

THE RETURN OF SHERLOCK HOLMES,

By A. Conan Doyle - Illustrated by F. D. Steele

The Adventure of the Six Napoleons

No. 8 of the Series

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It was no very unusual thing for Mr. Lestrade of Scotland Yard to look in upon us on an evening, and his visits were welcome to Sherlock Holmes, for they enabled him to keep in touch with all that was going on at the police headquarters.

In return for the news which Lestrade would bring, Holmes was always ready to listen with attention to the details of any case upon which the detective was engaged and was able occasionally to give some hint or suggestion drawn from his own vast knowledge and experience.

On this particular evening Lestrade had spoken of the weather and the newspapers. Then he had fallen silent, puffing thoughtfully at his cigar. Holmes looked keenly at him.

"Anything remarkable on hand?" he asked. "Oh, no, Mr. Holmes—nothing very particular."

"Then tell me about it." Lestrade laughed. "Well, Mr. Holmes, there is no use denying that there is something on my mind. And yet it is such an absurd business that I hesitated to bother you about it. On the other hand, although it is trivial, it is undoubtedly queer, and I know that you have a taste for all that is out of the common. But, in my opinion, it comes more in Dr. Watson's line than ours."

"Disease?" said Lestrade. "Madness, anyhow, and a queer madness too. You wouldn't think there was any one living at this time of day who had such a hatred of Napoleon I. that he would break any image of him that he could see."

Holmes sank back in his chair. "That's no business of mine," said he. "Exactly. That's what I said. But, then, when the man commits burglary in order to break images which are not his own, that brings it away from the doctor and on to the policeman."

Holmes sat up again. "Burglary? This is more interesting. Let me hear the details." Lestrade took out his official notebook and refreshed his memory from its pages.

"The first case reported was four days ago," said he. "It was at the shop of Morse Hudson, who has a place for the sale of pictures and statues in the Kennington road. The assistant had left the front shop for an instant when he heard a crash, and, hurrying in, he found a plaster bust of Napoleon, which stood with several other works of art upon the counter, lying shivered into fragments. He rushed out into the road, but, although several passersby declared that they had noticed a man run out of the shop, he could neither see any one nor could he find any means of identifying the rascal. It seemed to be one of those senseless acts of hoodliganism which occur from time to time, and which were reported to the constable on the beat as such. The plaster cast was not worth more than a few shillings, and the whole affair appeared to be too childish for any particular investigation."

"The second case, however, was more serious and also more singular. It occurred only last night. In Kennington road and within a few hundred yards of Morse Hudson's shop there lives a well known medical practitioner named Dr. Barnicot, who has one of the largest practices upon the south side of the Thames. His residence and principal consulting room is at Kennington road, but he has a branch surgery and dispensary at Lower Brixton road, two miles away. This Dr. Barnicot is an enthusiastic admirer of Napoleon, and his house is full of books, pictures and relics of the French emperor. Some little time ago he purchased from Morse Hudson two duplicate plaster casts of the famous head of Napoleon by the French sculptor Devine. One of these he placed in his hall in the house at Kennington road and the other on the mantelpiece of the surgery at Lower Brixton. Well, when Dr. Barnicot came down this morning he was astonished to find that his house had been burgled during the night, but that nothing had been taken save the plaster head from the hall. It had been carried out and had been dashed savagely against the garden wall, under which its splintered fragments were discovered."

Holmes rubbed his hands. "This is certainly very novel," said he. "I thought it would please you. But I have not got to the end yet. Dr. Barnicot was due at his surgery at 12 o'clock, and you can imagine his amazement when on arriving there he found that the window had been opened in the night and that the broken pieces of his second bust were strewn all over the room. It had been smashed to atoms where it stood. In neither case were there any signs which could give us a clue as to the criminal or lunatic who had done the mischief. Now, Mr. Holmes, you have got the facts."

