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TO PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS

The Superintendent of Public Schools of Franklin county will be in Louisburg on the second Thursdays of February, April, July, September, October and December, and remain for three days, if necessary, to the duties of examining applicants to teach in the Public Schools of this county. I will also be in attendance on Saturday of each week and all public days, to attend to any business connected with my office.

J. N. HARRIS, Supt.

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A STUDY IN SCARLET

By A. CONAN DOYLE.

"Here is your ring, Mrs. Sawyer," I interrupted, in obedience to a sign from my companion; "it clearly belongs to your daughter, and I am glad to restore it to the rightful owner."

With many mumbled blessings and protestations of gratitude the old crone packed it away in her pocket, and shuffled off down the stairs. Sherlock Holmes sprang to his feet the moment she was gone and rushed into his room. He returned in a few seconds enveloped in an ulster and a cravat. "I'll follow her," he said, hurriedly; "she must be an accomplice, and will lead me to him. Wait up for me." The hall door had hurriedly slammed behind our visitor before Holmes had descended the stair. Looking through the window I could see her walking feebly along the other side, while her pursuer dogged her some little distance behind. "Either his whole theory is incorrect," I thought to myself, "or else he will be led now to the heart of the mystery." There was no need for him to ask me to wait up for him, for I felt that sleep was impossible until I heard the result of his adventure.

It was close upon nine when he set out. I had no idea how long he might be, but I sat stolidly puffing at my pipe and skipping over the pages of Henri Murger's "Vie de Boheme." Ten o'clock passed, and I heard the footsteps of the maids as they pattered off to bed. Eleven and the more stately tread of the landlady passed my door, bound for the same destination. It was close upon twelve before I heard the sharp sound of his latch-key. The instant he entered I saw by his face that he had not been successful. Amusement and chagrin seemed to be struggling for the mastery, until the former suddenly carried the day, and he burst into a hearty laugh.

"I wouldn't have the Scotland Yarders know it for the world," he cried, dropping into his chair; "I have chaffed them so much that they would never have let me hear the end of it. I can afford to laugh, because I know that I will be even with them in the long run."

"What is it, then?" I asked.

"Oh, I don't mind telling a story against myself. That creature had gone a little way when she began to limp and show every sign of being foot-sore. Presently she came to a halt, and hailed a four-wheeler which was passing. I managed to be close enough to her to hear the address, but I need not have been so anxious, for she sang it out loud enough to be heard at the other side of the street. 'Drive to 13 Duncan street. Hoxton,' she cried. This begins to look genuine, I cried, and having seen her safely inside, I perched myself behind. That's an art which every detective should be an expert at. Well, away we rattled, and I never drew a rein until we reached the street in question. I hopped off before we came to the door, and strolled down the street in an easy, lounging way. I saw the cab pull up. The driver jumped down, and I saw him open the door and stand expectantly. Nothing came out, though. When I reached him he was groping about frantically in the empty cab, and giving vent to the finest assorted collection of oaths that ever I listened to. There was no sign or trace of his passenger, and I fear it will be some time before he gets his fare. On inquiring at No. 13 I found that the house belonged to a respectable paper-hanger, named Keswick, and that no one of the name either of Sawyer or Dennis had ever been heard of there."

"You don't mean to say," I cried, in amazement, "that that tottering, feeble old woman was able to get out of the cab while it was in motion, without either you or the driver seeing her?"

"Old woman be d—d!" said Sherlock Holmes, sharply. "We were the old women to be so taken in. It must have been a young man, and an active one, too, besides being an incomparable actor. The get-up was inimitable. He saw that he was followed, no doubt, and used this means of giving me the slip. It shows that the man we are after is not as lonely as I imagined he was, but has friends who are ready to risk something for him. Now, doctor, you are looking done-up. Take my advice and turn in."

I was certainly feeling very weary, so I obeyed his injunction. I left Holmes seated in front of the smoldering fire, and long into the watches of the night I heard the low, melancholy wailings of his violin, and knew that he was still pondering over the strange problem which he had set himself to unravel.

CHAPTER VI.

TOBIAS GREGSON SHOWS WHAT HE CAN DO.

The papers next day were full of the "Brixton mystery," as they termed it. Each had a long account of the affair, and some had leaders upon it in addition. There was some information in them which was new to me. I still retain in my scrap book numerous clippings and extracts bearing upon the case. Here is a condensation of a few of them:

The Daily Telegraph remarked that in the history of crime there had seldom been a tragedy which presented stranger features. The German name of the victim, the absence of all other motive, and the sinister inscription on the wall, all pointed to its perpetration by political refugees and revolutionists. The socialists had many branches in America, and the deceased had, no doubt, infringed their unwritten laws and been tracked down by them. After alluding airily to the Vehmgericht, aqua tofana, Carbonari, the Marchioness de Brinvilliers, the Danwinian theory, the principles of Malthus and the Ratcliff highway murders, the article concluded by admonishing the government and advocating a closer watch over foreigners in England.

The Standard commented upon the fact that lawless outrages of the sort usually occurred under a liberal administration. They arose from the unsettling of the minds of the masses, and the consequent weakening of all authority. The deceased was an American gentleman who had been residing for some weeks in the metropolis. He had stayed at the boarding-house of Mme. Charpentier, in Torquay Terrace, Camberwell. He was accompanied in his travels by his private secretary, Mr. Joseph Stangerson. The two made all for to their landlady upon Tuesday, the 4th inst., and departed to Euston station with the avowed intention of catching the Liverpool express. They were afterward seen together on the platform. Nothing more is known of them until Mr Drebber's body was, as recorded, discovered in an empty house in the Brixton road, many miles from Euston. How he came there or how he met his fate are questions which are still involved in mystery. Nothing is known of the whereabouts of Stangerson. We are glad to learn that Mr. Lestrade and Mr. Gregson, of Scotland Yard, are both engaged upon the case, and it is confidently anticipated that these well-known officers will speedily throw light upon the matter.

