

ASTORIAN SCARLET

BY A. CONAN DOYLE.

CHAPTER VII.—Continued.

Mr. Gregson, who had listened to this address with considerable impatience, could contain himself no longer. "Look here, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, you are a smart man, and that you have your own methods of working. We want something more than mere theory and preaching here, though. It is a case of taking the man I have made my case out, and it seems I was wrong. Young Chatterbox could not have been engaged in this second affair. Leatrada went after his man, Stangeron, and it appears that he was wrong, too. You have thrown out hints here and hints there, and seem to know more than we do, but the time has come when we feel that we have a right to ask you straight how much you do know of the business. Can you name the man who did it?"

PART II. The Country of the Saint.

CHAPTER I.

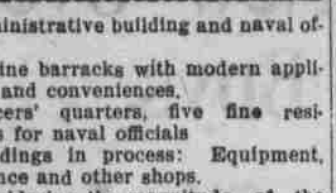
In the central portion of the great North American Continent there lies an arid and repulsive desert, which for many a long year served as a barrier against the advance of civilization. From the Sierra Nevada to Nebraska, and from the Yellowstone river in the north to the Colorado upon the south, is a region of desolation and silence. Nor is nature always in one mood throughout this grim district. It comprises snow-capped and lofty mountains and dark gloomy valleys. There are swiftly-flowing rivers which dash through jagged canyons; and there are enormous plains, which in winter are white with snow, and in summer are gray with the saline alkali dust. They all preserve, however, the common characteristic of barrenness, inhospitability and misery. There are no inhabitants of this land of desolation. A band of Pawnees or of Blackfeet may occasionally traverse it in order to reach other hunting-grounds, but the hardest of the bravest are glad to lose sight of those awesome plains and far themselves once more upon their prairies. The coyote skulks among the scrub, the buzzard flaps heavily through the air, and the clumsy grizzly bear lumbers through the dark ravines, which are such sustenance as it can find among the rocks. These are the sole dwellers in the wilderness. In the whole world there can be no more dreary view than that from the northern slope of the Sierra Blanco. As far as the eye can reach stretches the great flat plainland, all dusted over with patches of alkali, and intersected by clumps of the dwarfish chaparral bushes. On the extreme verge of the horizon lies a long chain of mountain peaks, with their rugged summits flecked with snow. In this great stretch of country there is no sign of life, nor of anything pertaining to life. There is no bird in the steel-blue heaven, no movement upon the dull, gray earth—above all there is absolute silence. Listen as one may, there is no shadow of a sound in all that mighty wilderness, nothing but silence—complete and heart-subduing silence. It has been said there is nothing appertaining to life upon the broad plain. That is hardly true. Looking down from the Sierra Blanco, one sees a pathway traced out across the desert, which winds away and is lost in the extreme distance. It is rutted with wheels and trodden down by the feet of many adventures. Here and there are scattered white objects which glisten in the sun and stand out against the dull deposit of alkali. Approach and examine them! They are bones; some large and coarse, others smaller and more delicate. The former have belonged to oxen, the latter to men. For fifteen hundred miles one may trace this ghastly caravan route by the scattered remains of those who have fallen by the wayside. Looking down on this very scene, there stood upon the 4th of May, 1847, a solitary traveler. His appearance was such that he might have been the very genius of the region. An observer would have found it difficult to say whether he was nearer to forty or to sixty. His face was lean and haggard, and his brows, parchment-like skin was drawn tightly over the projecting bones; his long, brown hair and beard were all flecked and dashed with white; his eyes were sunken in his head, and burned with an unnatural lustre; while the hands which grasped his rifle were hardly more fleshy than that of a skeleton. As he stood, he leaned upon his weapon for support, and yet his tall figure and the massive framework of his bones suggested a wiry and vigorous constitution. His gaunt face, however, and his clothes, which hung so baggily over his shriveled limbs, proclaimed what it was that gave him that smile and decrepit appearance. The man was dying—dying from hunger and from thirst. He had tolled painfully down the ravine, and on to this little elevation, which was his vain hope of seeing some signs of water. Now the great salt plain stretched before his eyes, and the distant belt of savage mountains without a sign of any sign of plant or tree which might indicate the presence of moisture. In all that broad landscape there was no gleam of hope. North, and east, and west he looked with wild, questioning eyes, and there he realized that his wanderings had come to an end, and that there, on that barren crag, he was about to die. "Why not here, as well as in a feather bed, twenty years hence," he muttered, as he seated himself in the shelter of a bowlder. Before sitting down, he had deposited upon the ground his useless rifle, and also a large bundle tied up in a gray canvas which he had carried along over his right shoulder. It appeared to be somewhat too heavy for his strength, for, in lowering it, it came down on the ground with some little violence. Instantly there broke from the gray parcel a little moaning cry, and from it there protruded a small, scared face, with very bright, brown eyes, and two little speckled, dimpled fists. "You've hurt me!" said the childish voice, reproachfully. "Have I, though?" the man answered, penitently; "I didn't go for to do it." As he spoke, he unwrapped the gray shawl and extricated a pretty little girl of about five years of age, whose dainty shoes and smart pink frock, with its little linen apron, all bespoke a mother's care. The present name is no longer appropriate, the northern boundary of the city having extended far beyond that avenue.