"They are singular, not to say grotesque," said Holmes. "May I ask whether the two busts smashed in Dr. Barnicot's rooms were the exact duplicates of the one which was destroyed in Morse Hudson's shop?"

"They were taken from the same mold." "Such a fact must tell against the theory that the man who breaks them is influenced by any general hatred of Napoleon. Considering how many hundreds of statues of the great emperor must exist in London, it is too much to suppose such a coincidence as that a promiscuous iconoclast should chance to begin upon three specimens of the same bust."

"Well, I thought as you do," said Lestrade. "On the other hand, this Morse Hudson is the purveyor of busts in that part of London, and these three were the only ones which had been in his shop for years. So, although, as you say, there are many hundreds of statues in London, it is very probable that these three were the only ones in that district. Therefore a local fanatic would begin with them. What do you think, Dr. Watson?"

"There are no limits to the possibilities of monomania," I answered. "There is the condition which the modern French psychologists have called the 'idee fixe,' which may be trifling in character, and accompanied by complete sanity in every other way. A man who had read deeply about Napoleon or who had possibly received some hereditary family injury through the great war might conceivably form such an 'idee fixe' and under its influence be capable of any fantastic outrage."

"That won't do, my dear Watson," said Holmes, shaking his head. "For no amount of 'idee fixe' would enable your interesting monomaniac to find out where these busts were situated."

"Well, how do you explain it?" "I don't attempt to do so. I would only observe that there is a certain method in the gentleman's eccentric proceedings. For example, in Dr. Barnicot's hall, where a sound might arouse the family, the bust was taken outside before being broken, whereas in the surgery, where there was less danger of an alarm, it was smashed where it stood. The affair seems absurdly trifling, and yet I dare call nothing trivial when I reflect that some of my most classic cases have had the least promising commencement. You will remember, Watson, how the dreadful business of the Abernethy family was first brought to my notice by the depth which the paralytic had sunk into the butter upon a hot day. I can't afford, therefore, to smile at your three broken busts, Lestrade, and I shall be very much obliged to you if you will let me hear of any fresh development of so singular a chain of events."

The development for which my friend had asked came in a quicker and an infinitely more tragic form than he could have imagined. I was still dressing in my bedroom next morning when there was a tap at the door, and Holmes entered, a telegram in his hand. He read it aloud: "Come instantly, 131 Pitt street, Kennington. LESTRADE."

"What is it, then?" I asked. "Don't know—may be anything. But I suspect it is the sequel of the story of the statues. In that case our friend, the image breaker, has begun operations in another quarter of London. There's coffee on the table, Watson, and I have a cab at the door."

In half an hour we had reached Pitt street, a quiet little backwater just beside one of the briskest currents of London life. No. 131 was one of a row, all flat chested, respectable and most unromantic dwellings. As we drove up we found the railings in front of the house lined by a curious crowd. Holmes whistled.

"By George, it's attempted murder at the least! Nothing less will hold the London message boy. There's a deed of violence indicated in that fellow's round shoulders and outstretched neck. What's this, Watson? The top steps swelled down and the other ones dry. Footsteps enough, anyhow! Well, well, there's Lestrade at the front window, and we shall soon know all about it."

The official received us with a very grave face and showed us into a sitting room, where an exceedingly unkempt and agitated elderly man clad in a flannel dressing gown was pacing up and down. He was introduced to us as the owner of the house—Mr. Horace Harker of the Central Press syndicate. "It's the Napoleon bust business again," said Lestrade. "You seemed interested last night, Mr. Holmes, so I thought perhaps you would be glad to be present now that the affair has taken a very much graver turn."

"What has it turned to, then?" "To murder, Mr. Harker, will you tell these gentlemen exactly what has occurred?"

