

I

A Scandal in Bohemeyaa

I.

Too Sherlock Hoamz she iz aulwase the woomman. I hav celdom herd him menshon her under enny uther name. In hiz ise she eclipez and predomminaits the whole ov her cex. It wauz not dhat he felt enny emoashon akin too luv for Irene Adler. Aul emoashonz, and dhat wun particularly, wer abhorent too hiz coald, precice but admirably ballanst miand. He wauz, I take it, the moast perfect rezoning and observing mashene dhat the werld haz cene, but az a luvver he wood hav plaist himcelf in a fauls posishon. He nevver spoke ov the softer pashonz, save withe a gibe and a snere. Dha wer admirabel thhingz for the observer—exelent for drauwng the vale from menz motiavz and acshonz. But for the traind rezoner too admit such intruezhonz intoo hiz one dellicate and fianly ajusted temperament wauz too introjuce a distracting factor which mite thro a dout uppon aul hiz mental rezults. Grit in a cencitive instrument, or a crac in wun ov hiz one

hi-pouwer lensez, wood not be moer disterbing dhan a strong emoashon in
a
nachure such az hiz. And yet dhare wauz but wun woomman too him, and
dhat woomman wauz
the late Irene Adler, ov jubeyous and qweschonabel memmory.

I had cene littel ov Hoamz laitly. Mi marrage had drifted us awa from eche
uther. Mi one complete happines, and the home-centerd interests which
rise up
around the man whoo ferst fiandz himcelf maaster ov hiz one
establishment, wer
sufishent too abzorb aul mi atenshon, while Hoamz, whoo loadhd evvery
form ov
sociyety withe hiz whole Bohemeyan sole, remaind in our lodgingz in
Baker Strete,
berrede among hiz oald boox, and aulternating from weke too weke
betwene cocane
and ambishon, the drousines ov the drug, and the feers ennergy ov hiz one
kene
nachure. He wauz stil, az evver, deeply attracted bi the studdy ov crime,
and
occupide hiz imens faccultese and extrordinary pouwerz ov observaishon
in
following out dhose cluse, and clering up dhose misterese which had bene
abandonnd az hoaples bi the ofishal polece. From time too time I herd sum
vaghe acount ov hiz doowingz: ov hiz summonz too Odessaa in the cace ov
the
Trepof merder, ov hiz clering up ov the cin'gular tradgedy ov the Atkinson
brutherz at Trincomaly, and finaly ov the mishon which he had acumplisht
so dellicaitly and suxesfooly for the raning fammily ov Holland. Beyond
these
cianz ov hiz activvity, houwevver, which I meerly shaerd withe aul the
rederz ov
the daly pres, I nu littel ov mi former frend and companyon.

Wun nite—it wauz on the twenteyeth ov March, 1888—I wauz reterning
from a gerny
too a paishent (for I had nou reternd too civvil practice), when mi wa led
me
throo Baker Strete. Az I paast the wel-rememberd doer, which must
aulwase
be asoasheyated in mi miand withe mi woowing, and withe the darc
incidents ov the
Studdy in Scarlet, I wauz ceezd withe a kene desire too ce Hoamz agane,
and too
no hou he wauz employiing hiz extraordinary pouwerz. Hiz ruimz wer
brilleyantly
lit, and, even az I looct up, I sau hiz taul, spare figgure paas twice in a
darc ciloowet against the bliand. He wauz pacing the roome swiftly,
egherly,
withe hiz hed sunc uppon hiz chest and hiz handz claaspt behiand him.
Too me, whoo
nu hiz evvery moode and habbit, hiz attichude and manner toald dhare
one stoery. He
wauz at werc agane. He had rizsen out ov hiz drug-creyated dreemz and
wauz hot uppon
the cent ov sum nu problem. I rang the bel and wauz shone up too the
chaimber
which had formerly bene in part mi one.

Hiz manner wauz not efucive. It celdom wauz; but he wauz glad, I thhinc,
too ce
me. Withe hardly a werd spoken, but withe a kiandly i, he waivd me too an
armchare, thru acros hiz cace ov cigarz, and indicated a spirrit cace and a
gassogene in the corner. Then he stood befoer the fire and looct me over in
hiz
cin'gular introspective fashon.

“Wedloc suets u,” he remarct. “I thhinc, Wautson, dhat u hav poot on
cevvven
and a haaf poundz cins I sau u.”

“Cevven!” I aancerd.

“Indede, I shood hav thaut a littel moer. Just a trifel moer, I fancy,
Wautson. And in practice agane, I observ. U did not tel me dhat u intended
too go intoo harnes.”

“Then, hou doo u no?”

“I ce it, I dejuce it. Hou doo I no dhat u hav bene ghetting yorcelf verry
wet laitley, and dhat u hav a moast clumsy and caerles cervant gherl?”

“Mi dere Hoamz,” ced I, “this iz too much. U wood certainly hav bene
bernd, had u livd a fu cenchurese ago. It iz tru dhat I had a cuntry wauc
on Thherzda and came home in a dredfool mes, but az I hav chainjd mi
cloadhz

I caant imadgine hou u dejuce it. Az too Mary Jane, she iz incorigibel, and
mi
wife haz ghivven her notice, but dhare, agane, I fale too ce hou u werc it
out.”

He chuckeld too himcelf and rubd hiz long, nervous handz toogheter.

“It iz cimpliscity itcelf,” ced he; “mi ise tel me dhat on the incide ov yor
left shoo, just whare the fiarlite striax it, the lether iz scoerd bi cix
aulmoast parralel cuts. Obveyously dha hav bene cauzd bi sumwun whoo
haz verry
caerlesly scaipt round the edgez ov the sole in order too remoove crusted
mud
from it. Hens, u ce, mi dubbel deducshon dhat u had bene out in vile

wether, and dhat u had a particularly malignant boote-slitting spescimen
ov
the Lundon slavy. Az too yor practice, if a gentelman waux intoo mi ruimz
smelling ov iyodoform, withe a blac marc ov niatrate ov cilver uppon hiz
rite
foerfin' gher, and a bulj on the rite cide ov hiz top-hat too sho whare he haz
secreted hiz stethoscope, I must be dul, indede, if I doo not pronouns him
too
be an active member ov the meddical profeshon."

I cood not help laafing at the ese withe which he explaind hiz proces ov
deducshon. "When I here u ghiv yor rezonz," I remarct, "the thhing
aulwase
apeerz too me too be so ridiculouly cimpel dhat I cood esily doo it micelf,
dho at eche suxescive instans ov yor rezoning I am baffeld until u
explane yor proces. And yet I beleve dhat mi ise ar az good az yorz."

"Qwite so," he aancerd, liting a ciggaret, and throwing himcelf doun intoo
an armchare. "U ce, but u doo not observ. The distincshon iz clere. For
exaampel, u hav freeqwently cene the steps which lede up from the haul
too this
roome."

"Freeqwently."

"Hou often?"

"Wel, sum hundredz ov tiamz."

"Then hou menny ar dhare?"

"Hou menny? I doant no."

"Qwite so! U hav not observd. And yet u hav cene. Dhat iz just mi point.