"No, there ain't nothing, dat?" "You'll just see do to be patient awhile and then you'll be all right. Put your head up again me, like that, and then you'll feel better. It ain't easy to talk when your lips are like leather, but I guess I'd best let you know how the cards lie. What's that you've got?" "Pretty things! fine things!" cried the little girl, ethereally holding up two glittering fragments of mica. "Wheree goes back to home I'll give them to brother Bob." "You'll see prettier things than them soon," said the man, confidently, as you just said a bit. I was going to tell you, though—you remember when we left the river?" "Well, we reckoned we strike another river soon, d'ye see. But there was something wrong, compasses or map, or something, and it didn't turn up. Water run out. Just except a little drop for the likes of you and—"

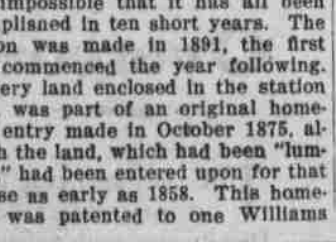
Uncle Sam's Puget Sound Navy Yard and Dry Docks

UNCLE SAM had no need to erect formidable fortifications and extensive naval and military works, in order to make sure of protection for the waters and commercial interests of the Pacific Northwest, but when our Uncle Sam located the Puget Sound Naval Station he secured such protection for all time to come under all possible events, domestic or foreign. At the same time he located these works in a position absolutely impregnable, a very Gibraltar of security against attack or interference, as an examination of location and surroundings will show. In the first place, the location of Port Orchard bay, on which the station is built, is 100 miles interior from the Pacific, reached only through the straits of Juan de Fuca, that wonderful body of water through which pours the present enormous streams of Northwestern commerce. This water is susceptible of fortifications and of defense beyond the ability of the combined fleets of all earth to force an entrance. Forts at Fort Townsend and other points eastward from the station, the entrance of the straits already protect the passage, while beyond, as the course lies further in toward the naval station, the channel narrows into abutting natural defenses. Should the naval powers of earth ever force their way there would remain torpedoes, bomb, dynamite mines, chains, and like means of destruction of the advancing engines of war, strung and hung in the narrow channels nearer the station, beyond any conceivable ability of present or future naval powers to pass. On such a situation is based the claim that the location, for safety and strength, is the finest that the world knows today. Other features are quite as favorable, including depth of water, character of anchorage grounds, shore for docks and wharfs, surrounding lands and conditions, including climatic conditions and protection from all winds by an absolutely land-locked harbor, set within densely timbered hills.

Views of the Station, its works and surroundings herewith given, disclose but a small part of the interesting and instructive features to be learned by a visit to Bremerton, as the little city surrounding the Station, has been named. Carved out of the virgin forest, the works occupy an enclosure of some eighty acres of level land, that comes down to the water on just the level needed for works and docks, while far back the ground rises by ridges and terraces, giving attractive natural locations for the administrative buildings, offices and quarters. Central to all lies the great dry dock, now the largest possessed by the government, with dockage and wharfs in front, and shops and repair and equipment buildings adjoining. Notwithstanding the completeness of the works all is still



BIG FIGHTING MACHINE IN DRYDOCK.



INTERIOR VIEW OF DRYDOCK UNOCCUPIED.



OFFICERS' QUARTERS AT PUGET SOUND STATION.

Administrative building and naval offices. Marine barracks with modern appliances and conveniences. Officers' quarters, five fine residences for naval officials. Buildings in process: Equipment, ordnance and other shops. Considering the magnitude of the station as it exists today, it seems almost impossible that it has all been accomplished in ten short years. The location was made in 1891, the first work commenced the year following. The very land enclosed in the station yards, was part of an original homestead entry made in October 1875, although the land, which had been "lumbered," had been entered upon for that purpose as early as 1858. This homestead was patented to one Williams

