



Sign of the Four.

BY CONAN DOYLE.

followed might well despair of ever finding the clew.

"Pinchin lane was a row of shabby two-story brick houses in the lower quarter of Lambeth. I had to knock for some time at No. 3 before I could make any impression. At last, however, there was the glint of a candle behind the blind, and a face looked out at the upper window.

"Go on, you drunken vagabond," said the face. "If you kick up any more row I'll open the kennels and let out forty-three dogs upon you."

"If you'll let me out it's just what I have come for," said I.

"Go on!" yelled the voice. "So help me, I have a wiper in this bag, and I'll drop it on you're 'ead if you don't look it."

"But I want a dog," I cried.

"I won't be argued with!" shouted Mr. Sherman. "Now stand clear; for when I say 'three,' down goes the wiper."

"Mr. Sherlock Holmes—" I began, but words had a most magical effect, the window instantly slammed down, and within a minute the door was unbarred and open. Mr. Sherman, a lanky, lean old man, with stoop-shoulders, a stringy neck and blue eyes, looked at me.

"A friend of Mr. Sherlock Holmes is always welcome," said he. "Step in, sir. Keep out of the badger; for he bites. Ah, right, right, would you take a seat at the gentleman?" This to a stout



"NOW STAND CLEAR."

which thrust its wicked head and red eyes between the bars of its cage. "Don't mind that, sir; it's only a slow worm. It hasn't got no fangs, so I gives it the run of the room, for it keeps the beetles down. You must not mind my being just a little bit out of the children, and there's many a one just comes down this lane to knock me up. What was it that Mr. Sherlock Holmes wanted, sir?"

"He wanted a dog of yours."

"What dog would be that?"

"Yes, Toby was the name."

"Toby lives at No. 7 on the left here?"

"He moved slowly forward with his candle among the queer animal family which he had gathered round him. In the uncertain, shadowy light I could see dimly that there were glances, glimmering eyes peeping down at us from every cranny and corner. Even the rafters above our heads were lined by solemn fowls, who lazily shifted their weight from one leg to the other as our voices disturbed their slumbers."

Toby proved to be an ugly, long-haired, long-eared creature, half spaniel-half terrier, brown-and-white in color, with a very clumsy waddling gait. It accepted, after some hesitation, a lump of sugar which the old naturalist handed to me, and, having thus sealed an alliance, it followed me to the cab, and made no difficulties about accompanying me. It had just struck three on the palace clock when I found myself back once more at Pinchin lane. The ex-prize-fighter McDermid had found, been arrested as an accessory, and both he and Mr. Sholto had been marched off to the station. Two constables guarded the narrow gate, but they allowed me to pass with the dog on my mentioning the detective's name."

Holmes was standing on the doorstep with his hands in his pockets, smoking his pipe.

"Ah, you have him there," said he. "Good dog, then. Athelney Jones has gone. We have had an immense display of energy since you left. He has arrested not only friend Thaddeus, but the gatekeeper, the housekeeper, and the Indian servant. We have the place to ourselves, but for a sergeant upstairs. Leave the dog here, and come up."

We tied Toby to the hall table, and ascended the stairs. The room was as we had left it, save that a sheet had been draped over the central figure. A weary-looking police sergeant reclined in the corner.

"Lend me your bull's-eye, sergeant," said my companion. "Now tie this bit of cord round my neck, so as to hang it in front of me. Thank you. Now I must kick off my boots and stockings! Just you carry them down with you, Watson. I am going to do a little climbing. And dip my handkerchief into the creosote. That will do. Now come up into the garret with me for a moment."

We clambered up through the hole. Holmes turned his light once more upon the footprints in the dust.

"I wish you particularly to notice these footmarks," he said. "Do you observe anything noteworthy about them?"

"They belong," I said, "to a child or a small woman."

"Apart from their size, though. Is there anything else?"

"They appear to be much as other footmarks."

"Not at all. Look here! This is the print of a right foot in the dust. Now I make one with my naked foot beside it. What is the chief difference?"