Nou, I no dhat dhare ar cevventene steps, becauz I hav boath cene and observd. Bi the wa, cins u ar interested in these littel problemz, and cins u ar good enuf too cronnikel wun or too ov mi triafling expereyencez, u ma be interested in this." He thru over a shete ov thhic, pinc-tinted notepaper which had bene liying open uppon the tabel. "It came bi the laast poast," ced he. "Rede it aloud."

The note wauz undated, and widhout iather cignachure or adres.

"Dhare wil caul uppon u too-nite, at a qworter too ate oacloc," it ced, "a gentelman whoo desiarz too consult u uppon a matter ov the verry depest moment.

Yor recent cervicez too wun ov the roiyal housez ov Urope hav shone dhat u ar wun whoo ma saifly be trusted withe matterz which ar ov an importans which can hardly be exadgerated. This acount ov u we hav from aul qworterz receevd. Be in yor chaimber then at dhat our, and doo not take it amis if yor vizsitor ware a maasc."

"This iz indede a mistery," I remarct. "Whaut doo u imadgine dhat it meenz?"

"I hav no dataa yet. It iz a cappital mistake too ththeyorise befoer wun haz dataa.

Incencibly wun beghinz too twist facts too sute ththeyorese, insted ov ththeyorese too sute facts. But the note itcelf. Whaut doo u dejuce from it?"

I caerfooly exammiand the riting, and the paper uppon which it wauz ritten.

“The man whoo rote it wauz preezhumably wel too doo,” I remarct, endevvoring too immitate mi companyonz procecez. “Such paper cood not be baut under haaf a croun a packet. It iz peculeyarly strong and stif.”

“Peculeyar—dhat iz the verry werd,” ced Hoamz. “It iz not an In’glis paper at aul. Hoald it up too the lite.”

I did so, and sau a larj “E” withe a smaul “g,” a “P,” and a larj “G” withe a smaul “t” woven into the texchure ov the paper.

“Whaut doo u make ov dhat?” aasct Hoamz.

“The name ov the maker, no dout; or hiz monnogram, raather.”

“Not at aul. The ‘G’ withe the smaul ‘t’ standz for ‘Gecelshaaft,’ which iz the German for ‘Cumpany.’ It iz a customary contracshon like our ‘Co.’ ‘P,’ ov coers, standz for ‘Papeyer.’ Nou for the ‘Eg.’ Let us glaans at our Continental Gasetere.” He tooc doun a hevvy broun vollume from hiz shelvz. “Eglo, Eglonits—here we ar, Egreyaa. It iz in a German-speking cuntry—in Bohemeyaa, not far from Carlzbad. ‘Remarcabel az beying the cene ov the deth ov Vaalenstine, and for its numerous glaas-factorese and paper-milz.’ Haa, haa, mi boi, whaut doo u make ov dhat?” Hiz ise sparkeld, and he cent up a grate blu triyumfant cloud from hiz ciggaret.

“The paper wauz made in Bohemeyaa,” I ced.

“Preciasly. And the man whoo rote the note iz a German. Doo u note the peculeyar construcshon ov the centens—‘This acount ov u we hav from aul qworterz receevd.’ A Frenchman or Rushan cood not hav ritten dhat. It iz the German whoo iz so unkerchous too hiz verbz. It oonly remainz, dhaerfoer, too discuvver whaut iz waunted bi this German whoo riats uppon Bohemeyan paper and preferz waring a maasc too showing hiz face. And here he cumz, if I am not mistaken, too rezolv aul our douts.”

Az he spoke dhare wauz the sharp sound ov horcez’ huifs and grating wheelz against the kerb, follode bi a sharp pool at the bel. Hoamz whisceld.

“A pare, bi the sound,” ced he. “Yes,” he continnude, glaancing out ov the windo. “A nice littel broowam and a pare ov butese. A hundred and fifty ghinnese apece. Dhaerz munny in this cace, Wautson, if dhare iz nuthhing els.”

“I thhinc dhat I had better go, Hoamz.”

“Not a bit, Doctor. Sta whare u ar. I am lost widhout mi Bozwel. And this prommicez too be interesting. It wood be a pitty too mis it.”

“But yor cliyent—”

“Nevver miand him. I ma waunt yor help, and so ma he. Here he cumz. Cit doun in dhat armchare, Doctor, and ghiv us yor best atenshon.”

A slo and hevvy step, which had bene herd uppon the staerz and in the passage, pauzd imejaitly outside the doer. Then dhare wauz a loud and authoritative

tap.

“Cum in!” ced Hoamz.

A man enterd whoo cood hardly hav bene les dhan cix fete cix inchez in hite, withe the chest and limz ov a Herculese. Hiz dres wauz rich withe a richnes which wood, in In’gland, be looct uppon az akin too bad taist.

Hevvy

bandz ov astracan wer slasht acros the sleevz and frunts ov hiz dubbel-brested cote, while the depe blu cloke which wauz throne over hiz shoalderz wauz liand withe flame-cullord cilc and cecuerd at the nec withe a

broche which concisted ov a cin’ghel flaming berril. Buits which extended haafwa

up hiz caavz, and which wer trimd at the tops withe rich broun fer, completed the impreshon ov barbarric oppulens which wauz sugested bi hiz whole

aperans. He carrede a braud-brimd hat in hiz hand, while he woer acros the upper part ov hiz face, extending doun paast the cheecboanz, a blac vizzard

maasc, which he had aparrently ajusted dhat verry moment, for hiz hand wauz stil

raizd too it az he enterd. From the lower part ov the face he apeerd too be a man ov strong carracter, withe a thhic, hanging lip, and a long, strate chin sugestive ov rezolueshon poosht too the length ov obstinacy.

“U had mi note?” he aasct withe a depe harsh vois and a strongly marct German axent. “I toald u dhat I wood caul.” He looct from wun too the uther

ov us, az if uncertane which too adres.

“Pra take a cete,” ced Hoamz. “This iz mi frend and colleghe, Dr. Wautson, whoo iz ocaizhonaly good enuf too help me in mi cacez. Whoome hav I the onnor

too adres?"

"U ma adres me az the Count Von Cram, a Bohemeyan nobelman. I understand dhat this gentelman, yor frend, iz a man ov onnor and disreshon, whoome I ma trust withe a matter ov the moast extreme importans. If not, I shood much prefer too communicate withe u alone."

I rose too go, but Hoamz caut me bi the rist and poosht me bac intoo mi chare. "It iz boath, or nun," ced he. "U ma sa befoer this gentelman ennithing which u ma sa too me."

The Count shrugd hiz braud shoalderz. "Then I must beghin," ced he, "bi bianding u boath too absolute ceecrecy for too yeerz; at the end ov dhat time the matter wil be ov no importans. At prezsent it iz not too much too sa dhat it iz ov such wate it ma hav an influwens uppon Uropeyan history."

"I prommice," ced Hoamz.

"And I."

"U wil excuse this maasc," continnude our strainj vizsitor. "The august person whoo emploiz me wishez hiz agent too be un'none too u, and I ma confes at wuns dhat the titel bi which I hav just cauld micelf iz not exactly mi one."

"I wauz aware ov it," ced Hoamz drily.