The man in the dressing gown turned upon us with a most melancholy face. "It's an extraordinary thing," said he, "that all my life I have been collecting other people's news, and now that a real piece of news has come my own way I am so confused and bothered that I can't put two words together. If I had come in here as a journalist I should have interviewed myself and had two columns in every evening paper. As it is, I am giving away valuable copy by telling my story over and over to a string of different people, and I can make no use of it myself. However, I've heard your name, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, and if you'll only explain this queer business I shall be

paid for my trouble in telling you the story."

Holmes sat down and listened. "It all seems to center round that bust of Napoleon which I bought for this very room about four months ago. I picked it up cheap from Harding Bros., two doors from the High Street station. A great deal of miscellaneous work is done at night, and I often wrote until the early morning. So it was today. I was sitting in my den, which is at the back of the top of the house, about 3 o'clock when I was convinced that I heard some sounds downstairs. I listened, but they were not repeated, and I concluded that they came from outside. Then suddenly, about five minutes later, there came a most horrible yell—the most dreadful sound, Mr. Holmes, that ever I heard. It will ring in my ears as long as I live. I sat frozen with horror for a minute or two; then I seized the poker and went downstairs. When I entered this room I found the window wide open, and I at once observed that the bust was gone from the mantelpiece. Why any burglar should take such a thing passes my understanding, for it was only a plaster cast and of no real value whatever."

"You can see for yourself that any one going out through that open window could reach the front doorstep by taking a long stride. This was clearly what the burglar had done, so I went round and opened the door. Stepping out into the dark, I nearly fell over a dead man who was lying there. I ran back for a light, and there was the poor fellow, a great gash in his throat and the whole place swimming in blood. He lay on his back, his eyes drawn up and his mouth horribly open. I shall see him in my dreams. I had just time to blow my police whistle, and then I must have fainted, for I knew nothing more until I found the policeman standing over me in the hall."

"Well, who was the murdered man?" asked Holmes. "There's nothing to show who he was," said Lestrade. "You shall see the body at the mortuary, but we have made nothing of it up to now. He is a tall man, sunburned, very powerful, not more than thirty. He is poorly dressed, and yet does not appear to be a laborer. A horn handled clasp knife was lying in a pool of blood beside him. Whether it was the weapon which did the deed or whether it belonged to the dead man I do not know. There was no name on his clothing and nothing in his pockets save an apple, some string, a shilling map of London and a photograph. Here it is."

It was evidently taken by a snapshot from a small camera. It represented an alert, sharp featured simian man, with thick eyebrows and a very peculiar projection of the lower part of the face, like the muzzle of a baboon.

"And what became of the bust?" asked Holmes after a careful study of this picture. "We had news of it just before you came. It has been found in the front garden of an empty house in Campden House road. It was broken into fragments. I am going round now to see it. Will you come?"

"Certainly. I must just take one look round." He examined the carpet and the window. "The fellow had either very long legs or was a most active man," said he. "With an area beneath, it was no mean feat to reach that window ledge and open that window. Getting back was comparatively simple. Are you coming with us to see the remains of your bust, Mr. Harker?"

The disconsolate journalist had seated himself at a writing table. "I must try and make something of it," said he, "though I have no doubt that the first editions of the evening papers are out already with full details. It's like my luck! You remember when the stand fell at Doncaster? Well, I was the only journalist in the stand and my journal the only one that had no account of it, for I was too shaken to write it. And now I'll be too late with a murder done on my own doorstep."

As we left the room we heard his pen traveling shrilly over the foolscap. The spot where the fragments of the bust had been found was only a few hundred yards away. For the first time our eyes rested upon this presentation of the great emperor, which seemed to raise such frantic and destructive hatred in the mind of the unknown. It lay scattered in splintered shards upon the grass. Holmes picked up several of them and examined them carefully. I was convinced from his intent face and his purposeful manner that at last he was upon a clue.