The Daily News observed that there was no doubt as to the crime being a political one. The despotism and hatred of liberalism which animated the continental governments had had the effect of driving to our shores a number of men who might have made excellent citizens were they not soured by the recollection of all that they had undergone. Among these men there was a stringent code of honor, any infringement of which was punished by death. Every effort should be made to find the secretary, Stangerson, and to ascertain some particulars of the habits of the deceased. A great step had been gained by the discovery of the address of the house at which he had boarded—a result which was entirely due to the acuteness and energy of Mr. Gregson, of Scotland Yard.

Sherlock Holmes and I read these notices over together at breakfast, and they appeared to afford him considerable amusement.

"I told you that whatever I suggested Lestrade and Gregson would be sure to score."

"That depends on how it turns out."

"Oh, bless you, it doesn't matter in the least. If the man is caught it will be on account of their exertions; if he escapes it will be in spite of their exertions. It's bad I call it, very bad indeed. Whatever the end may be they will have followers. Dogs of true virtue to pin us on the quiet moment we are off the track."

"What on earth is that?" I cried, for at this moment there came the pattering of many steps in the hall and on the stairs, accompanied by a babble of excited expressions of disgust upon the part of our landlady.

"It's the Baker street division of the detective police force," said my companion coolly as he ran to the door. We rushed into the hall in time to see a dozen_ragged_urchins_of_the_street_Arabs_at_our_landlady's_back_door. "Form!" cried Lestrade in a sharp tone, and the six ragged urchins stood in a line in the hall in front of the statuettes. "In future you need only send up Wiggins alone to report and the rest

"HAVE YOU FOUND IT, WIGGINS?"

of you must wait in the street. Have you found it, Wiggins?"

"No, sir, we haven't," said one of the youths.

"I hardly expected you would. You must keep on until you do. Here are your wages." He handed each of them a shilling. "Now, off you go, and come back with a better report next time."

He waved his hand, and they scampered away downstairs like so many rats, and we heard their shrill voices next moment in the street.

"There's more work to be got out of one of those little beggars than out of a dozen of the force," Holmes remarked. "The mere sight of an official-looking person seals men's lips. These youngsters, however, go everywhere and hear everything. They are as sharp as needles, too; all they want is organization."

"Is it on this Brixton case that you are employing them?" I asked.

"Yes; there is a point which I wish to ascertain. It is merely a matter of time. Hullo! we are going to hear some news now with a vengeance! Here is Gregson coming down the road with beatitude written upon every feature of his face. Bound for us, I know. Yes, he is stopping. There he is!"

There was a violent peal at the bell, and in a few seconds the fair-haired detective came up the stairs, three steps at a time, and burst into our sitting-room.

"My dear fellow," he cried, wringing Holmes' unresponsive hand, "Congratulate me! I have made the whole thing as clear as day."

A shade of anxiety seemed to me to cross my companion's expressive face.

"Do you mean that you are on the right track?" he asked.

"The right track! Why, sir, we have the man under lock and key."

"And his name is?"

"Arthur Charpentier, sub-lieutenant in her majesty's navy," cried Gregson, pompously, rubbing his fat hands and inflating his chest.

Sherlock Holmes gave a sigh of relief and relaxed into a smile.

"Take a seat and try one of these cigars," he said. "We are anxious to know how you managed it. Will you have some whisky and water?"

"I don't mind if I do," the detective answered. "The tremendous exertions which I have gone through during the last day or two have worn me out. Not so much bodily exertion, you understand, as the strain upon the mind. You will appreciate that, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, for we are both brain workers."

"You do me too much honor," said Holmes gravely. "Let us hear how you arrived at this most gratifying result."

The detective seated himself in the arm-chair and puffed complacently at his cigar. Then suddenly he slapped his thigh in a paroxysm of amusement.

"The fun of it is," he cried, "that that fool Lestrade, who thinks himself so smart, has gone off upon the wrong track altogether. He is after the secretary, Stangerson, who had no more to do with the crime than the babe unborn. I have no doubt that he has caught him by this time."

The idea tickled Gregson so much that he laughed until he choked.

"And how did you get your clew?"

"Ah, I'll tell you all about it. Of course, Dr. Watson, this is strictly between ourselves. The first difficulty which we had to contend with was the finding of this American's antecedents. Some people would have waited until their advertisements were answered, or until parties came forward at his house claiming the reward offered. That is not Tobias Gregson's way of doing to work. You remember the hat belonging to the dead man?"

"Yes," said Holmes, giving up the struggle to Gregson & Sons, 129 Camberwell road."

Gregson looked hopelessly perplexed.

"I had no idea that you noticed that," he said. "Have you been there?"

"No."

"Ah!" cried Gregson, in a tone of relief, "you should never neglect a chance, however small it may seem."

"To a great mind nothing is trifling," remarked Holmes sententiously.

"Well, I went to Camberwell and asked him if he had let a hat to Mr. Jeremiah Hodder, and he at once_produced_the_hat_in_question. He had sold the hat to a Mr. Hodder, who was a_very_____man_with_____Sherlock_Holmes.

"Just so," continued the detective, "and he gave_the_____address_to_which_the_hat_had_been_sent_namely, Mr. Drebber______Cleveland_Street_________ing_on_the_________ Cleveland_Street_I_______ a_______ of their_ _ _ _