"Your toes are all cramped together. The other print has each toe distinctly defined."

"Quite so. That is the point. Bear that in mind. Now, would you kindly step over to the flap-window and smell the edge of the woodwork? I shall stay over here, as I have this handkerchief in my hand."

I did as he directed, and was instantly conscious of a strong tarry smell.

"That is where he put his foot in getting out. If you can trace him, I should think that Toby will have no difficulty. Now run downstairs, loose the dog, and look out for Blondin."

By the time that I got out into the grounds, Sherlock Holmes was on the roof, and I could see him like an enormous glow-worm, crawling very slowly along the ridge. I lost sight of him behind a stack of chimneys, but he presently reappeared, and then vanished once more upon the opposite side. When I made my way round there I found him seated at one of the corner eaves.

"That you, Watson?" he cried.

"Yes."

"This is the place. What is that black thing down there?"

"A water-barrel."

"Top of it?"

"Yes."

"No sign of a ladder?"

"No."

"Found the fellow? It's a most break-neck place. I ought to be able to come down where he could climb up. The waterpipe feels pretty firm. Here goes, anyhow."

There was a snuffling of the feet, and the lantern began to come steadily down the side of the wall. Then with a light spring he came on to the barrel, and from there to the earth.

"It was easy to follow him," he said, drawing on his stockings and boots.

"The were loosened the whole way along, and in his hurry he had dropped this. It confirms my diagnosis, as you doctors express it."

The object which he held up to me was a small pocket or pouch woven out of colored grasses and with a few tawdry beads strung round it. In shape and size it was not unlike a cigarette case. Inside were half a dozen spines of dark wood, sharp at one end and rounded at the other, like that which had struck Bartholomew Sholto.

"They are hellish things," said he. "Look out that you don't prick yourself. I'm delighted to have them for the chances are that they are all he has. There is the less fear of you or me finding one in our skin before long. I would sooner face a Martini bullet, myself. Are you game for a six-mile trudge, Watson?"

"Certainly," I answered.

"Your leg will stand it?"

"Oh, yes."

"Here you are, doggy! Good old Toby! Smell it, Toby, smell it!"

He pushed the creosote handkerchief under the dog's nose, while the creature stood with its fluffy legs separated, and with most comical cock to its head, like a connoisseur sniffing the bouquet of a famous vintage.

Holmes then threw the handkerchief to a distance, fastened a stout cord to the mongrel's collar, and led him to the foot of the water barrel. The creature instantly broke into a succession of high, tremulous yelps, and, with his nose on the ground, and his tail in the air, pattered off upon the trail at a pace which strained his leash and kept us at the top of our speed.

The east had been gradually whitening, and we could now see some distance in the cold gray light. The square, massive house, with its black, empty windows and high, bare walls, towered up, sad and forlorn, behind

us. Our course led right across the grounds, in and out among the trenches and pits with which they were scarred and intersected. The whole place, with its scattered dirt-heaps and illumined black which harmonized with the black tragedy which hung over it.

On reaching the boundary wall, Toby ran along, whining eagerly, underneath its shadow, and stopped finally in a corner screen by a young beech. Where the two walls joined, several bricks had been loosened, and the crevices left were worn down and rounded upon the lower side, as though they had frequently been used as a ladder.

Holmes clambered up, and taking the dog from me, he dropped it over upon the other side.

"There's the print of wooden-leg's hand," he remarked, as I mounted up beside him. "You see the slight smudge of blood upon the white plaster. What a lucky thing it is that we have had no very heavy rain since yesterday!"

The scent will lie upon the road in spite of their eight-and-twenty hours' start."

I confess that I had my doubts myself when I reflected upon the great traffic which had passed along the London road in the interval. My fears

were soon assuaged, however. Toby never hesitated or swerved, but waddled on in his peculiar rolling fashion. Clearly the pungent smell of the creosote rose high above all other contending scents.