"Well?" asked Lestrade. Holmes shrugged his shoulders. "We have a long way to go yet," said he. "And yet—and yet—well, we have some suggestive facts to act upon. The possession of this trifling bust was worth more in the eyes of this strange criminal than a human life. That is one point. Then there is the singular fact that he did not break it in the house or immediately outside the house, if to break it was his sole object."

"He was rattled and hustled by meeting this other fellow. He hardly knew what he was doing."

"Well, that's likely enough, but I wish to call your attention very particularly to the position of this house in the garden of which the bust was destroyed."

Lestrade looked about him. "It was an empty house, and so he knew that he would not be disturbed in the garden."

"Yes, but there is another empty house farther up the street, which he must have passed before he came to this one. Why did he not break it there, since it is evident that every yard that he carried it increased the risk of some one meeting him?"

"I give it up," said Lestrade. "Holmes pointed to the street lamp above our heads. "He could see what he was doing here, and he could not there. That was his reason."

"By Jove, that's true," said the detective. "Now that I come to think of it, Dr. Barnicot's bust was broken not far from his red lamp. Well, Mr. Holmes, what are we to do with that fact?"

"To remember it—to docket it. We may come on something later which will bear upon it. What steps do you propose to take now, Lestrade?"

"The most practical way of getting at it, in my opinion, is to identify the dead man. There should be no difficulty about that. When we have found who he is and who his associates are we should have a good start in learning what he was doing in Pitt street last night and who it was who met him and killed him on the doorstep of Mr. Horace Harker. Don't you think so?"

"No doubt, and yet it is not quite the way in which I should approach the case."

"What would you do, then?" "Oh, you must not let me influence you in any way. I suggest that you go on your line and I on mine. We can compare notes afterward, and each will supplement the other."

"Very good," said Lestrade. "If you are going back to Pitt street you might see Mr. Horace Harker. Tell him for me that I have quite made up my mind and that it is certain that a dangerous homicidal lunatic with Napoleonic delusions was in his house last night. It will be useful for his article."

Lestrade started. "You don't seriously believe that?" Holmes smiled. "Don't! Well, perhaps I don't, but I am sure that it will interest Mr. Horace Harker and the subscribers of the Central Press syndicate. Now, Watson, I think that we shall find that we have a long and rather complex day's work before us. I should be glad, Lestrade, if you could make it convenient to meet us at Baker street at 6 o'clock this evening. Until then I should like to keep this photograph found in the dead man's pocket. It is possible that I may have to ask your company and assistance upon a small expedition which will have to be undertaken tonight if my chain of reasoning should prove to be correct. Until then, goodbye, and good luck."

Sherlock Holmes and I walked together to the High street, where we stopped at the shop of Harding Bros., whence the bust had been purchased. A young assistant informed us that Mr. Harding would be absent until after noon and that he was himself a newcomer who could give us no information. Holmes' face showed his disappointment and annoyance.

"Well, well, we can't expect to have it all our own way, Watson," he said at last. "We must come back in the afternoon, if Mr. Harding will not be here until then. I am, as you have no doubt surmised, endeavoring to trace these busts to their source in order to find if there is not something peculiar which may account for their remarkable fate. Let us make for Mr. Morse Hudson of the Kennington road and see if he can throw any light upon the problem."

A drive of an hour brought us to the picture dealer's establishment. He was a small, stout man, with a red face and a peppery manner. "Yes, sir. On my very counter, sir," said he. "What we pay rates and taxes for I don't know, when any ruffian can come in and break one's goods. Yes, sir, it was I who sold Dr. Barnicot his two statues. Disgraceful, sir! A nihilist plot—that's what I make it. No one but an anarchist would go about breaking statues. Red republicans—that's what I call 'em. Who did I get the statues from? I don't see what that has to do with it. Well, if you really want to know, I got them from Gelder & Co., in Church street, Stepney. They are a well known house in the trade and have been this twenty years. How many had I? Three—two and one are three—two of Dr. Barnicot's and one smashed in broad daylight on my own counter. Do I know that photograph? No, I don't. Yes, I do, though. Why, it's Beppo. He was a kind of Italian piece-work man, who made himself useful in the shop. He could carve a bit and gild and frame and do odd jobs. The fellow left me last week, and I've heard nothing of him since. No, I don't know where he came from nor where he went to. I had nothing against him while he was here. He was gone two days before the bust was smashed."

