

The Return of Sherlock Holmes

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ILLUSTRATED BY F. D. STEELE



The place was pitch dark, but it was evident to me that it was an empty house. Our feet creaked and crackled over the bare planking, and my outstretched hand touched a wall from which the paper was hanging in ribbons. Holmes' cold, thin fingers closed around my wrist and led me forward down a long hall until I dimly saw the murky fan light over the door. Here Holmes turned suddenly to the right, and we found ourselves in a large, square, empty room, heavily shadowed in the corners, but faintly lit in the center from the lights of the street beyond. There was no lamp near, and the window was thick with dust, so that we could only just discern each other's figures within. My companion put his hand upon my shoulder and his lips close to my ear.

"Do you know where we are?" he whispered.

"Surely that is Baker street," I answered, staring through the dim window.

"Exactly. We are in Camden House, which stands opposite to our own old quarters."

"But why are we here?"

"Because it commands so excellent a view of that picturesque pile. Might I trouble you, my dear Watson, to draw a little nearer to the window, taking every precaution not to show yourself, and then to look up at our old rooms—the starting point of so many of your little fairy tales? We will see if my three years of absence have entirely taken away my power to surprise you."

I crept forward and looked across at the familiar window. As my eyes fell upon it I gave a gasp and a cry of amazement. The blind was down, and a strong light was burning in the room. The shadow of a man who was seated in a chair within was thrown in hard, black outline upon the luminous screen of the window. There was no mistaking the pose of the head, the squareness of the shoulders, the sharpness of the features. The face was turned half around, and the effect was that of one of those black silhouettes which our grandparents loved to frame. It was a perfect reproduction of Holmes. So amazed was I that I threw out my hand to make sure that the man himself was standing beside me. He was quivering with silent laughter.

"Well?" said he.

"Good heavens!" I cried. "It is marvelous!"

"I trust that age doth not wither nor custom stale my infinite variety," said he. And I recognized in his voice the joy and pride which the artist takes in his own creation. "It really is rather like me, is it not?"

"I should be prepared to swear that it was you."

"The credit of the execution is due to M. Oscar Mennier of Grenoble, who spent some days in doing the molding. It is a bust in wax. The rest I arranged myself during my visit to Baker street this afternoon."

"But why?"

"Because, my dear Watson, I had the strongest possible reason for wishing certain people to think that I was there when I was really elsewhere."

"And you thought the rooms were watched?"

"I knew that they were watched."

"By whom?"

"By my old enemies, Watson. By the charming society whose leader lies in the Reichenbach fall. You must remember that they knew, and only they knew, that I was still alive. Sooner or later they believed that I should come back to my rooms. They watched them continuously, and this morning they saw me arrive."

"How do you know?"

"Because I recognized their sentinel when I glanced out of my window. He is a harmless enough fellow, Parker by name, a garotter by trade and a remarkable performer upon the Jew-harp. I cared nothing for him. But I cared a great deal for the much more formidable person who was behind him, the Bosom friend of Moriarty, the man who dropped the rocks over the cliff, the most cunning and dangerous criminal in London. That is the man who is after me tonight, Watson, and that is the man who is quite unaware that we are after him."

My friend's plans were gradually revealing themselves. From this convenient retreat the watchers were being watched and the trackers tracked. That angular shadow yonder was the bait, and we were the hunters. In silence we stood together in the darkness and watched the hurrying figures who passed and repassed in front of us. Holmes was silent and motionless, but I could tell that he was keenly alert and that his eyes were fixed intently upon the stream of passersby. It was a bleak and boisterous night, and the wind whistled shrilly down the long street. Many people were moving to and fro, most of them muffled in their coats and cravats. Once or twice it seemed to me that I had seen the same figure before, and I especially noticed two men who appeared to be sheltering themselves from the wind in the doorway of a house some distance up the street. I tried to draw my companion's attention to them, but he gave a little ejaculation of impatience and contin-

ued to stare into the street. More than once he fidgeted with his feet and tapped rapidly with his fingers upon the wall. It was evident to me that he was becoming uneasy and that his plans were not working out altogether as he had hoped. At last as midnight approached and the street gradually cleared he paced up and down the room in uncontrollable agitation. I was about to make some remark to him when I raised my eyes to the lighted window and again experienced almost as great a surprise as before. I clutched Holmes' arm and pointed upward.

"The shadow has moved!" I cried.

It was indeed no longer the profile, but the back, which was turned toward us.

Three years had certainly not smoothed the asperities of his temper or his impatience with a less active intelligence than his own.