"Do not imagine," said Holmes, "that I depend for my success in this case upon the mere chance of one of these fellows having put his foot in the chemical. I have knowledge now which would enable me to trace them in many different ways. This, however, is the readiest, and, since fortune has put it into our hands, I should be culpable if I neglected it. It has, however, prevented the case from becoming the pretty little intellectual problem which it at one time promised to be. There might have been some credit to be gained out of it, but for this too palpable clew."

"There is credit, and to spare," said I. "I assure you, Holmes, that I marvel at the means by which you obtain your results in this case, even more than I did in the Jefferson Hope murder. The thing seems to me to be deeper and more inexplicable. How, for example, could you describe with such confidence the wooden-legged man?"

"Pshaw, my dear boy! It was simplicity itself. I don't wish to be theatrical. It is all patent and above-board. Two officers who are in command of a convict guard learn an important secret as to buried treasure. A map is drawn for them by an Englishman named Jonathan Small. You remember the name? We saw the name upon the chart in Capt. Morstan's possession. He had signed it in behalf of himself and his associates—the sign of the four, as he somewhat dramatically called it. Added by this chart, the

treasure and brings it to England, leaving, we will suppose, some condition under which he received it unfulfilled. Now, then, why did not Jonathan Small get the treasure himself? The answer is obvious. The chart is dated at a time when Morstan was brought into close association with convicts. Jonathan Small did not get the treasure because he and his associates were themselves convicts and could not get away."

"But this is mere speculation," said I. "It is more than that. It is the only hypothesis which covers the facts. Let us see how it fits in with the sequel. Maj. Sholto remains at peace for some years, happy in the possession of his treasure. Then he receives a letter from India which gives him a great fright. What was that?"

"A letter to say that the men whom he had wronged had been set free."

"Or had escaped. That is much more likely, for he would have known what their term of imprisonment was. It would not have been a surprise to him. What does he do then? He guards himself against a wooden-legged man—a white man, mark you, for he mistakes a white tradesman for him, and actually fires a pistol at him. Now, only one white man's name is on the chart. The others are Hindoos or Mohomedans. There is no other white man. Therefore we may say with confidence that the wooden-legged man is identical with Jonathan Small. Does the reasoning strike you as being faulty?"

"No; it is clear and concise."

"Well, now, let us put ourselves in the place of Jonathan Small. Let us look at it from his point of view. He comes to England with the double idea of regaining what he considers to be his rights and of having his revenge upon the man who had wronged him. He found out where Sholto lived, and very possibly he established communications with some one inside the house. There is this butler, Lal Rao, whom we have not seen. Mrs. Bernstone gives him far from a good character. Small could not find out, however, where the treasure was hid, for no one ever knew, save the major and one faithful servant who had died. Suddenly Small learns that the major is on his death-bed. In a frenzy lest the secret of the treasure die with him, he runs the gauntlet of the guards, makes his way to the dying man's window, and is only deterred from entering by the presence of his two sons. Mad with hate, however, against the dead man, he enters the room at night, searches his private papers in the hope of discovering some memorandum relating to the treasure, and finally leaves a memento of his visit in the short inscription upon the card. He had doubtless planned beforehand that should he slay the major he would leave some such record upon the body as a sign that he was not a common murderer, but, from the point of view of the four associates, something in the nature of an act of justice. Whimsical and bizarre conceits of this kind are common enough in the annals of crime, and usually afford valuable indications as to the criminal. Do you follow all this?"

"Very clearly."

(To be continued.)

J. R. Norris, a railroad man, was killed at the union depot, Petersburg, Va., leaving a wife and three children.

Sued Asheville for \$15,000 and Got \$11,000.

Asheville, March 20.—Miss Janell Reid Sheldon has sued the city of Asheville for \$15,000 damages, having been injured by a fall on the sidewalk. In the Superior Court this afternoon, the jury rendered a verdict allowing her \$11,000.

Capt. Corbett, South Africa, offers Canada twenty per cent. advantage over the United States in trade.

BIG WHISKEY STEAL.

10,000 GALLONS OF CORN JUICE STOLEN WITH A SIPHON.