"Well, that's all we could reasonably expect from Morse Hudson," said Holmes as we emerged from the shop. "We have this Beppo as a common factor, both in Kennington and in Kennington, so that is worth a ten mile drive. Now, Watson, let us make for Gelder & Co. of Stepney, the source and origin of the busts. I shall be surprised if we don't get some help down there."

In rapid succession we passed through the fringe of fashionable London, hotel London, theatrical London, literary London, commercial London, and, finally, maritime London, till we came to a riverside city of 100,000 souls, where the tenement houses swelter and reek with the outcasts of Europe. Here, in a broad thoroughfare, once the abode of wealthy city merchants, we found the sculpture works for which we searched. Outside was a considerable yard full of monumental masonry. Inside was a large room in which fifty workers were carving or molding. The manager, a big blond German, received us civilly and gave a clear answer to all Holmes' questions. A reference to his books showed that hundreds of casts had been taken from a marble copy of Devine's head of Napoleon, but that the three which had been sent to Morse Hudson a year or so before had been of a batch of six, the other three being sent to Harding Bros. of Kennington. There was no reason why those six should be different from any of the other casts. He could suggest no possible cause why any one should wish to destroy them. In fact, he laughed at the idea. Their wholesale price was 6 shillings, but the retailer would get 12 or more. The cast was taken in two molds from each side of the face, and then these two profiles of plaster of paris were joined together to make the complete bust. The work was usually done by Italians in the room we were in. When finished the busts were put on a table in the passage to dry and afterward stored. That was all he could tell us.

But the production of the photograph had a remarkable effect upon the manager. His face flushed with anger, and his brows knitted over his blue Teutonic eyes. "Ah, the rascal!" he cried. "Yes, indeed, I know him very well. This has always been a respectable establishment, and the only time that we have ever had the police in it was over this very fellow. It was more than a year ago now. He knifed another Italian in the street, and then he came to the works with the police on his heels, and he was taken here. Beppo was his name—his second name I never knew. Served me right for engaging a man with such a face. But he was a good workman—one of the best."

"What did he do?" "The man lived, and he got off with a year. I have no doubt he is out now, but he has not dared to show his nose here. We have a cousin of his here, and I dare say he could tell you where he is."

"No, no," cried Holmes, "not a word to the cousin—not a word, I beg of you. The matter is very important, and the farther I go with it the more important it seems to grow. When you referred in your ledger to the sale of those casts I observed that the date was June 3 of last year. Could you give me the date when Beppo was arrested?"

"I could tell you roughly by the pay list," the manager answered. "Yes," he continued, after some turning over of pages, "he was paid last on May 20."

"Thank you," said Holmes. "I don't think that I need intrude upon your time and patience any more. With a last word of caution that he should say nothing as to our researches we turned our faces westward once more.

The afternoon was far advanced before we were able to snatch a hasty luncheon at a restaurant. A news bill at the entrance announced: "Kennington Outrage. Murder by a Madman," and the contents of the paper showed that Mr. Horace Harker had got his account into print after all. Two columns were occupied with a highly sensational and flowery rendering of the whole incident. Holmes propped it against the cruet stand and read it while he ate. Once or twice he chuckled.

"This is all right, Watson," said he. "Listen to this: 'It is satisfactory to know that there was no difference of opinion upon this case, since Mr. Lestrade, one of the most experienced members of the official force, and Mr. Sherlock Holmes, the well known consulting expert, have each come to the conclusion that the grotesque series of incidents, which have ended in so tragic a fashion, arise from lunacy rather than from deliberate crime. No explanation save mental aberration can cover the facts.' The press, Watson, is a most valuable institution, if you only know how to use it. And now, if you have quite finished, we will hark back to Kennington and see what the manager of Harding Bros. has to say on the matter."

