entitled to place no less than 26 letters, indicating various titles of honor, after his name.

Geraniums bloom most satisfactorily when grown in comparatively small pots and soil which is termed rich, but not rank with excessive manure.

In Portugal if the wife publishes literary works without the husband's consent, the law frees him at once from all further matrimonial obligations.

During the past ten years immigration to America from Germany, Ireland and England has decreased, while that from Italy, Austria and Russia has increased.

Three are 6,000 monks on the promontory of Athos. They pay to the sultan 2,000 pounds a year for the privilege of being allowed to govern themselves.

The number of ships in the American whaling fleet has fallen off in the last twelve years from 97 to 40, and much the same is the case with the Scotch whaling industry.

One of Milton's biographers says that nearly twenty years elapsed between the time he sketched out the plan of "Paradise Lost" and the completion of that work. The actual labor of composition was condensed into two or three years.

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Farmer Honk—An' s'posin' he tells yew the boy ain't suited fer farmin' at all?

Farmer Jones—That's just what I want tew find out, so's I kin lick it out uv him before he gits tew big.

Yonghub—There's nothing like matrimony for teaching a young man the value of money.

Oldwed—That's right. A dollar a man gives to his wife looks twice as big as the dollar he blew in on her during courtship.

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Miss Pepperey — There was a slight misunderstanding there. I said you were "two fast idiots."—Philadelphia Press.

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Mr. Crimsonbeak—Several clubs.

Mrs. Crimsonbeak—The monster.

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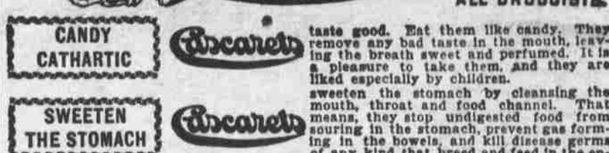

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LIVER TONIC — Cascarets tone the stomach and bowels and stir up the lazy liver. They do not merely soften the stools and cause their discharge, but strengthen the bowels and put them into lively, healthy condition, making their action natural.

MILD BUT SURE — Cascarets never grip nor gripe. They act quietly, positively and never cause any kind of uncomfortable feeling. Taken regularly they make the liver act regularly and naturally as it should. They keep the sewerage of the body properly moving and keep the system clean.

BOON FOR MOTHERS — Cascarets increase the flow of milk in nursing mothers. If the mother eats a tablet, it makes her milk mildly purgative and has a mild but certain effect on the baby. In this way they are the only safe laxative for the nursing infant.

CURE CONSTIPATION — Cascarets taken patiently, persistently, will cure any form of constipation, no matter how old or how often other remedies have failed. They are absolutely guaranteed to cure any case, or purchase money will be cheerfully refunded.

NEVER SOLD IN BULK — Cascarets cost 10c, 25c, 50c a box. Samples sent free for the asking. We publish no testimonials but sell Cascarets on their merit under absolute guarantee to cure. Buy and try a box to-day, or write us for free samples and booklet.

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$100 REWARD will be paid to any reader of this paper who will report to us any attempt of substitution, or sale of "something just as good" when Cascarets are called for, and furnish evidence upon which we can convict. All correspondence confidential.