

# The Adventure of the Dancing Men

#### No. 3 of the Series

#### it ontinued from last work?)

'Has he been moved ?" asked Holmes "We have moved nothing except the tady. We could not leave her lying wounded upon the floor.'

"How long have you been here, doe thr?

"Since 4 o'clock."

"Any one else?"

"Yes, the constable here."

"And you have touched nothing?"

"Nothing."

"You have acted with great discretion. Who sent for you?

"The housemaid, Saunders."

Was it she who gave the alarm?

"She and Mrs. King, the cook." Where are they now?

"In the kitchen, I believe."

"Then I think we had better heatheir story at once."

The old hall, oak paneled and high windowed, had been turned into a court of investigation. Holmes sat in a great, old fashioned chair, his inevorable eyes gleaming out of his buggind Cace. I could read in them a set pupose to devote his life to this quest until the client whom he had failed to save should at last be avenged. The trim Inspector Martin, the old, gray headed country doctor, myself and a stolid village policeman made up the rest of that strange company.

The two women told their story clear tr enough. They had been aroused from their sleep by the sound of an explosion, which had been followed a minute later by a second one. They stept in adjoining rooms, and Mrs King had rushed in to Saunders. To gether they had descended the stairs The door of the study was oven, and a candle was burning upon the table. Their muster by upon his face in the center of the room. He was ould dead. Near flie window his wife was erouching, her head leaning exclusion the wall. She was horribly wounded, and the side of her face was red with blood. She breathed heavily, but was incapable of saying anything. The parsage as well as the room was full of smoke and the smell of powder. The window was certainly shut and fusioned upon the inside. Both wemen were positive upon the point. they had at once sent for the doctor and for the constable. Then, with the aid of the groom and the stable boy. they had conveyed their injured mistress to her room. Both she and her trustand had occupied the bed. She was ciud in her dress, he in his dressing gown. over his night clothes. Seatta Sir ing had been moved in the study. fur as they know, there had never been any quarrel between husband , ud wite, They had always looked upon them as a very united couple These were the main points of the servants' evidence. In answer to Inspector Martin they were clear that every door was fastened upon the mode and that no one could have escaped from the house. In answer to Holmes they both remembered that they were conscious of the smell of powder from the moment that they ran out of their rooms upon the top floor. "I commend that fact very carefully to your attention." said Holmes to his professional colleague. "And now I think that we are in a position to undertake a thorough examination of the room." The study proved to be a small cham- , hadly step round with me, we sime her lined on three sides with books end with a writing table facing an ordinary window, which looked out upon the garden. Our first attention was gives to the body of the unfortunate equire, whose huge frame lay stretched across the room. His disordered dreas showed fist he had been hastly aroused from sleep. The bullet had been fired at him from the front and had remained in his body after penetrating the heart. His death had certainly been instantaneous and painless. There was no powder marking either upon his dressing gown or on his hands. According to the country surgeon, the lady had stains upon her face, but none upon her hand, "The absence of the latter means rothing, though its presence may team everything," said Holmes. "Unless the powder from a badly fitting curridge happens to spurt back ward one may tire many shots without leaving a sign. I would suggest that Mr. Cubitt's body may now be removed. I suppose. tor, you have not recovered the buildt which wenned the lady?"

A serious operation STEI be necessary before that can be done. But there are still four cartridges in the revolver. Two have been fired and two wounds inflicted, so that each bullet can be accounted for.

"So it would seem." said Holmes. "Perhaps you can account also for the bullet which has so obviously struck the edge of the window?"

He had turned suddenly, and his long, thin finger was pointing to a hole which had been drilled right through the lower window sash about an inch above the bottom.

"By George" cried the inspector. "How ever did you see that?"

"Because I looked for it."

"Wonderful!" said the country doc-"You are certainly right, sir. Then tor a third shot has been fired, and therefore a third person must have been present. But who could that have been and how could he have got away?"

"That is the problem which we are now about to solve," said Sherlock Holmes. "You remember, Inspector Martin, when the servants said that on leaving their room they were at once conscious of a smell of powder I remarked that the point was an extremely important one?"

