The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton.

(Continued.)

tate in my actions, nor would I adopt so energetic and, indeed, so dangerous a course if any other were possible. Let us look at the matter clearly and fairly. I suppose that you will admit that the action is morally justifiable, though technically criminal. To burgle his house is no more than to forcibly take his pocketbook, an action in which you were prepared to aid me."

I turned it over in my mind.

"Yes," I said, "it is morally justifiable so long as our object is to take no articles save those which are used for an illegal purpose."

"Exactly. Since it is morally justifiable I have only to consider the question of personal risk. Surely a gentleman should not lay much stress upon this when a lady is in most desperate need of his help?"

"You will be in such a false position."

"Well, that is part of the risk. There is no other possible way of regaining these letters. The unfortunate lady has not the money, and there are none of her people in whom she could confide. Tomorrow is the last day of grace, and unless we can get the letters tonight this villain will be as good as his word and will bring about her ruin. I must therefore abandon my client to her fate or I must play this last card. Between ourselves, Watson, it's a sporting duel between this fellow Milverton and me. He had, as you saw, the best of the first exchanges, but my self respect and my reputation are concerned to fight it to a finish."

"Well, I don't like it, but I suppose it must be," said I. "When do we start?"

"You are not coming."

"Then you are not going," said I. "I give you my word of honor—and I never broke it in my life—that I will take a cab straight to the police station and give you away unless you let me share this adventure with you."

"You can't help me."

"How do you know that? You can't tell what may happen. Anyway my resolution is taken. Other people beside you have self respect and even reputations."

Holmes had looked annoyed, but his brow cleared, and he clapped me on the shoulder.

"Well, well, my dear fellow, be it so. We have shared this same room for some years, and it would be amusing if we ended by sharing the same cell. You know, Watson, I don't mind confessing to you that I have always had an idea that I would have made a highly efficient criminal. This is the chance of my lifetime in that direction. See here!" He took a neat little leather case out of a drawer and, opening it, he exhibited a number of shining instruments. "This is a first class up to date burgling kit, with nickel plated jimmy, diamond tipped glass cutter, adaptable keys and every modern improvement which the march of civilization demands. Here, too, is my dark lantern. Everything is in order. Have you a pair of silent shoes?"

"I have rubber soled tennis shoes."

"Excellent! And a mask?"

"I can make a couple out of black silk."

"I can see that you have a strong natural turn for this sort of thing. Very good, you make the masks. We shall have some cold supper before we start. It is now 9:30. At 11 we shall drive as far as Church row. It is a quarter of an hour's walk from there to Appledore Towers. We shall be at work before midnight. Milverton is a heavy sleeper and retires punctually at 10:30. With any luck we should be back here by 2 with the Lady Eva's letters in my pocket."

Holmes and I put on our dress clothes so that we might appear to be two theater goers homeward bound. In Oxford street we picked up a hansom and drove to an address in Hampstead. Here we paid off our cab, and with our greatcoats buttoned up, for it was bitterly cold and the wind seemed to blow through us, we walked along the edge of the heath.

"It's a business that needs delicate treatment," said Holmes. "These documents are contained in a safe in the fellow's study, and the study is the anteroom of his bed chamber. On the other hand, like all these stout little men who do themselves well, he is a plethoric sleeper. Agatha—that's my fiancee—says it is a joke in the servants' hall that it's impossible to wake the master. He has a secretary who is devoted to his interests and never budges from the study all day. That's why we are going at night. Then he has a beast of a dog, which roams the garden. I met Agatha late the last two evenings, and she locks the brute up so as to give me a clear run. This is the house, this big one in its own grounds. Through the gate—now to the right among the laurels. We might put on our masks here, I think. You see, there is not a glimmer of light in any of the windows, and everything is working splendidly."

With our black silk face coverings, which turned us into two of the most truculent figures in London, we stole up to the silent, gloomy house. A sort of tiled veranda extended along one side of it, lined by several windows and two doors.