Brought to Light by the Investigations of United States Internal Revenue Officers.

The facts in one of the most remarkable robberies ever known in South Carolina have just been unearthed by the internal revenue officers at Walhalla, S. C.

In 1892 Henry Bieman sold four government distilleries, with bonded warehouses situated about a half a mile apart along the banks of a creek, two miles from Walhalla, to W. C. Tatum. They were built on the side of the hill sloping towards the stream, and the warehouses contained ten thousand gallons of corn whiskey. Tatum at once closed the distilleries and the government seal attached, it being the government's purpose to hold the whiskey three years before paying the tax as allowed by law.

During the latter part of August of last year Collector Townes wrote to Tatum several times informing him that the three years were about to expire and urging him to be ready to comply with the law. On the night of September 5th, two days before the expiration of the time, three of the distilleries were burned to the ground. The fourth only contained seventy gallons of whiskey. Deputy Collectors Vanderford and King were detailed to conduct an investigation. Visiting the sites of the burned buildings they could discover no signs whatever of whiskey, although they expected to find the ground saturated for many feet around where the burning fluid had flowed. Gradually the evidence was developed and finally confessions were obtained substantially as follows:

Soon after the purchase by Tatum one of the warehouses had been entered, the burglars drawing the staple of the door. Then they had inserted one end of a piece of hose into a barrel and drawing it through a crack in the wall placed the other end in an empty barrel at the foot of the hill in which the whiskey was siphoned.

This process was repeated night after night until every gallon of the whiskey had been stolen, the siphon arrangement enabling the thieves to operate deliberately and avoid the danger which hanging away a large quantity at once would have incurred. The revenue officers say that the tax on the whiskey is secured by the bond.

The facts above related were gradually developed, and the arrests of John Farmer, Ashbury Hyde, William Whitman, Tony Watkins and John Rowland followed. They have been given hearings before United States Commissioner Hawthorne at Greenville and were held for trial. Some of them have made full confessions.

WASHINGTON NOTES.

Secretary Gresham, who was 63 on St. Patrick's Day, is the oldest member of the cabinet, and Secretary Smith is the baby.

Pages in Congress will hereafter be summoned by touching an electric button on the desk instead of noisily clapping the hands.

For years there have been many prominent Cuban annexationists in the United States. The question has never been made a political one or annexation might have been accomplished before this. It would be difficult to find two men wider apart upon everything political than Senators Morgan, of Alabama, and Frye, of Maine, are, but just read how perfectly they agree on Cuban annexation, and do not forget that they are both members of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

Said Senator Frye, of that little diplomatic flurry with Spain: "It looks as if Spain would make the required apology and as if all would soon be settled. I had hoped it would be otherwise, and that Spain would assume such an arrogant and belligerent tone that it would be necessary for the United States to go over and take possession of Cuba. We certainly ought to have that island in order to round out our possessions as they should be, and if we cannot buy it, I for one should like to have an opportunity to acquire it by conquest."

Said Senator Morgan: "I am in favor of purchasing Cuba or of acquiring it by any other just method. I have always been a Cuban annexationist, for the island is an important one to the United States. If the revolutionists are able to hold out for a year they will be able to secure material assistance from persons in this country, not only in the way of money, but in men, in spite of all efforts to prevent it. There are many men who are ready to go into a war for Cuba, or any other war, and there will be no way of keeping them out of it if the men who are leading this revolt show that they command any real strength at home. Since these public utterances the prediction is freely made that a new movement for the annexation of Cuba will soon begin to show itself in this country. In fact, many believe that Secretary Gresham made his recent demand upon Spain unnecessarily harsh with the hope that it would make Spain do something that would justify an attack upon her."

TO TAX BACHELORS.

And Establish a Home for Old Maids. The Object of a Bill.

SPRINGFIELD, Ill., March 25.—A bill to tax bachelors and establish an "old maids' home" when the tax fund shall have reached \$50,000 was introduced in the House by Representative Wallick.