Yes, sir; but I confess I did not guite follow you."

"It suggested that at the time of the firing the window as well as the door of the room had been open. Otherwise the fumes of powder could not have been blown so rapidly through the nouse. A draft in the room was ne essary for that. Both door and window were only open for a very short time, however."

"How do you prove that?"

"Because the candle was not get tered.

"Capital" cried the inspector. "Capitn1:

"Feeling sure that the window had been open at the time of the tragedy. I conceived that there might have been a third person in the affair, who stood outside this opening and fired through Any shot directed at this person 11. might hit the sush. I looked, and there, sure enough, was the bullet mark!

"Itni how came the window to be shut and fastened? "The wommn's first instinct would be

to shut and fasten the window. But, hello! What is this?"

It was a lady's hand bag which stood upon the study table-a trim little hand bag of crocodile skin and sliver. Hoimes opened it and turned the contents out. There were twenty fifty pound notes of the Bank of England, held together by an india rubber bandnothing else.

"This must be preserved, for it will figure in the trial," said Holmes as he handed the bag with its contents to the inspector. "It is now necessary that we should try to throw some light upon this third bullet, which has clearly, from the splintering of the wood, been fired from inside the room. I should like to see Mrs. King, the cook, again. You said, Mrs. King, that you were awakened by a loud explosion. When you said that did you mean that it seemed to you to be louder than the

several points in this problem which I have not been able to explain to you Now that I have got so far 1 NOL. had best proceed on my own lines and then clear the whole matter up once

THATC HIS

I II go fnto that later.

and for all." "Just as you wish, Mr. Holmes, so long as we get our man."

"I have no desire to make mysteries but it is impossible at the moment of action to enter into long and complex explanations. I have the threads of this affair all in my hand. Even if this lady should never recover consciousness we can still reconstruct the events of last night and insure that justice be done. First of all, I wish to know whether there is any inn in this neighborhood known as Elrige's?"

The servants were cross questioned. but none of them had heard of such a place. The stable boy threw a light upon the matter by remembering that a farmer of that name lived some miles off in the direction of East Ruston.

"Is it a lonely farm?"

"Very lonely, sir."

"Perhaps they have not heard yet of all that happened here during the night ?"

"Maybe not, sir."

Holmes thought for a little, and then a curious smile played over his face.

"Saddle a horse, my lad," said he. "I shall wish you to take a note to Elrige's farm."

He took from his pocket the various slips of the dancing men. With these in front of him he worked for some time at the study table. Finally he handed a note to the boy, with directions to put it into the hands of the person to whom it was addressed, and especially to answer no questions of any sort which might be put to him. I saw the outside of the note, addressed in straggling, irregular characters, very unlike Holmes' usual precise hand. It was consigned to Mr. Abe Shaney, Elrige's farm, East Ruston, Norfolk.

"I think, inspector," Holmes remarked, "that you would do well to telgraph for an escort, as, if my calculations prove to be correct, you may have a particularly daugerous prisoner to convey to the county jall. The boy who takes this note could no doubt forward your telegram. If there is an afternoon train to town, Watson, I think we should do well to take it, as I have a chemical analysis of some interest to finish, and this investigation draws raply to a close."

When the youth had been disputched with the note, Sherlock Holmes gave his instructions to the servants. If any isitor were to call, asking for Mrs. Hilton Cubitt, no information should be given as to her condition, but he was to be shown at once into the drawing room. He impressed these points upon them with the utmost carnestness Finally he led the way into the draw fug room, with the remark that the lies was now out of our hands and that we must while away the time as test we might until we could see what was in store for us. The doctor had departed to his patients, and only the inelector and myself remained.

"I think that I can help you to pass an hour in an interesting and profitable manner," said Holmes, drawing his chair up to the table and spreading out in front of him the various papers upon which were recorded the antics of the dancing men. "As to you, friend

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### TIMBER LAND NOTICE.