"The cercumstaancez ar ov grate dellicacy, and evvery precaushon haz too be taken

too quench whaut mite gro too be an imens scandal and cereyously
compromise wun
ov the raning fammilese ov Urope. Too speke plainly, the matter implicaits
the
grate Hous ov Ormstine, hereditary kingz ov Bohemeyaa.”

“I wauz aulso aware ov dhat,” mermerd Hoamz, cetling himcelf down in
hiz
armchare and closing hiz ise.

Our vizsitor glaanst withe sum aparrent cerprise at the lan’gwid, loun’ging
figgure
ov the man whoo had bene no dout depicted too him az the moast incicive
rezoner
and moast energettich agent in Urope. Hoamz sloly reyopend hiz ise and
looct
impaishently at hiz gigantic cliyent.

“If yor Madgesty wood condecend too state yor cace,” he remarct, “I shood
be better abel too advise u.”

The man sprang from hiz chare and paist up and down the roome in
uncontrolabel
agitaishon. Then, withe a geschure ov desperaishon, he toer the maasc from
hiz face
and herld it uppon the ground. “U ar rite,” he cride; “I am the King. Whi
shood I atempt too concele it?”

“Whi, indede?” mermerd Hoamz. “Yor Madgesty had not spoken befoer I
wauz aware
dhat I wauz adrescing Vil’helm Gotsriakh Cigghizmond von Ormstine,
Grand Juke ov
Cascel-Felstine, and hereditary King ov Bohemeyaa.”

“But u can understand,” ced our strainj vizsitor, citting doun wuns moer and paacing hiz hand over hiz hi white foerhed, “u can understand dhat I am not acustomd too doowing such biznes in mi one person. Yet the matter wauz so dellicate dhat I cood not confide it too an agent widhout pooting micelf in hiz pouwer. I hav cum incogneto from Praag for the perpoce ov consulting u.”

“Then, pra consult,” ced Hoamz, shutting hiz ise wuns moer.

“The facts ar breefly these: Sum five yeerz ago, juring a lengthy vizsit too Worsau, I made the aqwaintans ov the wel-none advenchures, Irene Adler. The name iz no dout familleyar too u.”

“Kiandly looc her up in mi index, Doctor,” mermerd Hoamz widhout opening hiz ise. For menny yeerz he had adopted a cistem ov docketing aul parragraafs concerning men and thhingz, so dhat it wauz difficult too name a subject or a person on which he cood not at wuns fernish informaishon. In this cace I found her biyograafy sandwich in betwene dhat ov a Hebru rabbi and dhat ov a staaf-comaander whoo had ritten a monnograaf uppon the depe-ce fishez.

“Let me ce!” ced Hoamz. “Hum! Born in Nu Gersy in the yere 1858. Contraalto—hum! Laa Scalaa, hum! Prima donna Impereyal Opperaa ov Worsau—yes! Retiard from operatic stage—haa! Livving in Lndon—qwite so! Yor Madgesty, az I understand, became entan’gheld withe this yung person, rote her sum compromising letterz, and iz nou desirous ov ghetting dhose letterz bac.”

“Preciasly so. But hou—”

“Wauz dhare a ceecret marrage?”

“Nun.”

“No legal paperz or certifficaits?”

“Nun.”

“Then I fale too follo yor Madgesty. If this yung person shood projuce her letterz for blacmaling or uther perpocez, hou iz she too proove dhare authhentiscity?”

“Dhare iz the riting.”

“Poo, poo! Forgery.”

“Mi private note-paper.”

“Stolen.”

“Mi one cele.”

“Immitated.”

“Mi fotograaf.”

“Baut.”

“We wer boath in the fotograaf.”

“O, dere! Dhat iz verry bad! Yor Madgesty haz indede comitted an indisreshon.”

"I wauz mad—insane."

"U hav compromiazd yorcelf cereyously."

"I wauz oanly Croun Prins then. I wauz yung. I am but thherty nou."

"It must be recuvverd."

"We hav tride and faild."

"Yor Madgesty must pa. It must be baut."

"She wil not cel."

"Stolen, then."

"Five atempts hav bene made. Twice berglarz in mi pa ransact her hous. Wuns we diverted her luggage when she travveld. Twice she haz bene walade.

Dhare haz bene no rezult."

"No cine ov it?"

"Absoluetly nun."

Hoamz laaft. "It iz qwite a pritty littel problem," ced he.

"But a verry cereyous wun too me," reternd the King reproachfooly.

"Verry, indede. And whaut duz she propose too doo withe the fotograaf?"

"Too ruwin me."

"But hou?"

"I am about too be marrede."

"So I hav herd."

"Too Clotild Loathman von Sax-Menin'gen, cecond dauter ov the King ov Scandinaveyaa. U ma no the strict principelz ov her fammily. She iz hercelf the verry sole ov dellicacy. A shaddo ov a dout az too mi conduct wood bring the matter too an end."

"And Irene Adler?"

"Threttenz too cend them the fotograaf. And she wil doo it. I no dhat she wil doo it. U doo not no her, but she haz a sole ov stele. She haz the face ov the moast butifool ov wimmen, and the miand ov the moast rezzolute ov men.

Raather dhan I shood marry anuther woomman, dhare ar no lengths too which she wood not go—nun."

"U ar shure dhat she haz not cent it yet?"

"I am shure."

"And whi?"

"Becauz she haz ced dhat she wood cend it on the da when the betroadhal wauz publicly proclaimd. Dhat wil be next Munda."

"O, then we hav thre dase yet," ced Hoamz withe a yaun. "Dhat iz verry forchunate, az I hav wun or too matterz ov importans too looc intoo just at prezsent. Yor Madgesty wil, ov coers, sta in Lundon for the prezsent?"

“Certainly. U wil fiand me at the Langam under the name ov the Count Von Cram.”

“Then I shal drop u a line too let u no hou we progres.”

“Pra doo so. I shal be aul anxiety.”

“Then, az too munny?”

“U hav cart blaansh.”

“Absoluetly?”

“I tel u dhat I wood ghiv wun ov the provvincez ov mi kingdom too hav dhat fotograaf.”

“And for prezsent expencez?”

The King tooc a hevvy shammy lether bag from under hiz cloke and lade it on the tabel.

“Dhare ar thre hundred poundz in goald and cevven hundred in noats,” he ced.

Hoamz scribbeld a recete uppon a shete ov hiz note-booc and handed it too him.

“And Mademwaaselz adres?” he aasct.

“Iz Briyony Loj, Cerpentine Avvenu, St. Jonz Wood.”

Hoamz tooc a note ov it. "Wun uther qweschon," ced he. "Wauz the fotograaf a cabbinet?"

"It wauz."

"Then, good-nite, yor Madgesty, and I trust dhat we shal soone hav sum good nuse for u. And good-nite, Wautson," he added, az the wheelz ov the roiyal broowam roald down the strete. "If u wil be good enuf too caul too-moro aafternoone at thre oacloc I shood like too chat this littel matter over withe u."

2.