The bill defines bachelors as single men of thirty-two years or over who have never been married and exempts men who have reached sixty-five, who are physically unfit or who can prove to a board of unmarried women over sixty years that they have proposed marriage at least three times to marriageable females and been refused each time.

A Busy Man's Misfortune.

Thousands of people all over the country will sympathize with Charles Broadway Rouss, the New York merchant prince, who is threatened with speedy and total blindness.

Mr. Rouss was a gallant confederate soldier in Stonewall Jackson's army. After the war he went to New York penniless and friendless, and by his pluck, energy and foresight accumulated a fortune of \$10,000,000. His liberality to his old comrades, his friends, the deserving poor and his native town, Winchester, Va., is well known to many of our readers.

The Drummers Organize.

WINSTON, N. C., March 24.—The North Carolina Division of the Traveler's Protective Association of America was organized in the chamber of commerce rooms, Thursday night, by W. J. Crump, of Richmond, Va. The names of 33 members were enrolled at the first meeting, composed mostly of traveling men and manufacturers of Winston-Salem. This number will be largely increased.

New Officers.

A telegram from Washington says: "Major Edward M. Hayes, Seventh Cavalry, has been ordered to proceed to Raleigh, N. C., to report in person to the Governor of North Carolina for duty pertaining to the National Guard of that State to relieve Capt. Thaddeus W. Jones, Tenth Cavalry."

Sentenced for Libelling Taylor.

WASHINGTON, D. C., March 25.—W. Calvin Chase, the colored editor who was convicted of the criminal libel of C. H. J. Taylor, the colored recorder of deeds, some days ago, was sentenced to ninety days in jail by the Judge.

Chauncey Made a Mistake.

RUTHERFORD, N. C., March 19.—At Rutherford college today seventy-five students went to the depot to meet their professors. As the professors left the cars, the students set up a yell. Chauncey Depew was aboard and thought they were cheering him. He left the car and made them a political speech. The train moved off before Dr. Depew saw the joke that was on him.

The Seaboard Announces Another Cut.

WASHINGTON, D. C., March 23.—The Seaboard announces a cut in the rate from Washington to Atlanta on its vestibule limited from \$17.50 to \$14.50.

THE SOUTHERN BRIEFS.

C. H. More, vice-president of the New England Granite Manufacturers' Association, is traveling in the South with the view of buying quarry property. He has recently been prospecting in the vicinity of Charlotte, N. C.

A meeting of the stockholders of the First National Bank of Buena Vista, Va., will be held on April 12 to consider and determine a proposition to remove the bank to Lexington, Va.

Anderson, S. C., has sold \$20,000 of school bonds to J. N. Brewer, of that city.

Charter has been granted to the Kershaw Banking & Mercantile Co., of Kershaw, S. C., with Leroy Springs, president; William Sanson, vice-president, and J. M. Heath, treasurer. The capital stock is \$25,000.

The Manhattan Investment Association, of Camden, S. C., has been incorporated by D. Wolfe, W. F. Malone, J. S. Lindsay and others. The capital stock is \$50,000.

Davis & Zoeller of Wilmington, N. C., dealers in dry goods, notions, carpets, etc., have assigned with Frank H. Stuckey, assignee. Preferences about \$6,300, of which about \$5,000 to local creditors.

20,000 bales of cotton were burned at the New Orleans, La., cotton compress last week. The loss is over a million dollars.

The Columbia State thinks that there are yet 200,000 bales of cotton in South Carolina.

Rev. Dr. William Brown Yonce, professor of ancient languages at Roanoke College, Va., dropped dead from apoplexy about 8 o'clock Friday evening at the Lutheran church in Salem, Va., just before the commencement of services.

SOUTHERN BRIEFS.

A New Work Issued far Superior to and Cheaper Than The Encyclopedias.—Five Volumes of Wonderful Value.

CHARLOTTE, N. C.—After a careful examination between the Britannica, Appleton's American, and Johnson's Universal Encyclopedias and History for Ready Reference by Larned, for the purpose of purchasing one of the above for the Charlotte Library Association, History for Ready Reference was unanimously decided upon by the committee as being the preferable, both for satisfactory results and for convenience of arrangement.