United States Land Office, Lakeview, Oregon, August 8th, 1905. Notice is hereby given that in compliance with the provisions of the Act of June 3, 1878 entitled "An act for the sale of timber lands in the States of California, Oregon, Nevada and Washington Territory," as extended to all the Public Land States by act of August 4, 1892, the following persons have th s day filed in this office

persons have this day filed in this office their sworn atatements to-wit: Kate Barry, of Lakeview, county of Lake, state of Oregon. Sworn state-ment No. 3001, for the purchase of the NE¼ SE¼ SE¼ NE¼ and Lots 1 and 2 Sec. 6, Tp 40 S., R 22 E W M. Nellie Barry, of Lakeview, county of Lake, state of Oregon. Sworn state-

ment No. 3002, for the purchase of the Nw14 SE14 S16 SEX and Sw4 NEy Sec. 6, Tp 40 S., R 22 E W M.

That they will offer proof to show that the land sought is more valuable for its timber or stone than for agricultural purposes and to establish their claim to said land before Register & Receiver at Lakeview, Or., on Monday the 23 day of October 1905.

They name as witnesses

Thomas Lynch, Benjamin Daly and Dennis Sullivan of Lakeview, Oregon, and John Barry of Adel, Oregon. Any and all persons claiming adverse-

ly the above-described lands are requested to file their affirms in this office on or before said 23d day of October 1905. 21-22 J. N. Watson, Register,

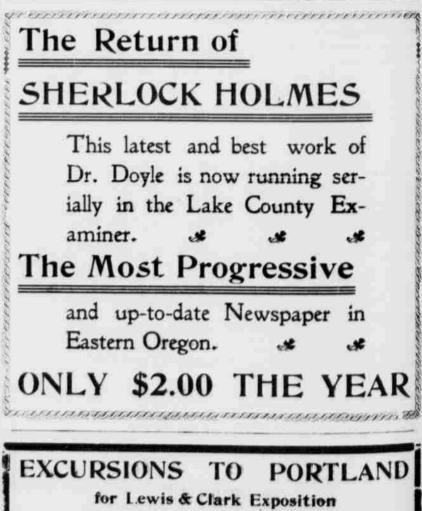
### Notice of Appointmenmt of Administrator

Istrator of the ESTATE of WILLIAM

All persons having claims against said

Dated this 7th day of September, 1905. DICK J. WILCOX.

36-40



"Woll, sir, it wakened me from my sleep, and so it is hard to judge. But t did seem very loud.

"You don't think that it might have been two shots fired almost at the same instant?

"I am sure I couldn't say, sir."

speciator l'entre-

"I believe that it was undoubtedly I rather think, Inspector Martin 30.1 that we have now exhausted all that this coom can teach us. If you will see what fresh evidence the garden be to offer.

A flower bed extended up to the stuly window, and we all broke inter an exchamation as we approached it The nowers were trampled down, and the soft soli was imprinted all over with footmarks. Large, masculine for they were, with peculiarly long, sharp tors illoimes hunted about among the grass and leaves like a retriever after a wounded bird. Then, with a cry of satisfaction, he bent forward and pick ed op a little brazen cylinder.

"I thought so," said he. "The re volver had an ejector, and here is the I really think. In third cartridge. spector Martin, that our case is almost complete.

The country inspector's face had shown his intense amagement at the rapid and musterful progress of Holmes investigation. At first he had shown some disposition to morer his own posttion, but now he was acceeding administion and ready to followant discrimention wherever Hubbler h "Avils on do your allo not V" he a



He sank with a deep groun on to the settee.

Watson, I owe you every atonement for having allowed your natural curiosity to remain so long unsatisfied. To you, inspector, the whole incident may appeal as a remarkable professional study. I must tell you, first of all, the interesting circumstances connected with the previous consultations which Mr. Hilton Cubitt has had with me in Baker street." He then shortly recapitulated the facts which have al ready been recorded. "I have here in front of me these singular productions, at which one might smile had they not proved themselves to be the forerun ners of so terrible a tragedy. I am fairly familiar with all forms of secret writings and am myself the author of a triffing monograph upon the subject, in which I analyze 160 separate ciphers. but I confess that this is endedly new to use. The object of those who is vented the sectors has an postly to to entired that these clusterers es WAY IS DEPOSITE OUT TO STOCKED ADDRESS OF they are the more reading sports in

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