At thre oacloc preciasly I wauz at Baker Strete, but Hoamz had not yet reternd. The landlady informd me dhat he had left the hous shortly aafter ate oacloc in the morning. I sat doun becide the fire, houwevver, withe the intenshon ov awating him, houwevver long he mite be. I wauz aulreddy deeply interested in hiz inqwiry, for, dho it wauz surrounded bi nun ov the grim and strainj fechuerz which wer asoasheyated withe the too criez which I hav aulreddy recorded, stil, the nachure ov the cace and the exaulted staishon ov hiz cliyent gave it a carracter ov its one. Indede, apart from the nachure ov the

investigaishon which mi frend had on hand, dhare wauz sumthhing in hiz
maasterly
graasp ov a cichuwaishon, and hiz kene, incicive rezoning, which made it a
plezhure too me too studdy hiz cistem ov werc, and too follo the qwic,
suttel
methodz bi which he dicentan'gheld the moast inextriccabel misterese. So
acustomd
wauz I too hiz invareyabel suxes dhat the verry pocibillity ov hiz falng
had
ceest too enter intoo mi hed.

It wauz cloce uppon foer befoer the doer opend, and a drunken-loocking
groome,
il-kempt and cide-whiskerd, withe an inflaimd face and disrepputabel
cloadhz,
wauct intoo the roome. Acustomd az I wauz too mi frendz amasing
pouwerz in the
uce ov disghisez, I had too looc thre tiamz befoer I wauz certane dhat it
wauz
indede he. Withe a nod he vannisht intoo the bedroome, whens he emerjd
in five
minnuets twede-suted and respectabel, az ov oald. Pootting hiz handz
intoo hiz
pockets, he strecht out hiz legz in frunt ov the fire and laaft hartily
for sum minnuets.

"Wel, reyaly!" he cride, and then he choact and laaft agane until he wauz
obliajd too li bac, limp and helples, in the chare.

"Whaut iz it?"

"Its qwite too funny. I am shure u cood nevver ghes hou I employd mi
morning, or whaut I ended bi doowing."

“I caant imadgine. I supose dhat u hav bene wauching the habbits, and perhaps the hous, ov Mis Irene Adler.”

“Qwite so; but the ceeqwel wauz raather unnuezhuwal. I wil tel u, houwevver. I left the hous a littel aafter ate oacloc this morning in the carracter ov a groome out ov werc. Dhare iz a wonderfool cimpathhy and fremasonry amung horcy men. Be wun ov them, and u wil no aul dhat dhare iz too no. I soone found Briyony Loj. It iz a bijou villaa, withe a garden at the bac, but bilt out in frunt rite up too the rode, too stoerese. Chub loc too the doer. Larj citting-roome on the rite cide, wel fernisht, withe long windose aulmoast too the floer, and dhose preposterous In’GLISH windo faacenerz which a chiald cood open. Behiand dhare wauz nuthhing remarlabel, save dhat the passage windo cood be reecht from the top ov the coche-hous. I wauct round it and exammiand it cloasly from evvery point ov vu, but widhout noting ennithhing els ov interest.

“I then lounjd doun the strete and found, az I expected, dhat dhare wauz a muse in a lane which runz doun bi wun waul ov the garden. I lent the oslerz a hand in rubbing doun dhare horcez, and receevd in exchainj tuppens, a glaas ov haaf-and-haaf, too filz ov shag tobacco, and az much informaishon az I cood desire about Mis Adler, too sa nuthhing ov haaf a duzsen uther pepel in the naborhood in whoome I wauz not in the leest interested, but whoose biyograafese I wauz compeld too liscen too.”

“And whaut ov Irene Adler?” I aasct.

“O, she haz ternd aul the menz hedz doun in dhat part. She iz the dainteyest thhing under a bonnet on this plannet. So sa the Cerpentine-muse, too a man. She livz qwiyetly, cingz at concerts, driavz out at five evvery da, and reternz at cevven sharp for dinner. Celdom gose out at uther tiamz, exept when she cingz.

Haz oanly wun male vizsitor, but a good dele ov him. He iz darc, handsum, and dashing, nevver caulz les dhan wuns a da, and often twice. He iz a Mr. Godfry

Norton, ov the Inner Tempel. Ce the advaantagez ov a cabman az a confidant.

Dha had drivven him home a duzsen tiamz from Cerpentine-muse, and nu aul about him. When I had liscend too aul dha had too tel, I began too wauc up and doun

nere Briyony Loj wuns moer, and too thhinc over mi plan ov campane.

“This Godfry Norton wauz evvidently an important factor in the matter.

He wauz a lauyer. Dhat sounded omminous. Whaut wauz the relaishon betwene them, and whaut the obgect ov hiz repeted vizsits? Wauz she hiz cliyent, hiz frend, or hiz mistres?

If the former, she had probbably traansferd the fotograaf too hiz keping. If the latter, it wauz les liacly. On the ishu ov this qweschon depended whether

I shood continnu mi werc at Briyony Loj, or tern mi atenshon too the gentelmanz chaimberz in the Tempel. It wauz a dellicate point, and it widend the

feeld ov mi inqwiry. I fere dhat I boer u withe these detailz, but I hav too

let u ce mi littel difficultese, if u ar too understand the cichuwaishon.”

“I am following u cloasly,” I aancerd.

“I wauz stil ballancing the matter in mi miand when a hansom cab drove up too Briyony Loj, and a gentelman sprang out. He wauz a remarcably handsum man, darc, aqwiline, and moostaasht—evvidently the man ov whoome I had herd. He apeerd too be in a grate hurry, shouted too the cabman too wate, and brusht paast the made whoo opend the doer withe the are ov a man whoo wauz thurroly at home.

“He wauz in the hous about haaf an our, and I cood cach glimpcez ov him in the windose ov the citting-roome, pacing up and down, tauking excitedly, and waving hiz armz. Ov her I cood ce nuthhing. Prezsently he emerjd, loocking even moer flurrede dhan befoer. Az he stept up too the cab, he poold a goald wauch from hiz pocket and looct at it earnestly, ‘Drive like the devvil,’ he shouted, ‘ferst too Groce & Hankese in Regent Strete, and then too the Cherch ov St. Monicaa in the Ejware Rode. Haaf a ghinny if u doo it in twenty minnuets!’

“Awa dha went, and I wauz just wondering whether I shood not doo wel too follo them when up the lane came a nete littel landau, the coachman withe hiz cote oanly haaf-buttond, and hiz ti under hiz ere, while aul the tagz ov hiz harnes wer sticking out ov the buckelz. It hadnt poold up befoer she shot

out ov the haul doer and intoo it. I oanly caut a glimps ov her at the moment,
but she wauz a luvly woomman, withe a face dhat a man mite di for.

“ ‘The Cherch ov St. Monicaa, Jon,’ she cride, ‘and haaf a sovverane if u reche it in twenty minnuets.’

“This wauz qwite too good too loose, Wautson. I wauz just ballancing whether I shood
run for it, or whether I shood perch behiand her landau when a cab came throo
the strete. The driver looct twice at such a shabby fare, but I jumpt in befoer he cood obgett. ‘The Cherch ov St. Monicaa,’ ced I, ‘and haaf a sovverane if u reche it in twenty minnuets.’ It wauz twenty-five minnuets too
twelv, and ov coers it wauz clere enuf whaut wauz in the wind.