"Of course it has moved," said he. "Am I such a farcical bungler, Watson, that I should erect an obvious dummy and expect that some of the sharpest men in Europe would be deceived by it? We have been in this room two hours, and Mrs. Hudson has made some change in that figure eight times, or once in every quarter of an hour. She works it from the front, so that her shadow may never be seen. Ah!" He drew in his breath with a shrill, excited intake. In the dim light I saw his head thrown forward, his whole attitude rigid with attention. Outside, the street was absolutely deserted. Those two men might still be crouching in the doorway, but I could no longer see them. All was still and dark save only that brilliant yellow screen in front of us with the black figure outlined upon its center. Again in the utter silence I heard that thin, sibilant note which spoke of intense suppressed excitement. An instant later he pulled me back into the blackest corner of the room, and I felt his warning hand upon my lips. The fingers which clutched me were quivering. Never had I known my friend more moved, and yet the dark street still stretched lonely and motionless before us.

But suddenly I was aware of that which his keener senses had already distinguished. A low, stealthy sound came to my ears not from the direction of Baker street, but from the back of the very house in which we lay concealed. A door opened and shut. An instant later steps crept down the passage—steps which were meant to be silent, but which reverberated harshly through the empty house. Holmes crouched back against the wall, and I did the same, my hand closing upon the handle of my revolver. Peering through the gloom, I saw the vague outline of a man, a shade blacker than the blackness of the open door. He stood for an instant, and then he crept forward, crouching, menacing, into the room. He was within three yards of us, this sinister figure, and I had braced myself to meet his spring before I realized that he had no idea of our presence. He passed close beside us, stole over to the window and very softly and noiselessly raised it for half a foot. As he sank to the level of this opening the light of the street, no longer dimmed by the dusty glass, fell full upon his face.

The man seemed to be beside himself with excitement. His two eyes shone like stars, and his features were working convulsively. He was an elderly man, with a thin, projecting nose, a high, bald forehead and a huge grizzled mustache. An opera hat was pushed to the back of his head, and an evening dress shirt front gleamed out through his open overcoat. His face was gaunt and swarthy, scored with deep, savage lines. In his hand he carried what appeared to be a stick, but as he laid it down upon the floor it gave a metallic clang. Then from the pocket of his overcoat he drew a bulky object, and he busied himself in some task which ended with a loud, sharp click, as if a spring or bolt had fallen into its place. Still kneeling upon the floor, he bent forward and threw all his weight and strength upon some lever, with the result that there came a long, whirling, grinding noise, ending once more in a powerful click. He straightened himself then, and I saw that what he held in his hand was a sort of gun with a curiously misshapen butt. He opened it at the breech, put something in and snapped the breechlock. Then, crouching down, he rested the end of the barrel upon the ledge of the open window, and I saw his long mustache droop over the stock and his eyes gleam as it peered along the sights. I heard a little sigh of satisfaction as he cuddled the butt into his shoulder and saw that amazing target, the black man on the yellow ground, standing clear at the end of his foresight. For an instant he was rigid and motionless. Then his finger tightened on the trigger. There was a strange, loud whizz and a long, silvery tinkle of broken glass. At that instant Holmes sprang like a tiger on to the marksman's back and hurled him flat upon his face. He was up again in a moment, and with convulsive strength he seized Holmes by the throat, but I struck him on the head with the butt of my revolver, and he dropped again

upon the floor. I fell upon him, and as I held him my comrade blew a shrill call upon a whistle. There was the clatter of running feet upon the pavement, and two policemen in uniform, with one plain clothes detective, rushed through the front entrance and into the room.

"That you, Lestrade?" said Holmes.

"Yes, Mr. Holmes. I took the job myself. It's good to see you back in London, sir."

"I think you want a little unofficial help. Three undetected murders in one year won't do, Lestrade. But you handled the Molesey mystery with less than your usual—that's to say, you handled it fairly well."

"We had all risen to our feet, our prisoner breathing hard, with a stalwart constable on each side of him. Already a few loiterers had begun to collect in the street. Holmes stepped up to the window, closed it and dropped the blinds. Lestrade had produced two candles, and the policemen had uncovered their lanterns. I was able at last to have a good look at our prisoner.

It was a tremendously virile and yet sinister face which was turned toward us. With the brow of a philosopher above and the jaw of a sensualist below, the man must have started with great capacities for good or for evil. But one could not look upon his cruel blue eyes, with their drooping, cynical lids, or upon the fierce, aggressive nose and the threatening, deep lined brow without reading nature's plainest danger signals. He took no heed of any of us, but his eyes were fixed upon Holmes' face with an expression in which hatred and amazement were equally blended. "You fend," he kept on muttering—"you clever, clever fend!"

"Ah, colonel," said Holmes, arranging his rumpled collar. "Journeys end in lovers' meetings," as the old play says. I don't think I have had the pleasure of seeing you since you favored me with those attentions as I lay on the ledge above the Reichenbach fall."