The founder of that great emporium proved to be a brisk, crisp little person, very dapper and quick, with a clear head and a ready tongue. "Yes, sir, I have already read the account in the evening papers. Mr. Horace Harker is a customer of ours. We supplied him with the bust some months ago. We ordered three busts of that sort from Gelder & Co. of Stepney. They are all sold now. To whom? Oh, I dare say by consulting our sales book we could very easily tell you. Yes, we have the entries here. One to Mr. Harker, you see, and one to Mr. Josiah Brown of Laburnum lodge, Laburnum Vale, Chiswick, and one to Mr. Sandford of Lower Grove road, Reading. No, I have never seen this face which you show me in the photograph. You would hardly forget it, would you, sir, for I've seldom seen an uglier. Have we any Italians on the staff? Yes, sir; we have several among our workpeople and cleaners.

I dare say they might get a peep at that sales book if they wanted to. There is no particular reason for keeping a watch upon that book. Well, well, it's a very strange business, and I hope that you will let me know if anything comes of your inquiries."

Holmes had taken several notes during Mr. Harding's evidence, and I could see that he was thoroughly satisfied by the turn which affairs were taking. He made no remark, however, save that unless we hurried we should be late for our appointment with Lestrade. Sure enough, when we reached Baker street the detective was already there, and we found him pacing up and down in a fever of impatience. His look of importance showed that his day's work had not been in vain.

"Well?" he asked. "What luck, Mr. Holmes?"

"We have had a very busy day and not entirely a wasted one," my friend explained. "We have seen both the retailers and also the wholesale manufacturers. I can trace each of the busts now from the beginning."

"The busts?" cried Lestrade. "Well, well, you have your own methods, Mr. Sherlock Holmes, and it is not for me to say a word against them, but I think I have done a better day's work than you. I have identified the dead man."

"And found a cause for the crime," "Splendid!"

"We have an inspector who makes a specialty of Saffron Hill and the Italian quarter. Well, this dead man had some Catholic emblem round his neck, and that, along with his color, made me think he was from the south. Inspector Hill knew him the moment he caught sight of him. His name is Pietro Venetti, from Naples, and he is one of the greatest cutthroats in London. He is connected with the Mafia, which, as you know, is a secret political society, enforcing its decrees by murder. Now, you see how the affair begins to clear up. The other fellow is probably an Italian also and a member of the Mafia. He has broken the rules in some fashion. Pietro is set upon his track. Probably the photograph we found in his pocket is the man himself, so that he may not knife the wrong person. He does the fiddle. He sees him enter a house, he waits outside for him, and in the scuffle he receives his

own death wound. How is that, Mr. Sherlock Holmes?"

Holmes clapped his hands approvingly. "Excellent, Lestrade, excellent!" he cried. "But I didn't quite follow your explanation of the destruction of the busts."

"The busts! You never can get those busts out of your head. After all, that is nothing; petty larceny, six months at the most. It is the murder that we are really investigating, and I tell you that I am gathering all the threads into my hands."

"And the next stage?" "It is a very simple one. I shall go down with Hill to the Italian quarter, find the man whose photograph we have got and arrest him on the charge of murder. Will you come with us?"

"I think not. I fancy we can attain our end in a simpler way. I can't say for certain because it all depends—well, it all depends upon a factor which is completely outside our control. But I have great hopes—in fact, the betting is exactly two to one—that if you will come with us tonight I shall be able to help you to lay him by the heels."