“Mi cabby drove faast. I doant thhinc I evver drove faaster, but the utherz wer
dhare befoer us. The cab and the landau withe dhare stemming horcez wer in frunt ov the doer when I ariavd. I pade the man and hurrede intoo the cherch.
Dhare wauz not a sole dhare save the too whoome I had follode and a cerpliast
clergiman, whoo ceemd too be exposchulating withe them. Dha wer aul thre
standing in a not in frunt ov the aultar. I lounjd up the cide ile like enny uther iadler whoo haz dropt intoo a cherch. Suddenly, too mi cerprise, the thre
at the aultar faist round too me, and Godfry Norton came running az hard az he
cood toowordz me.

“ ‘Thanc God,’ he cride. ‘Ule doo. Cum! Cum!’

“ ‘Whaut then?’ I aasct.

“ ‘Cum, man, cum, oonly thre minnuets, or it woant be legal.’

“I wauz haaf-dragd up too the aultar, and befoer I nu whare I wauz I found micelf mumbling responcez which wer whisperd in mi ere, and vouching for thhingz ov which I nu nuthhing, and genneraly acisting in the ceure tying up ov Irene Adler, spinster, too Godfry Norton, batchelor. It wauz aul dun in an instant, and dhare wauz the gentelman thanking me on the wun cide and the lady on the uther, while the clergiman beemd on me in frunt. It wauz the moast preposterous posishon in which I evver found micelf in mi life, and it wauz thaut ov it dhat started me laafing just nou. It ceemz dhat dhare had bene sum informallity about dhare licens, dhat the clergiman absoluety refuezd too marry them widhout a witnes ov sum sort, and dhat mi lucky aperans saivd the briadgroom from havving too sally out intoo the streets in cerch ov a best man. The bride gave me a sovverane, and I mene too ware it on mi wauch chane in memmory ov the ocaizhon.”

“This iz a verry unexpected tern ov afaerz,” ced I; “and whaut then?”

“Wel, I found mi planz verry cereyously mennaist. It looct az if the pare mite take an imejate deparchure, and so necescitate verry prompt and energettich

mezhuertz on mi part. At the cherch doer, houwevver, dha cepparated, he driving bac too the Tempel, and she too her one hous. 'I shal drive out in the parc at five az uezhuwal,' she ced az she left him. I herd no moer. Dha drove awa in different direcshonz, and I went of too make mi one arainjments."

"Which ar?"

"Sum coald befe and a glaas ov bere," he aancerd, ringing the bel. "I hav bene too bizsy too thhinc ov foode, and I am liacly too be bizseyer stil this evening. Bi the wa, Doctor, I shal waunt yor co-operaishon."

"I shal be delited."

"U doant miand braking the lau?"

"Not in the leest."

"Nor running a chaans ov arest?"

"Not in a good cauz."

"O, the cauz iz exelent!"

"Then I am yor man."

"I wauz shure dhat I mite reli on u."

"But whaut iz it u wish?"

"When Mrs. Turner haz braut in the tra I wil make it clere too u. Nou," he ced az he ternd hun'grily on the cimpel fare dhat our landlady had provided,

"I must discuss it while I eat, for I have not much time. It is nearly five
now. In too ourz we must be on the scene of action. Miss Irene, or Madam,
rather, returns from her drive at seven. We must be at Briony Loj too
meet
her."

"And what then?"

"You must leave that to me. I have already arranged what is too oker. There
is
only one point on which I must insist. You must not interfere, with what
I
mean.
Do you understand?"

"I am to be neutral?"

"Too do nothing whatever. There will probably be some small
unpleasantness. Do
not join in it. It will end in my being conveyed into the house. For or five
minutes afterwards the sitting-room window will open. You are to station
yourself close to that open window."

"Yes."

"You are to watch me, for I will be visible to you."

"Yes."

"And when I raise my hand—so—you will throw into the room what I give you
too
throw, and will, at the same time, raise the cry of fire. You quite follow me?"

"Entirely."

“It iz nuthhing verry formiddabel,” he ced, taking a long cigar-shaipt role from
hiz pocket. “It iz an ordinary plummerz smoke-rocket, fitted withe a cap at
iather end too make it celf-liting. Yor taasc iz confiand too dhat. When u
rase yor cri ov fire, it wil be taken up bi qwite a number ov pepel. U
ma then wauc too the end ov the strete, and I wil rejoin u in ten minnuets. I
hope dhat I hav made micelf clere?”

“I am too remane nuetral, too ghet nere the windo, too wauch u, and at the
signal too thro in this obgett, then too rase the cri ov fire, and too wate u
at the corner ov the strete.”

“Preciasly.”

“Then u ma entiarly reli on me.”

“Dhat iz exelent. I thhinc, perhaps, it iz aulmoast time dhat I prepare for
the
nu role I hav too pla.”

He disapeerd intoo hiz bedroome and reternd in a fu minnuets in the
carracter
ov an ameyabel and cimpel-mianded Nonconformist clergiman. Hiz braud
blac hat,
hiz bagghy trouserz, hiz white ti, hiz cimpathhettic smile, and genneral
looc ov
pering and benevvolent cureyoscity wer such az Mr. Jon Hare alone cood
hav
eeqwald. It wauz not meerly dhat Hoamz chainjd hiz coschume. Hiz
expreshon,
hiz manner, hiz verry sole ceemd too vary withe evvery fresh part dhat he
ashuemd.
The stage lost a fine actor, even az ciyens lost an acute rezoner, when he
became a speshalist in crime.

It wauz a qworter paast cix when we left Baker Strete, and it stil waunted
ten
minnuets too the our when we found ourcelvz in Cerpentine Avvenu. It
wauz
aulreddy dusc, and the lamps wer just beying lited az we paist up and
doun in
frunt ov Briyony Loj, wating for the cumming ov its occupant. The hous
wauz
just such az I had picchuerd it from Sherloc Hoamz' succinct descriphon,
but
the locallity apeerd too be les private dhan I expected. On the contrary, for
a smaul strete in a qwiyet naborhood, it wauz remarcably animated.
Dhare wauz
a groope ov shabbily drest men smoking and laafing in a corner, a
cizzorz-griander withe hiz whele, too gardzmen whoo wer flerting withe a
ners-gherl, and cevveral wel-drest yung men whoo wer loun'ging up and
doun
withe cigarz in dhare mouths.

"U ce," remarct Hoamz, az we paist too and fro in frunt ov the hous, "this
marrage raather cimplifise matterz. The fotograaf becumz a dubbel-ejd
weppon nou. The chaancez ar dhat she wood be az avers too its beying
cene bi

Mr. Godfry Norton, az our cliyent iz too its cumming too the ise ov hiz
princes.

Nou the qweschon iz, Whare ar we too fiand the fotograaf?"

"Whare, indede?"

"It iz moast unliacly dhat she carrese it about withe her. It iz cabbinet cise.
Too larj for esy conceelment about a woommanz dres. She nose dhat the
King
iz capabel ov havving her walade and cercht. Too atemptz ov the sort hav

aulreddy bene made. We ma take it, then, dhat she duz not carry it about
withe
her.”

“Whare, then?”

“Her banker or her lauyer. Dhare iz dhat dubbel pocibility. But I am
incliand
too thhinc niather. Wimmen ar natchuraly ceecretive, and dha like too doo
dhare one
cecreting. Whi shood she hand it over too enniwun els? She cood trust her
one
garjanship, but she cood not tel whaut indirect or polittical influwens mite
be braut too bare uppon a biznes man. Beciadz, remember dhat she had
rezolvd
too use it within a fu dase. It must be whare she can la her handz uppon it.
It
must be in her one hous.”