The colonel still stared at my friend like a man in a trance. "You cunning, cunning fend!" was all that he could say.

"I have not introduced you yet," said Holmes. "This, gentlemen, is Colonel Sebastian Moran, once of her majesty's Indian army and the best heavy game shot that our eastern empire has ever produced. I believe I am correct, colonel, in saying that your bag of tigers still remains unrivaled?"

The fierce old man said nothing, but still glared at my companion. With his savage eyes and bristling mustache he was wonderfully like a tiger himself.

"I wonder that my very simple stratagem could deceive so old a shikari," said Holmes. "It must be very familiar to you. Have you not tethered a young kid under a tree, lain above it with your rifle and waited for the bait to bring up your tiger? This empty house is my tree, and you are my tiger. You have possibly had other guns in reserve in case there should be several tigers or in the unlikely supposition of your own aim failing you. These"—he pointed around—"are my other guns. The parallel is exact."

Colonel Moran sprang forward with a snarl of rage, but the constables dragged him back. The fury upon his face was terrible to look at.

"I confess that you had one small surprise for me," said Holmes. "I did not anticipate that you would yourself make use of this empty house and this convenient front window. I had imagined you as operating from the street, where my friend Lestrade and his merry men were awaiting you. With that exception all has gone as I expected."

Colonel Moran turned to the official detective.

"You may or may not have just cause for arresting me," said he, "but at least there can be no reason why I should submit to the gibes of this person. If I am in the hands of the law let things be done in a legal way."

(To be continued.)

TREAS. BALANCE SHEET.

Official Publication of Treasurer's Report of Balances of County Funds as Made June 1st, 1905.

RECEIPTS	
On hand January 1, 1905.	\$ 61,561 50
Delinquent taxes collected.	192 45
Interest on same.	21 39
Tax of 1904.	139,796 39
Interest.	54 32
School loans paid in.	4,461 10
Interest.	1,545 50
Fines.	61 00
Institute.	84 00
Poor Farm.	389 00
Mult tax.	9,000 00
Mechan overpay fees.	9 85
H. Pester lot contract.	12 50
J Koch, overpay ass.	3 20
Clerk fees.	866 73
Record fees.	900 25
Auditor's fees.	148 00
Old bridge lumber.	61 00
J Cook, sewer pipe.	1 00
Bridge on Shelby Co. line.	105 82
Repair bridge on Carroll Co. line.	18 76
T Meahan on insane expenses.	22 12
John Lamp on insane expenses.	144 00
H. Lohse for H. Schuman, insane.	36 90
Sale of Leans.	50 00
Total Receipts.	\$ 222,466 28
DISBURSEMENTS	
Refunds.	3 10
State Treasurer.	11,543 91
School loans.	2,000 00
Institute expenses.	43 01
County warrants.	18,076 96
County road warrants.	86 98
Bridge warrants.	11,985 49
Poor fund.	3,251 52
Insane expenses.	3,411 48
Feeble-minded children.	134 04
Soldiers relief.	1,088 50
Auditor's appropriation.	6,863 78
Legatee.	123 85
Court house.	20,798 89
University.	736 84
State college.	795 84
Normal school.	397 68
Total county expenses.	\$ 81,004 88
Contingent funds.	\$ 15,518 94
Teachers.	39,344 60
School house.	5,430 00
Library.	183 07
Total school expenses.	\$ 60,300 61
Total Twp. Expenses.	\$ 12,914 37
Mult.	\$ 4,500 00
Incorporation.	5,968 54
Road.	56 97
County road.	135 60
Judgment.	569 40
Board of Health.	12 00
Bond.	1,580 99
Sidewalk.	217 58
Gas.	254 55
Fire.	298 96
Library.	578 15
Grading.	66 85
Total Town Expenses.	\$ 14,025 82
Total Disbursements.	166,375 58
Balance on hand.	54,110 60
BALANCE	
State.	\$ 139 96
State University.	9 21
County.	9,062 26
County road.	6,618 89
County School.	138 07
Bridge.	5,867 20
Poor overpay.	1,669 49
Insane.	2,437 94
Deposit.	125 05
Temporary school.	104 00
Permanent school.	3,273 78
Institute.	215 55
Soldiers relief.	994 74
Court house.	22,424 86
State college.	9 21
Normal school.	4 57
Total County.	\$ 51,423 19
Iowa district.	2 40
Incidentals.	6 00
Teachers.	2 61
School house.	11 01
Aspinwall Independent.	47 00
Incidentals.	1 40
Teachers.	1 40
Iowa Township.	1 87
Road.	13 54
Nishnabotny District.	13 54
Incidentals.	3 30
Teachers.	13 67
Nishnabotny Township.	16 97
Road.	11 38
Board of Health.	9 52
Mailla Independent.	30 90
Incidentals.	37 44
Teachers.	62 10
School house.	12 25
Washington District.	111 79
Incidentals.	40 12
Teachers.	114 53
Washington Township.	154 65
Road.	62 60
Board of Health.	17 48
Union District.	80 08
Incidentals.	14 05
Teachers.	47 20
Union Township.	61 25
Road.	65 32
Board of Health.	164 02
Dow City Independent.	229 37
Incidentals.	137 32
Teachers.	209 65
Boyer District.	346 97
Incidentals.	21 54
Teachers.	79 07
School House.	21 37
Boyer Township.	105 59
Road.	43 08
Hays District.	43 08
Incidentals.	13 84
Teachers.	63 20
Hays Township.	79 04
Road.	30 45
Board of Health.	14 91
East Boyer District.	45 36
Incidentals.	1 04
Teachers.	8 85
School house.	64 00
East Boyer Township.	10 53
Road.	3 70
Board of Health.	17 84
Denison District.	21 54
Incidentals.	14 14
Teachers.	44 16
Denison Township.	58 30
Road.	21 49
Board of Health.	35 05
Denison Independent.	54 54
Incidentals.	143 26
Teachers.	231 17
School House.	73 07
Library.	62 80
Paradise District.	460 36
Incidentals.	19 59
Teachers.	75 39
Paradise Township.	95 10
Road.	35 83
Board of Health.	39 77
Willow District.	75 60
Incidentals.	\$ 1 81

