

The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist.

(Continued.)

recovered we shall be happy to escort her to her mother's home. If she is not quite convalescent you will find that a bill that she was about to telegraph to a young electrician in the Midlands will probably complete the cure. As to you, Mr. Carruthers, I think that you have done what you could to make amends for your share in an evil plot. There is my card, sir, and if my evidence can be of help to you in your trial it shall be at your disposal."

In the whirl of our incessant activity it has often been difficult for me, as the reader has probably observed, to find time to give those details which the curious might expect. Each case has been the subject of a number of the papers upon the subject have passed fore and aft of our table. I find, however, that what was the end of my own acquaintance with this case, in which I have put it upon record that Miss Violet Barnard and indeed almost a large fortune and that she is now the wife of Cyril Morton, the senior partner of Morton & Kennedy, the famous Westchester electricians. Williamson and Woodley were both tried for abduction and assault, the former getting seven years and the latter ten. Of the fate of Carruthers I have no record, but I am sure that his assault was not viewed very gravely by the court, since Woodley had the reputation of being a most dangerous ruffian, and I think that a few months were sufficient to satisfy the demands of justice.

The Adventure of the Priory School

No. 5 of the Series

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WE have had some dramatic entrances and exits upon our small stage at Baker street, but I cannot recollect anything more sudden and startling than the first appearance of Dr. Thornercroft Huxtable, M. A., Ph. D., etc. His card, which seemed too small to carry the weight of his academic distinctions, preceded him by a few seconds, and then he entered himself, so large, so pompous and so dignified that he was the very embodiment of self-possession and solidity. And yet his first action when the door had closed behind him was to stagger against the table, whence he slipped down upon the floor, and there was that majestic figure prostrate and insensible upon our Persian hearth-rug.

We had sprung to our feet, and for a few moments we stared in silent amazement at this ponderous piece of wreckage, which told of some sudden and fatal storm far out on the ocean of life. Then Holmes hurried with a cushion for his head and I with brandy for his lips. The heavy, white face was smeared with lines of trouble; the hanging pouches under the closed eyes were laden in color; the loose mouth drooped dejectedly at the corners; the rolling chins were unshaven. Collar and shirt bore the grime of a long journey, and the hair bristled unkempt from the well-shaped head. It was a sorely stricken man who lay before us.

"What is it, Watson?" asked Holmes. "Absolute exhaustion, possibly mere hunger and fatigue," said I, with my finger on the thready pulse, where the stream of life trickled thin and small.

"Return ticket from Mackleton, in the north of England," said Holmes, drawing it from the watch pocket. "It is not 12 o'clock yet. He has certainly been an early starter."

The puckered eyelids had begun to quiver, and now a pair of vacant gray eyes looked up at us. An instant later the man had scrambled on to his feet, his face crimson with shame.

"Forgive this weakness, Mr. Holmes. I have been a little overwrought. Thank you, if I might have a glass of milk and a biscuit I have no doubt that I should be better. I came personally, Mr. Holmes, in order to insure that you would return with me. I feared that a telegram would convince you of the absolute urgency of the case."

"When you are quite restored"—"I am quite well again. I cannot imagine how I came to be so weak. I wish you, Mr. Holmes, to come to Mackleton with me by the next train."

My friend shook his head.

"My colleague, Dr. Watson, could tell you that we are very busy at present. I am retained in this case of the Perret documents, and the Abergavenny murder is coming up for trial. Only a very important issue could call me from London at present."

"Important!" Our visitor threw up his hands. "Have you heard nothing of the abduction of the only son of the Duke of Holderness?"

rumor in the Globe last night. I thought it might have reached your ears."

Holmes shot out his long, thin arm and picked out volume "H" in his encyclopaedia of reference.

"Holderness, sixth duke, K. G., P. C.—half the alphabet! Baron Beverley, earl of Carston—dear me, what a list! Lord Lieutenant of Herefordshire since 1900. Married Edith, daughter of Sir Charles Appleford, 1888. Heir and only child, Lord Saltire. Owns about 250,000 acres. Minerals in Lancashire and Wales. Address, Carlton House Terrace; Holderness Hall, Herefordshire; Carston castle, Bangor, Wales. Lord of the admiralty, 1872; chief secretary of state for— Well, well, this man is certainly one of the greatest subjects of the crown!"