“But it haz twice bene bergheld.”

“Pshau! Dha did not no hou too looc.”

“But hou wil u looc?”

“I wil not looc.”

“Whaut then?”

“I wil ghet her too sho me.”

“But she wil refuse.”

“She wil not be abel too. But I here the rumbel ov wheelz. It iz her carrage.

Nou carry out mi orderz too the letter.”

Az he spoke the gleme ov the ciadliats ov a carrage came round the kerv ov the avvenu. It wauz a smart littel landau which ratteld up too the doer ov Briyony

Loj. Az it poold up, wun ov the lofing men at the corner dasht forword too open the doer in the hope ov ernaling a copper, but wauz elbode awa bi anuther

lofer, whoo had rusht up withe the same intenshon. A feers qworel broke out,

which wauz increest bi the too gardzmen, whoo tooc ciadz withe wun ov the

loun'gerz, and bi the cizzorz-griander, whoo wauz eeqwaly hot uppon the uther cide.

A blo wauz struc, and in an instant the lady, whoo had stept from her carrage, wauz the center ov a littel not ov flusht and strugling men, whoo struc savvaijly at eche uther withe dhare fists and stix. Hoamz dasht intoo the croud too protect the lady; but, just az he reecht her, he gave a cri and dropt too the ground, withe the blod running frely down hiz face. At hiz faul

the gardzmen tooc too dhare heelz in wun direcshon and the loun'gerz in the

uther, while a number ov better drest pepel, whoo had waucht the scuffel widhout taking part in it, crouded in too help the lady and too atend too the

injuerd man. Irene Adler, az I wil stil caul her, had hurrede up the steps; but she stood at the top withe her superb figgure outliand against the liats ov

the haul, loocking bac intoo the strete.

“Iz the poor gentelman much hert?” she aasct.

“He iz ded,” cride cevveral voicez.

“No, no, dhaerz life in him!” shouted anuther. “But hele be gon befoer u can ghet him too hospital.”

“Hese a brave fello,” ced a woomman. “Dha wood hav had the ladese pers and
wauch if it hadnt bene for him. Dha wer a gang, and a ruf wun, too. Aa,
hese breething nou.”

“He caant li in the strete. Ma we bring him in, marm?”

“Shuerly. Bring him intoo the citting-roome. Dhare iz a cumfortabel sofaa.
This
wa, plese!”

Sloly and sollemly he wauz boern intoo Briyony Loj and lade out in the
principal roome, while I stil observd the procedingz from mi poast bi the
windo. The lamps had bene lit, but the bliandz had not bene draun, so dhat
I
cood ce Hoamz az he la uppon the couch. I doo not no whether he wauz
ceezd
withe compuncshon at dhat moment for the part he wauz playing, but I no
dhat I
nevver felt moer hartily ashaimd ov micelf in mi life dhan when I sau the
butifool crechure against whoome I wauz conspiring, or the grace and
kiandlines
withe which she wated uppon the injuerd man. And yet it wood be the
blackest
tretchery too Hoamz too drau bac nou from the part which he had
intrusted too
me. I hardend mi hart, and tooc the smoke-rocket from under mi ulster.
Aafter
aul, I thaut, we ar not injuring her. We ar but preventing her from
injuring anuther.

Hoamz had sat up upon the couch, and I sau him moashon like a man
whoo iz in
nede ov are. A made rusht acros and thru open the windo. At the same
instant I sau him rase hiz hand and at the cignal I tost mi rocket intoo the
roome withe a cri ov "Fire!" The werd wauz no sooner out ov mi mouth
dhan the
whole croud ov spectatorz, wel drest and il—gentelmen, oslerz, and
cervant
maidz—joind in a genneral shreke ov "Fire!" Thhic cloudz ov smoke kerld
throo the roome and out at the open windo. I caut a glimps ov rushing
figguerz, and a moment later the vois ov Hoamz from within ashuring
them dhat
it wauz a fauls alarm. Slipping throo the shouting croud I made mi wa too
the
corner ov the strete, and in ten minnuets wauz rejoist too fiand mi frendz
arm
in mine, and too ghet awa from the cene ov uproer. He wauct swiftly and
in
cilens for sum fu minnuets until we had ternd down wun ov the qwiyet
streets
which lede toowordz the Ejware Rode.

"U did it verry niasly, Doctor," he remarct. "Nuthhing cood hav bene
better.

It iz aul rite."

"U hav the fotograaf?"

"I no whare it iz."

"And hou did u fiand out?"

"She shode me, az I toald u she wood."

"I am stil in the darc."

"I doo not wish too make a mystery," ced he, laafing. "The matter wauz perfectly cimpel. U, ov coers, sau dhat evveriwun in the strete wauz an acumpllice. Dha wer aul en'gajjd for the evening."

"I ghest az much."

"Then, when the rou broke out, I had a littel moist red paint in the paalm ov mi hand. I rusht forword, fel doun, clapt mi hand too mi face, and became a pitchous spektakel. It iz an oald tric."

"Dhat aulso I cood fadhom."

"Then dha carrede me in. She wauz bound too hav me in. Whaut els cood she doo? And intoo her citting-roome, which wauz the verry roome which I suspected. It la betwene dhat and her bedroome, and I wauz determiand too ce which. Dha lade me on a couch, I moashond for are, dha wer compeld too open the windo, and u had yor chaans."

"Hou did dhat help u?"

"It wauz aul-important. When a woomman thhinx dhat her hous iz on fire, her instinct iz at wuns too rush too the thhing which she valluse moast. It iz a perfectly overpouwering impuls, and I hav moer dhan wuns taken advantage ov

it. In the case of the Darlington Substitution Scandal it was of use to me, and also in the Arnsworth Case business. A married woman grabbed at her baby; an unmarried woman reached for her jewel-box. Now it was clear to me that our lady of too-day had nothing in the house more precious to her than what we are in quest of. She would rush to secure it. The alarm of fire was admirably done.

The smoke and shouting were enough to shake nerves of steel. She responded but foolishly. The photograph is in a recess behind a sliding panel just above the right bell-pool. She was there in an instant, and I caught a glimpse of it as she had it out. When I cried out that it was a false alarm, she replaced it, glanced at the rocket, rushed from the room, and I have not seen her since. I rose, and, making my excuse, escaped from the house. I hesitated whether to attempt to secure the photograph at once; but the coachman had come in, and as he was watching me narrowly, it seemed safer to wait. A little over-precipitation may ruin all."

"And now?" I asked.

"Our quest is practically finished. I shall call with the King to-morrow, and with you, if you care to come with us. We will be shown into the sitting-room to wait for the lady, but it is probable that when she comes she may find neither us nor the photograph. It may be a satisfaction to His Majesty to regain it with his own hands."

"And when will you call?"

"At eight in the morning. She will not be up, so that we shall have a clear field. Besides, we must be prompt, for this marriage may mean a complete change

in her life and habbits. I must wire too the King widhout dela."

We had reecht Baker Strete and had stopt at the doer. He wauz cerching hiz pockets for the ke when sumwun paacing ced:

"Good-nite, Mister Sherloc Hoamz."

