

The Adventure of the Priory School.

(Continued.)

same time he had a definite motive also. He was eager that I should break the entail, and he was of opinion that it lay in my power to do so. He intended to make a bargain with me—to release Arthur if I would break the entail and so make it possible for the estate to be left to him by will. He knew well that I should never willingly invoke the aid of the police against him, and he would have proposed such a bargain to me, but did not actually do so, for events moved too quickly for him, and he had not time to put his plans into practice.

"What brought all his wicked scheme to wreck was your discovery of this man Heidegger's dead body. James was seized with horror at the news. It came to us yesterday as we sat together in this study. Dr. Huxtable had sent a telegram. James was so overwhelmed with grief and agitation that my suspicions, which had never been entirely absent, rose instantly to a certainty, and I taxed him with the deed. He made a complete voluntary confession. Then he implored me to keep his secret for three days longer so as to give his wretched accomplice a chance of saving his guilty life. I yielded—as I have always yielded—to his prayers, and instantly James hurried off to the Fighting Cock to warn Hayes and give him the means of flight. I could not go there by daylight without provoking comment, but as soon as night fell I hurried off to see my dear Arthur. I found him safe and well, but horrified beyond expression by the dreadful deed he had witnessed. In deference to my promise and much against my will I consented to leave him there for three days under the charge of Mrs. Hayes, since it was evident that it was impossible to inform the police where he was without telling them also who was the murderer, and I could not see how that murderer could be punished without ruin to my unfortunate James. You asked for frankness, Mr. Holmes, and I have taken you at your word, for I have now told you everything without an attempt at circumlocution or concealment. Do you in your turn be as frank with me."

"I will," said Holmes. "In the first place, your grace, I am bound to tell you that you have placed yourself in a most serious position in the eyes of the law. You have condoned a felony, and you have aided the escape of a murderer, for I cannot doubt that any money which was taken by James Wilder to aid his accomplice in his flight came from your grace's purse." The duke bowed his assent.

"This is indeed a most serious matter. Even more culpable in my opinion, your grace, is your attitude toward your younger son. You leave him in this den for three days."

"Under solemn promises"—

"What are promises to such people as these? You have no guarantee that he will not be spirited away again. To honor your guilty elder son you have exposed your innocent younger son to imminent and unnecessary danger. It was a most unjustifiable action."

The proud lord of Holderness was not accustomed to be so rated in his own diocesan hall. The blood flushed into his high forehead, but his conscience held him dumb.

"I will help you, but on one condition only. It is that you ring for the footman and let me give such orders as I like."

Without a word the duke pressed the electric bell. A servant entered.

"You will be glad to hear," said Holmes, "that your young master is found. It is the duke's desire that the carriage shall go at once to the Fighting Cock Inn to bring Lord Saltire home."

"Now," said Holmes when the retreating lackey had disappeared, "having secured the future, we can afford to be more lenient with the past. I am not in an official position, and there is no reason so long as the ends of justice are served why I should disclose all that I know. As to Hayes, I say nothing. The gallows awaits him, and I would do nothing to save him from it. What he will divulge I cannot tell, but I have no doubt that your grace could make him understand that it is to his interest to be silent. From the police point of view he will have kidnaped the boy for the purpose of ransom. If they do not themselves find it out, I see no reason why I should prompt them to take a broader point of view. I would warn your grace, however, that the continued presence of Mr. James Wilder in your household can only lead to misfortune."

"I understand that, Mr. Holmes, and it is already settled that he shall leave me forever and go to seek his fortune in Australia."

"In that case, your grace, since you have yourself stated that any unhappiness in your married life was caused by his presence, I would suggest that you make such amends as you can to the duchess and that you try to resume those relations which have been so un happily interrupted."

"I will do as you command, Mr.

Holmes. I wrote to the duchess this morning."

"In that case," said Holmes, "I think that my friend and I can congratulate ourselves upon several most happy results from our little visit to the north. There is one other small point upon which I desire some light. This fellow Hayes had shod his horses with shoes which counterfeited the tracks of cows. Was it from Mr. Wilder that he learned so extraordinary a device?"

The duke stood in thought for a moment, with a look of intense surprise on his face. Then he opened a door and showed us into a large room furnished as a museum. He led the way to a glass case in a corner and pointed to the inscription.

"These shoes," it ran, "were dug up in the moat of Holderness Hall. They are for the use of horses, but they are shaped below with a cloven foot of iron so as to throw pursuers off the track. They are supposed to have belonged to some of the marauding barons of Holderness in the middle ages."

Holmes opened the case, and moistening his finger, he passed it along the shoe. A thin film of recent mud was left upon his skin.

"Thank you," said he as he replaced the glass. "It is the second most interesting object that I have seen in the north."

"And the first?"

Holmes folded up his check and placed it carefully in his notebook. "I am a poor man," said he as he patted it affectionately and thrust it into the depths of his inner pocket.

The Adventure of Black Peter

No. 6 of the Series

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HAVE never known my friend to be in better form, both mental and physical, than in the year '95. His increasing fame had brought with it an immense practice, and I should be guilty of an indiscretion if I were even to hint at the identity of some of the illustrious clients who crossed our humble threshold in Baker street. Holmes, however, like all great artists, lived for his art's sake, and, save in the case of the Duke of Holderness, I have seldom known him claim any large reward for his inestimable services. So unworldly was he—or so capricious—that he frequently refused his help to the powerful and wealthy where the problem made no appeal to his sympathies, while he would devote weeks of most intense application to the affairs of some humble client whose case presented those strange and dramatic qualities which appealed to his imagination and challenged his ingenuity.

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During the first week of July my friend had been absent so often and so long from our lodgings that I knew he had something on hand. The fact that several rough looking men called during that time and inquired for Captain Basil made me understand that Holmes was working somewhere under one of the numerous disguises and names with which he concealed his own formidable identity. He had at least five small refuges in different parts of London in which he was able to change his personality. He said nothing of his business to me, and it was not my habit to force a confidence. The first positive sign which he gave me of the direction which his investigation was taking was an extraordinary one. He had gone out before breakfast, and I had sat down to mine when he strode into the room, his hat upon his head and a huge barb headed spear tucked like an umbrella under his arm.

"Good gracious, Holmes," I cried, "you don't mean to say that you have been walking about London with that thing?"

"I drove to the butcher's and back."

"The butcher's?"

"And I return with an excellent appetite. There can be no question, my dear Watson, of the value of exercise before breakfast. But I am prepared to bet that you will not guess the form that my exercise has taken."

"I will not attempt it."

He chuckled as he poured out the coffee.

"If you could have looked into Al-

lister's book when you would have

(Continued on last page.)

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

Mining blanks at the Examiner office.



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