"That's the bedroom," Holmes whispered. "This door opens straight into the study. It would suit us best, but it is bolted as well as locked, and we should make too much noise getting in. Come round here. There's a greenhouse which opens into the drawing room."

The place was lighted but Holmes removed a pane of glass and turned the key which he had left. An instant afterward he had closed the door behind us.

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Sherlock Holmes in disguise.

and we had become felons in the eyes of the law. The thick, warm air of the conservatory and the rich, choking fragrance of exotic plants took us by the throat. He seized my hand in the darkness and led me swiftly past banks of shrubs which brushed against our faces. Holmes had remarkable powers, carefully cultivated, of seeing in the dark. Still holding my hand in one of his, he opened a door, and I was vaguely conscious that we had entered a large room in which a cigar had been smoked not long before. He felt his way among the furniture, opened another door and closed it behind us. Putting out my hand, I felt several coats hanging from the wall, and I understood that I was in a passage. We passed along it, and Holmes very gently opened a door upon the right hand side. Something rushed out at us, and my heart sprang into my mouth, but I could have laughed when I realized that it was the cat. A fire was burning in this new room, and again the air was heavy with tobacco smoke. Holmes entered on tiptoe, waited for me to follow, and then very gently closed the door. We were in Milverton's study, and a portiere at the farther side showed the entrance to his bedroom.

(Continued next week.)

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No. 1			No. 1
9:00 a. m.	Lv.... Reno	At	5:30 p. m.
9:47 a. m.	Lv.... Summit	At	4:36 p. m.
10:05 a. m.	Lv.... Cisco	At	4:26 p. m.
10:20 a. m.	Lv.... Francis	At	4:10 p. m.
11:15 a. m.	Lv.... Purdy	At	3:20 p. m.
11:50 a. m.	Lv.... Plumas	At	2:45 p. m.
12:00 p. m.	Lv.... Chat	At	2:18 p. m.
12:18 p. m.	Lv.... Cameron	At	2:10 p. m.
12:38 p. m.	Lv.... Red Rock	At	1:47 p. m.
12:53 p. m.	Lv.... Constantia	At	1:36 p. m.
1:15 p. m.	Lv.... Doyle	At	1:15 p. m.
1:40 p. m.	Lv.... Lingan	At	12:50 p. m.
2:00 p. m.	Lv.... Amedee	At	12:20 p. m.
3:00 p. m.	Lv.... Amedee	At	11:00 a. m.
3:25 p. m.	Lv.... Hot Springs	At	10:35 a. m.
3:57 p. m.	Lv.... Murray	At	10:07 a. m.
4:20 p. m.	Lv.... Karlo	At	10:20 a. m.
5:25 p. m.	Lv.... Horse Lake	At	9:40 a. m.
5:50 p. m.	Lv.... Waverly	At	9:10 a. m.
6:30 p. m.	Lv.... Termo	At	8:25 a. m.
7:15 a. m.	Lv.... Brockmans	At	7:50 a. m.
7:40 p. m.	At.... Madeline	Lv	7:00 a. m.

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5.00 pm	10:35 am	Lv... Plumas	At	4.00 pm / 9.30 am
5.45 pm	11:20 am	Lv... Vinton	Ar	3.15 pm / 8.45 am
6.30 pm	12:05 am	Lv. Beckwith	Ar	2.30 pm / 7.50 am
7.20 pm	12.55 am	Lv. Clairville	Ar	1.40 pm / 7.00 am

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Ar. Bogus	6.35 "	Ar. Dixie	10.5 "
" Steel Br'g	6.45 "	" Kl'h Sp'gs	11.00 "
" Fall Cr'k	7.05 "	" Fall Creek	11.15 "
" Kl'h Sp'gs	7.10 "	" Steel Br'g	11.30 "
" Dixie	8.10 "	" Bogus	11.20 P M
" Pokegama	8.20 "	" Thrall	12.40 "

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" Fall Creek	2.35 "	" Bogus	5.20 "
" Kl'h Sp'gs	2.40 "	" Thrall	5.45 "

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