Dhare wer cevveral pepel on the paivment at the time, but the greting apeerd too cum from a slim ueth in an ulster whoo had hurrede bi.

"Ive herd dhat vois befoer," ced Hoamz, staring down the dimly lit strete.

"Nou, I wunder whoo the juce dhat cood hav bene."

3.

I slept at Baker Strete dhat nite, and we wer en'gaijd uppon our toast and coffy in the morning when the King ov Bohemeyaa rusht intoo the roome.

"U hav reyaly got it!" he cride, graasping Sherloc Hoamz bi iather shoalder and loocking egherly intoo hiz face.

"Not yet."

"But u hav hoaps?"

"I hav hoaps."

"Then, cum. I am aul impaishens too be gon."

"We must hav a cab."

"No, mi broowam iz wating."

"Then dhat wil cimplifi matterz." We decended and started of wuns moer
for
Briyony Loj.

"Irene Adler iz marrede," remarct Hoamz.

"Marrede! When?"

"Yesterda."

"But too whoome?"

"Too an In'glisch lauyer naimd Norton."

"But she cood not luv him."

"I am in hoaps dhat she duz."

"And whi in hoaps?"

"Becauz it wood spare yor Madgesty aul fere ov fuchure anoiyans. If the
lady
luvz her huzband, she duz not luv yor Madgesty. If she duz not luv yor
Madgesty, dhare iz no rezon whi she shood interfere withe yor Madgestese
plan."

"It iz tru. And yet—! Wel! I wish she had bene ov mi one staishon! Whaut a

qwene she wood hav made!" He relapst intoo a moody cilens, which wauz not broken until we dru up in Serpentine Avvenu.

The doer ov Briyony Loj wauz open, and an elderly woomman stood uppon the steps. She waucht us withe a sardonnic i az we stept from the broowam.

"Mr. Sherloc Hoamz, I beleve?" ced she.

"I am Mr. Hoamz," aancerd mi companyon, loocking at her withe a qweschoning and raather starteld gase.

"Indede! Mi mistres toald me dhat u wer liacly too caul. She left this morning withe her huzband bi the 5:15 trane from Charing Cros for the Continent."

"Whaut!" Sherloc Hoamz staggherd bac, white withe shagrin and cerprise. "Doo u mene dhat she haz left In'gland?"

"Nevver too retern."

"And the paperz?" aasct the King hoersly. "Aul iz lost."

"We shal ce." He poosht paast the cervant and rusht intoo the drauwing-roome, follode bi the King and micelf. The fernichure wauz scatterd about in evvery direcshon, withe dismanteld shelvz and open drauwerz, az if the lady had hurreedly ransact them befoer her flite. Hoamz rusht at the bel-pool, toer bac a smaull sliding shutter, and, plun'ging in hiz hand, poold out a fotograaf and a letter. The fotograaf wauz ov Irene Adler hercelf in evening

dres, the letter wauz superscriabd too “Sherloc Hoamz, Esq. Too be left til cauld for.” Mi frend toer it open, and we aul thre red it tooghether. It wauz dated at midnite ov the preceding nite and ran in this wa:

“MI DERE MR. SHERLOC HOAMZ,—U reyaly did it verry wel. U tooc me in compleetly. Until aafter the alarm ov fire, I had not a suspishon. But then, when I found hou I had betrade micelf, I began too thhinc. I had bene wornd against u munths ago. I had bene toald dhat, if the King emploid an agent, it wood certainly be u. And yor adres had bene ghivven me. Yet, withe aul this, u made me revele whaut u waunted too no. Even aafter I became suspishous, I found it hard too thhinc evil ov such a dere, kiand oald clergiman. But, u no, I hav bene traind az an actres micelf. Male coschume iz nuthhing nu too me. I often take advaantage ov the fredom which it ghivz. I cent Jon, the coachman, too wauch u, ran upstaerz, got intoo mi wauking cloadhz, az I caul them, and came doun just az u departed.

“Wel, I follode u too yor doer, and so made shure dhat I wauz reyaly an obgett ov interest too the cellebrated Mr. Sherloc Hoamz. Then I, raather imprudently, wisht u good-nite, and started for the Tempel too ce mi huzband.

“We boath thaut the best rezoers wauz flite, when pershude bi so
formiddabel an
antaggonist; so u wil fiand the nest empty when u caul too-moro. Az too
the
fotograaf, yor cliyent ma rest in pece. I luv and am luvd bi a better man
dhan he. The King ma doo whaut he wil widhout hindrans from wun
whoome he haz
cruwely rongd. I kepe it oanly too saifgard micelf, and too preserv a
weppon
which wil aulwase cecure me from enny steps which he mite take in the
fuchure. I
leve a fotograaf which he mite care too poses; and I remane, dere Mr.
Sherloc Hoamz,

“Verry truly yorz,

“Irene Norton, ne Adler .”

“Whaut a woomman—o, whaut a woomman!” cride the King ov
Bohemeyaa, when we had aul
thre red this episcel. “Did I not tel u hou qwic and rezzolute she wauz?
Wood she not hav made an admirabel qwene? Iz it not a pittty dhat she
wauz not
on mi levvel?”

“From whaut I hav cene ov the lady, she ceemz, indede, too be on a verry
different levvel too yor Madgesty,” ced Hoamz coaldly. “I am sory dhat I
hav

not bene abel too bring yor Madgestese biznes too a moer suxesfool concluezhon."

"On the contrary, mi dere cer," cride the King; "nuthhing cood be moer suxesfool. I no dhat her werd iz inviyolate. The fotograaf iz nou az safe az if it wer in the fire."

"I am glad too here yor Madgesty sa so."

"I am imensly indetted too u. Pra tel me in whaut wa I can reword u. This ring—" He slipt an emmerald snake ring from hiz fin'gher and held it out uppon the paalm ov hiz hand.

"Yor Madgesty haz sumthhing which I shood vallu even moer hily," ced Hoamz.

"U hav but too name it."

"This fotograaf!"

The King staerd at him in amaizment.

"Ireenz fotograaf!" he cride. "Certainly, if u wish it."

"I thanc yor Madgesty. Then dhare iz no moer too be dun in the matter. I hav the onnor too wish u a verry good morning." He boud, and, terning awa widhout observing the hand which the King had strecht out too him, he cet of in mi cumpany for hiz chaimberz.

And dhat wauz hou a grate scandal threttend too afect the kingdom ov Bohemeyaa,
and hou the best planz ov Mr. Sherloc Hoamz wer beten bi a woommanz wit. He
uest too make merry over the clevvernes ov wimmen, but I hav not herd
him doo it
ov late. And when he speex ov Irene Adler, or when he referz too her
fotograaf, it iz aulwase under the onnorabel titel ov the woomman.

2

The Red-Hedded Leghe

I had cauld uppon mi frend, Mr. Sherloc Hoamz, wun da in the autum ov
laast
yere and found him in depe conversaishon withe a verry stout, florid-faist,
elderly gentelman withe firy red hare. Withe an apollogy for mi intruezhon,
I wauz
about too widhdrau when Hoamz poold me abruptly intoo the roome and
cloazd the
doer behiand me.