"In the Italian quarter?" "No; I fancy Chiswick is an address which is more likely to find him. If you will come with me to Chiswick tonight, Lestrade, I'll promise to go to the Italian quarter with you tomorrow, and no harm will be done by the delay. And now I think that a few hours' sleep would do us all good, for I do not propose to leave before 11 o'clock, and it is unlikely that we shall be back before morning. You'll dine with us, Lestrade, and then you are welcome to the sofa until it is time for us to start. In the meantime, Watson, I should be glad if you would ring for an express messenger, for I have a letter to send, and it is important that it should go at once."

Holmes spent the evening in rum-

aging among the files of the old daily papers with which one of our lumber rooms was packed. When at last he descended it was with triumph in his eyes, but he said nothing to either of us as to the result of his researches. For my own part I had followed step by step the method by which he had traced the various windings of this complex case, and though I could not yet perceive the goal which we would reach, I understood clearly that Holmes expected this grotesque criminal to make an attempt upon the two remaining busts, one of which, I remembered, was at Chiswick. No doubt the object of our journey was to catch him in the very act, and I could not but admire the cunning with which my friend had inserted a wrong clue in the evening paper, so as to give the fellow the idea that he could continue his scheme with impunity. I was not surprised when Holmes suggested that I should take my revolver with me. He had himself picked up the loaded hunting crop, which was his favorite weapon.

A four wheeler was at the door at 11, and in it we drove to a spot at the other side of Hammersmith bridge. Here the cabman was waiting to wait. A short walk brought us to a secluded road fringed with pleasant houses, each standing in its own grounds. In the light of a street lamp we read "Laburnum Villa" upon the gatepost of one of them. The occupants had evidently retired to rest, for all was dark save for a faint glow over the hall door, which shed a single blurred circle on to the garden path. The wooden fence which separated the grounds from the road threw a dense black shadow upon the inner side, and here it was that we crouched.

"I fear that you'll have a long wait," Holmes whispered. "We may thank our stars that it is not raining. I don't think we can even venture to smoke to pass the time. However, it's a two to one chance that we get something to pay us for our trouble."

It proved, however, that our vigil was not to be so long as Holmes had led us to fear, and it ended in a very sudden and singular fashion. In an instant, without the least sound to warn us of his coming, the garden gate swung open, and a lithe, dark figure, as swift and active as an ape, rushed up the garden path. We saw it whisk past the light thrown from

the black shadow of the house. There was a long pause, during which we held our breath, and then a very good creaking sound came to our ears. The window was being opened. The noise ceased, and again there was a long silence. The fellow was making his way into the house. We saw the sudden flash of a dark lantern inside the room. What he sought was evidently not there, for again we saw the flash through another blind and then through another.

"Let us get to the open window. We will nab him as he climbs out," Lestrade whispered.

But before we could move the man had emerged again. As he came out into the glimmering patch of light we saw that he carried something white under his arm. He looked stealthily all round him. The silence of the deserted street reassured him. Turning his back upon us, he laid down his burden, and the next instant there was the sound of a sharp tap, followed by a clatter and rattle. The man was so intent upon what he was doing that he never heard our steps as we stole across the grass plot. With the bound of a tiger, Holmes was on his back, and an instant later Lestrade and I had him by either wrist and the handcuffs had been fastened. As we turned him over I saw a hideous, sallow face, with writhing, furious features, glaring up at us, and I knew that it was indeed the man of the photograph whom we had secured.

But it was not our prisoner to whom Holmes was giving his attention. Squatted on the doorstep, he was engaged in most carefully examining that which the man had brought from the house. It was a bust of Napoleon, like the one which we had seen that morning, and it had been broken into similar fragments. Carefully Holmes held each separate shard to the light, but in no

own death wound. How is that, Mr. Sherlock Holmes?"

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"And the next stage?" "It is a very simple one. I shall go down with Hill to the Italian quarter, find the man whose photograph we have got and arrest him on the charge of murder. Will you come with us?"