Teachers.

Willow Township—	7 46
Road.	2 87
Board of Health.	3 99
West Side District—	6 86
Incidentals.	2 06
Teachers.	4 19
West Side Township—	6 24
Road.	10 13
West Side Independent—	10 18
Incidentals.	4 16
Teachers.	5 63
Vail Independent—	9 78
Incidentals.	14 13
Teachers.	25 32
School House.	5 82
Milford District—	45 07
Incidentals.	11 49
Teachers.	43 37
Milford Township—	54 86
Road.	15 63
Board of Health.	93 01
Goodrich District—	108 04
Incidentals.	12 87
Teachers.	40 42
Goodrich Township—	53 29
Road.	28 64
Board of Health.	4 39
Hanover District—	31 02
Incidentals.	10 35
Teachers.	25 90
Hanover Township—	36 25
Board of Health.	6 05
Charter Oak District—	6 05
Incidentals.	11 38
Teachers.	39 27
Charter Oak Township—	50 65
Road.	25 29
Charter Oak Independent—	25 29
Incidentals.	28 33
Teachers.	154 79
School House.	7 84
Jackson Township—	190 83
Road.	3 58
Board of Health.	8 49
Stockholm District—	12 07
Incidentals.	9 75
Teachers.	27 96
School House.	4 88
Stockholm Township—	42 59
Road.	18 15
Board of Health.	39 02
Older Creek District—	38 17
Incidentals.	15 32
Teachers overpaid.	333 89
School House.	32 84
Otter Creek Township—	48 15
Road.	43 30
Morgan District—	48 30
Incidentals.	1 15
Teachers.	1 91
Morgan Township—	3 06
Road.	1 21
Board of Health.	54 93
Soldier District—	56 14
Incidentals.	8 78
Teachers.	39 84
Soldier Township—	39 62
Road.	11 91
Denison Incorporation—	11 91
Bond.	42 05
Incorporation.	131 04
Road overpay.	26 20
Mult.	75 00
Board of Health.	103 04
Sidewalk.	3 64
Fire.	11 70
Dow City Incorporation—	392 67
Incorporation.	29 96
Board of Health.	477 82
Vail Incorporation—	507 79
Incorporation.	11 37
Board of Health.	7 50
Mult.	75 00
West Side Incorporation—	83 77
Incorporation.	3 06
Manilla Incorporation—	3 06
Incorporation.	35 21
Sidewalk.	10 55
Bond.	3 85
Judgment.	35 21
Charter Oak Incorporation—	129 72
Incorporation.	12 27
Water Rent.	22 84
Board of Health.	9 03
Sidewalk.	83 79
Bond.	3 85
Mult.	9 81
150 00	
Schleswig Independent—	229 29
Incidentals.	8 94
Teachers.	24 59
School House.	8 94
Arlon Incorporation—	44 47
Incorporation.	5 29
Board of Health.	5 58
Water Bond.	152 44
2 58	
Kiron Incorporation—	162 70
Incorporation.	8 99
Grading.	2 70
Deloit—	11 69
Incidentals.	3 58
Board of Health	