As to the three ships first mentioned, there is yet considerable to be done to them in painting and overhauling for two of them, the Iowa having long departed, while the Philadelphia is expected to be made into a receiving ship, by the removal of one of her decks. Bremerton, the city of the Station, to-be, has its foundation of course in the labor employed, and the traffic of the Station and of its officers and managers. Suddenly rising to several thousand of population, the little city is struggling to keep pace with its own unexpected importance and growth, and fortunately is in the hands of enterprising men of high character, who are seized with the spirit and character of the enterprise that has come to them, and who evince a disposition to co-operate with the government purpose and to make their city a credit. This is shown in the character of improvements, in street construction and all the municipal improvements as fast as undertaken. There is a water system already installed, by utilization of fine streams of pure water, with sufficient head for fire protection, and on a scale for all future requirements. The young city government keeps pace with the federal requirements and in interests, in short there is that harmony and co-operation so desirable under the circumstances. Among other steps in this direction, the town is at present organizing a Sailor's and Marine Club at Mare Island and Brooklyn, in the interest of improvement, and advantages for the seafaring employes when at the Station. Schools, churches, and society of the rising order are features of the young city of Port Orchard Bay, which also has that modern necessity the newspaper, the Weekly News, conducted by the Gale Brothers. This was established one year ago. Kitsap is the inexpressive name of the interior, sound-encircled county that has received this great improvement and development. A region densely timbered, sparsely settled, and with its chief business centers and bay traffic hitherto, finds its solitude transformed into noise and bustle, with hints of the mighty world outside, by comparisons of the hills and machinery of the world's hitherto to them unknown fighting monsters, with the pigmy bottoms so long their pride and admiration. The wilderness is beginning to blossom as the rose, and numerous small towns are springing up, testifying to the immense expenditures by the government, and that all sections are getting some share. The county seat is across the bay from the Naval Station, with no doubt an ambition on the part of the Bremerton people, that some time in the near future Bremerton will be the capital of the county, as it has already become the commercial center. Farms are rapidly developing, and the fruit raising industry is expected to be large in all that region in the very near future. Moreover, the people settling the region are hardy, industrious and consequently thrifty people, that will soon set the mark of wealth and high character upon the region where Uncle Sam has placed so important national interests. As to management it is universal testimony that the government has made no mistake in the assignments of Commandant, and other administrative officers, who in the order of Commandants since opening of the Station have been, Lieutenant Wyke, Commander Morong, Capt. Whiting, Commander Green, Capt. Coghlan, and Capt. W. T. Burwell. As to accessibility for the traveler and the visitor, as well as for commercial communication with Bremerton, it is easy, involving more or less daylight water trips from all coast and

who sold to William Bremer, from whom the government purchased the station tract of 86 acres, which was upon recommendation of two commissions, one of naval officers and one of civilians, Congress acting upon the report of those commissions. Bremerton City takes its name from its original land owner. No foot of the land where the station is was cleared until the government commenced it in the year stated. Mr. Bremer had built a small dock, for the bay boats, which still stands a pioneer finger mark compared with the extensive docks of modern equipment and construction where now float the mightiest fighting machines of modern times. While the government authorities

constantly on foot the largest of the present works under construction being an immense equipment building of brick, that will be completed this season. Brick and steel structure is maintained throughout, and every specialty of construction, brick, stone and timber, is of the superior quality for which Uncle Samuel is noted. A point of great significance as bearing on the local adaptability and economy of the town comes from the Puget Sound and Pacific region, excepting bare structural steel and iron. Stone, brick, timber and coal, are all at Uncle Sam's finger tips. Details of these great works, are to be found in the reports, but a few items will suffice, emphasizing in the main, as they do, the local importance of the Station, and comparison with the sister stations of Mare Island and Brooklyn. Puget Sound is already larger than either of the other two, and ready under the protectingegis of government appropriation, will shortly be among the largest in the world. Its interior capacity is such that it can contain a battleship in the world, and yet the extensions now contemplated, to be covered in the next appropriation calling for \$4,000,000, already approved by the department, call for another dry dock double the size of our present one, and our interests in the far east. Other extensions covered in the recent appropriation of \$1,200,000 are the coal bunkers of 25,000 tons capacity. Bremerton being one of five such coal stations ordered, the other four being San Diego, San Francisco, Sitka, and Dutch Harbor for the Pacific and Behring Sea. This coaling provision is now a necessity, but the future system for the Station is said by government officials to be to utilize the Lake Washington fresh water canal now under construction, ship coaling through that body of water directly up the coal bunkers near the mines, and in going and coming clean their bottoms of barnacles, saving the scrapping process in dry dock. The rolls of the coal body of water directly up increases as the works are extended. The present works comprise the following: Drydock, the largest government dock in the United States; two large docks and docks, largest and most commodious on the Pacific Coast. Brick and steel fire-proof construction and repair buildings. Steam engineering building, with equipment. Brick warehouse and store house.

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What Alligators Eat. More than one curious thing have been found in the stomach of a shark, but never has such an extraordinary collection been found as was discovered recently in the stomach of an alligator. This alligator was killed in the Sonora, and was more than 12 feet in length. In its stomach were discovered eighty-five stones, several birds' claws, two human finger nails and three hoofs of a donkey, to one of which a piece of rope was attached. Medals for First Volunteers. Governor Crane, of Massachusetts, has signed the bill awarding a medal to every man from his state who went out in response to President Lincoln's first call for troops. The pen with which he signed the bill has been presented to President Pierce, of the "minute men of '61."