"I think not. I fancy we can attain our end in a simpler way. I can't say for certain because it all depends—well, it all depends upon a factor which is completely outside our control. But I have great hopes—in fact, the betting is exactly two to one—that if you will come with us tonight I shall be able to help you to lay him by the heels."

"In the Italian quarter?" "No; I fancy Chiswick is an address which is more likely to find him. If you will come with me to Chiswick tonight, Lestrade, I'll promise to go to the Italian quarter with you tomorrow, and no harm will be done by the delay. And now I think that a few hours' sleep would do us all good, for I do not propose to leave before 11 o'clock, and it is unlikely that we shall be back before morning. You'll dine with us, Lestrade, and then you are welcome to the sofa until it is time for us to start. In the meantime, Watson, I should be glad if you would ring for an express messenger, for I have a letter to send, and it is important that it should go at once."

Holmes spent the evening in rum-

aging among the files of the old daily papers with which one of our lumber rooms was packed. When at last he descended it was with triumph in his eyes, but he said nothing to either of us as to the result of his researches. For my own part I had followed step by step the method by which he had traced the various windings of this complex case, and though I could not yet perceive the goal which we would reach, I understood clearly that Holmes expected this grotesque criminal to make an attempt upon the two remaining busts, one of which, I remembered, was at Chiswick. No doubt the object of our journey was to catch him in the very act, and I could not but admire the cunning with which my friend had inserted a wrong clue in the evening paper, so as to give the fellow the idea that he could continue his scheme with impunity. I was not surprised when Holmes suggested that I should take my revolver with me. He had himself picked up the loaded hunting crop, which was his favorite weapon.

A four wheeler was at the door at 11, and in it we drove to a spot at the other side of Hammersmith bridge. Here the cabman was waiting to wait. A short walk brought us to a secluded road fringed with pleasant houses, each standing in its own grounds. In the light of a street lamp we read "Laburnum Villa" upon the gatepost of one of them. The occupants had evidently retired to rest, for all was dark save for a faint glow over the hall door, which shed a single blurred circle on to the garden path. The wooden fence which separated the grounds from the road threw a dense black shadow upon the inner side, and here it was that we crouched.

"I fear that you'll have a long wait," Holmes whispered. "We may thank our stars that it is not raining. I don't think we can even venture to smoke to pass the time. However, it's a two to one chance that we get something to pay us for our trouble."

It proved, however, that our vigil was not to be so long as Holmes had led us to fear, and it ended in a very sudden and singular fashion. In an instant, without the least sound to warn us of his coming, the garden gate swung open, and a lithe, dark figure, as swift and active as an ape, rushed up the garden path. We saw it whisk past the light thrown from

the black shadow of the house. There was a long pause, during which we held our breath, and then a very good creaking sound came to our ears. The window was being opened. The noise ceased, and again there was a long silence. The fellow was making his way into the house. We saw the sudden flash of a dark lantern inside the room. What he sought was evidently not there, for again we saw the flash through another blind and then through another.

"Let us get to the open window. We will nab him as he climbs out," Lestrade whispered.

But before we could move the man had emerged again. As he came out into the glimmering patch of light we saw that he carried something white under his arm. He looked stealthily all round him. The silence of the deserted street reassured him. Turning his back upon us, he laid down his burden, and the next instant there was the sound of a sharp tap, followed by a clatter and rattle. The man was so intent upon what he was doing that he never heard our steps as we stole across the grass plot. With the bound of a tiger, Holmes was on his back, and an instant later Lestrade and I had him by either wrist and the handcuffs had been fastened. As we turned him over I saw a hideous, sallow face, with writhing, furious features, glaring up at us, and I knew that it was indeed the man of the photograph whom we had secured.

But it was not our prisoner to whom Holmes was giving his attention. Squatted on the doorstep, he was engaged in most carefully examining that which the man had brought from the house. It was a bust of Napoleon, like the one which we had seen that morning, and it had been broken into similar fragments. Carefully Holmes held each separate shard to the light, but in no