"The greatest and perhaps the wealthiest. I am aware, Mr. Holmes, that you take a very high line in professional matters and that you are prepared to work for the work's sake. I may tell you, however, that his grace has already intimated that a check for 15,000 will be handed over to the person who can tell him where his son is and another thousand to him who can name the man or men who have taken him."

"It is a princely offer," said Holmes. "Watson, I think that we shall accompany Dr. Huxtable back to the north of England. And now, Dr. Huxtable, when you have consumed that milk you will kindly tell me what has happened, when it happened, how it happened and, finally, what Dr. Thornercroft Huxtable of the Priory school, near Mackleton, has to do with the matter and why he comes three days after an event—the state of your chin gives the date—to ask for my humble services."

Our visitor had consumed his milk and biscuits. The light had come back to his eyes and the color to his cheeks as he set himself with great vigor and lucidity to explain the situation.

"I must inform you, gentlemen, that the Priory is a preparatory school of which I am the founder and principal 'Huxtable's Side Lights on Horace' may possibly recall my name to your memories. The Priory is without exception the best and most select preparatory school in England. Lord Leverstoke, the Earl of Blackwater, Sir Cathcart Soames—they all have intrusted their sons to me. But I felt that my school had reached its zenith when, three weeks ago, the Duke of Holderness sent Mr. James Wilder, his secretary, with the intimation that young Lord Saltire, ten years old, his only son and heir, was about to be committed to my charge. Little did I think that this would be the prelude to the most crushing misfortune of my life.

"On May 1 the boy arrived, that being the beginning of the summer term. He was a charming youth, and he soon fell into our ways. I may tell you—I trust that I am not indiscreet, but half confidences are absurd in such a case—that he was not entirely happy at home. It is an open secret that the duke's married life had not been a peaceful one, and the matter had ended in a separation by mutual consent, the duchess taking up her residence in the south of France. This had occurred very shortly before, and the boy's sympathies are known to have been strongly with his mother. He moped after her departure from Holderness Hall, and it was for this reason that the duke desired to send him to my establishment. In a fortnight the boy was quite at home with us and was apparently absolutely happy.

"He was last seen on the night of May 12—that is, the night of last Monday. His room was on the second floor and was approached through another larger room, in which two boys were sleeping. These boys saw and heard nothing, so that it is certain that young Saltire did not pass out that way. His window was open, and there is a stout iron plank leading to the ground. We could trace no footmarks below, but it is sure that this is the only possible exit."

"His absence was discovered at 7 o'clock on Tuesday morning. His bed had been slept in. He had dressed himself fully before going off in his usual school suit of black Eton jacket and dark gray trousers. There were no signs that any one had entered the room, and it is quite certain that anything in the nature of cries or a struggle would have been heard, since Caunter, the elder boy in the inner room, is a very light sleeper.

"When Lord Saltire's disappearance was discovered, I at once called a roll of the whole establishment—boys, masters and servants. It was then that we ascertained that Lord Saltire had not been alone in his flight. Heldegger, the German master, was missing. His room was on the second floor at the farther end of the building, facing the same way as Lord Saltire's. His bed had also been slept in, but he had apparently gone away partly dressed, since his shirt and socks were lying on the floor. He had undoubtedly let himself down by the ivy, for we could see the marks of his feet where he had landed on the lawn. His bicycle was kept in a small shed beside this lawn, and it was also gone.

"He had been with me for two years and came with the best references, but he was a silent, morose

(Continued on last page.)

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In the matter of the Estate of JOHN HOLLAND, Deceased.

Notice is hereby given that the undersigned has filed in the County Court of Lake County, Oregon, the final account of his administration of said estate, and that Monday, the second day of October 1905, at the hour of 10 o'clock A. M., at the County Judge's office in Lakeview, Oregon, has been appointed by the Court as the time and place for hearing objections to said report and to the settlement of said estate thereon.

F. M. CHRISMAN, Administrator.
Dated August 17th, 1905.

Mining blanks at the Examiner office.



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