(Mrs.) B. L. Dewey, Librarian.

History for Ready Reference is more valuable to men than any Encyclopedias within my knowledge. Rev. T. H. Pritchard, D. D.

"History for Ready Reference and Topical Reading," by J. N. Larned, is the title of a new work just being issued by one of our largest publishing houses.

It is the only work in the world which attempts to give the statements upon all questions of history, of the best scholars, the most brilliant writers, and the most vigorous thinkers, the world has ever seen. It is the only work ever printed which gives the full text of the constitutions of the different countries of the world; also the full text of the prominent Historical Documents such as the Magna Charter, the Grand Remonstrance, Scottish National Covenant, Habeas Corpus Act, Luther's Ninety-Five Theses, Declaration of Independence and many others. It is the only work giving a brilliant and authentic account written by some authority on every Party or Faction in the world's history. It is the only work giving a clearly-defined account of every battle and military movement in our late Civil War taken from every prominent writer upon that subject, and giving full justice to the South.

But the greatest feature is its magnificent arrangement. Being arranged first alphabetically, and then by countries and chronologically, any historical subject, however obscure, can be found as quickly as one can find a word in a dictionary, and then you always have authority for it. In legal phraseology it might be called a historical digest. That the historical accounts are not meagre, is proven by the fact that 260 pages, of 1,000 words to a page, are given to the History of the United States, 200 pages to England, 239 to France, the article on "Slavery" 20 pages, "Social Movements" 26 pages, while "Tariff Legislation" takes up 23 pages. "The History of the Legal Science," "Medical Science," "Money and Banking," "Education," and in fact every topic of a historical nature are all fully treated. The New York Nation says: "The work possesses a universal character," New York Herald, "It embraces the whole range of historical writing," Boston Journal, "Nothing like it has ever been published."

It is endorsed by every scholar who has seen it. In North Carolina Bishop Edward Rondthaler, of Salem, President G. T. Winston, Drs. Manning, Battle and Hume and Profs. E. A. Alderman and C. C. Cobb, of the University, Rev. J. W. Carter, of Raleigh, Rev. E. A. Yates, of Durham, Rev. Egbert Smith, of Greensboro, W. W. Fuller, of Durham, and many others endorse it unconditionally.

For circulars address Chas. L. Van Noppen, Buford Hotel, Charlotte, N. C.

LIST OF PATENTS

Granted to Southern inventors last week:

F. C. Amshary, Little Rock, Ark., stop and waste valve.

M. H. Baer, Hagerstown, Md., metallic stop for wire fence.

J. M. Christopher, Baltimore, Md., alarm for vehicles.

J. R. Crunkleton, Baltimore, Md., bicycle support.

J. C. Deyrie, Salem, Va., brake for railway cars.

V. L. Emerson, Baltimore, Md., lumber-drier.

A. Enstis, New Orleans, device for assisting infirm persons.

T. Gaskins, Arcadia, La., car-coupling.

E. J. Griffin, Zion, Ky., wire fence.

J. House, Princess Anne, Va., rocking frame for tanning-vats.

B. H. Johnson, Dickey, Ga., scrubber.

W. H. Kable, Staunton, Va., Thrilling.

E. Kierolf, Jackson, Tenn., building-block.

B. Lowenberg, Norfolk, Va., convertible car.

O. P. McDonald, Daytona, Fla., fumigator.

S. M. Neely, Smith's Turnout, S. C., baling press.

W. H. Roberts, Knoxville, Tenn., combined file-case and desk.

L. Sennett, Russell, Ky., air-brake coupling.

C. H. Smith, Birmingham, Ala., car-coupling.

P. P. Taylor, Henderson, Ky., blind slot-holding device.

J. T. Thorpe, New Orleans, La., gas controller.

A. Volkenrath, Huntington, W. Va., pan-lifter.

C. A. White, Carlisle, Ky., harness-trimming.