“U cood not poscibly hav cum at a better time, mi dere Wautson,” he ced

corjaly.

“I wauz afrade dhat u wer en‘gajd.”

“So I am. Verry much so.”

“Then I can wate in the next roome.”

“Not at aul. This gentelman, Mr. Wilson, haz bene mi partner and helper in
menny
ov mi moast suxesfool cacez, and I hav no dout dhat he wil be ov the
utmoast
uce too me in yorz aulso.”

The stout gentelman haaf rose from hiz chare and gave a bob ov greting,
withe a
qwic littel qweschoning glaans from hiz smaul fat-encerkeld ise.

“Tri the cetty,” ced Hoamz, relapcing intoo hiz armchare and pooting hiz
fin‘ghertips tooghether, az wauz hiz custom when in judishal muidz. “I no,
mi dere
Wautson, dhat u share mi luv ov aul dhat iz bizar and outcide the
convenshonz and humdrum rootene ov evverida life. U hav shone yor
relish
for it bi the enthuseyazm which haz prompted u too cronnikel, and, if u wil
excuse mi saying so, sumwhaut too embellish so menny ov mi one littel
advenchuerz.”

“Yor cacez hav indede bene ov the gratest interest too me,” I observd.

“U wil remember dhat I remarct the uther da, just befoer we went intoo the
verry cimpel problem presented bi Mis Mary Sutherland, dhat for strainj
efects

and extraordinary combinaishonz we must go too life itcelf, which iz
aulwase far
moer daring dhan enny effort ov the imaginaishon."

"A proposishon which I tooc the libberty ov douting."

"U did, Doctor, but nun the les u must cum round too mi vu, for
utherwise I shal kepe on piling fact uppon fact on u until yor rezon braix
doun under them and acnollegez me too be rite. Nou, Mr. Jabez Wilson
here haz
bene good enuf too caul uppon me this morning, and too beghin a
narrative which
prommicez too be wun ov the moast cin'gular which I hav liscend too for
sum time.
U hav herd me remarc dhat the strain'gest and moast uneke thhingz ar
verry
often conected not withe the larger but withe the smauler criamz, and
ocaizhonal, indede, whare dhare iz roome for dout whether enny
pozitive crime
haz bene comitted. Az far az I hav herd, it iz imposcibel for me too sa
whether the prezsent cace iz an instans ov crime or not, but the coers ov
events iz certainly among the moast cin'gular dhat I hav evver liscend too.
Perhaps, Mr. Wilson, u wood hav the grate kiandnes too recomens yor
narrative. I aasc u not meerly becauz mi frend Dr. Wautson haz not herd
the
opening part but aulso becauz the peculeyar nachure ov the stoery maix
me ancshous
too hav evvery poscibel detale from yor lips. Az a rule, when I hav herd
sum
slite indicaishon ov the coers ov events, I am abel too ghide micelf bi the
thouzandz ov uther cimmilar cacez which oker too mi memmory. In the
prezsent
instans I am foerst too admit dhat the facts ar, too the best ov mi belefe,
uneke."

The poertly cliyent puft out hiz chest withe an aperans ov sum littel pride and poold a derty and rinkeld nuespaper from the incide pocket ov hiz graitcote. Az he glaanst doun the advertiazment collum, withe hiz hed thrust

forword and the paper flattend out uppon hiz ne, I tooc a good looc at the man and endevvord, aafter the fashon ov mi companyon, too rede the indicaishonz

which mite be presented bi hiz dres or aperans.

I did not gane verry much, houwevver, bi mi inspecshon. Our vizsitor boer evvery

marc ov beying an avverage commonplace Brittish traidzman, obece, pompous, and

slo. He woer raather bagghy gra shepherdz chec trouserz, a not over-clene blac froc-cote, unbuttond in the frunt, and a drab waistcote withe a hevvy braacy Albert chane, and a sqware peerst bit ov mettal dan'gling doun az an

ornament. A frade top-hat and a faded broun overcote withe a rinkeld velvet

collar la uppon a chare becide him. Aultooghether, looc az I wood, dhare wauz

nuthhing remarcabel about the man save hiz blasing red hed, and the expreshon

ov extreme shagrin and discontent uppon hiz fechuerz.

Sherloc Hoamz' qwic i tooc in mi ocupaishon, and he shooc hiz hed withe a smile az he notiast mi qweschoning glaancez. "Beyond the obveyous facts dhat he

haz at sum time dun mannuwal labor, dhat he taix snuf, dhat he iz a Fremason, dhat he haz bene in Chinaa, and dhat he haz dun a concidderabel

amount ov riting laitley, I can dejuce nuthhing els."

Mr. Jabez Wilson started up in hiz chare, withe hiz foerfin'gher uppon the paper,
but hiz ise uppon mi companyon.

"Hou, in the name ov good-forchune, did u no aul dhat, Mr. Hoamz?" he aasct. "Hou did u no, for exaampel, dhat I did mannuwal labor. Its az tru az gospel, for I began az a ships carpenter."

"Yor handz, mi dere cer. Yor rite hand iz qwite a cise larger dhan yor left. U hav werct withe it, and the muscelz ar moer devellopt."

"Wel, the snuf, then, and the Fremasonry?"

"I woant insult yor intelligens bi telling u hou I red dhat, espeshaly az, raather against the strict ruelz ov yor order, u use an arc-and-cumpas brestpin."

"Aa, ov coers, I forgot dhat. But the riting?"

"Whaut els can be indicated bi dhat rite cuf so verry shiny for five inchez, and the left wun withe the smuithe pach nere the elbo whare u rest it uppon the desc?"

"Wel, but Chinaa?"

"The fish dhat u hav tatoode imejaitly abuv yor rite rist cood oanly hav bene dun in Chinaa. I hav made a smaul studdy ov tatoos and hav even contribbuted too the litterachure ov the subject. Dhat tric ov staning the fishes' scailz ov a dellicate pinc iz qwite peculeyar too Chinaa. When, in adishon, I ce a Chinese coin hanging from yor wauch-chane, the matter becumz even moer cimpel."

Mr. Jabez Wilson laaft hevvely. "Wel, I nevvver!" ced he. "I thaut at ferst dhat u had dun sumthhing clevver, but I ce dhat dhare wauz nuthhing in it aafter aul."

"I beghin too thhinc, Wautson," ced Hoamz, "dhat I make a mistake in explaning.

'Omn ignotum pro magnifico,' u no, and mi poor littel reputaishon, such az it iz, wil suffer shiprec if I am so candid. Can u not fiand the advertiazment, Mr. Wilson?"

"Yes, I hav got it nou," he aancerd withe hiz thhic red fin'gher plaanted haafwa doun the collum. "Here it iz. This iz whaut began it aul. U just red it for yorcelf, cer."

I tooc the paper from him and red az follose:

"TOO THE RED-HEDDED LEGHE: On acount ov the beqwest ov the late Esekeyah

Hopkinz, ov Lebanon, Pencilvainyaa, U. S. A., dhare iz nou anuther vacancy open

which entitelz a member ov the Leghe too a sallary ov 4 a weke for puerly nomminal cervicez. Aul red-hedded men whoo ar sound in boddy and miand and abuv

the age ov twenty-wun yeerz, ar elligibel. Apli in person on Munda, at elevven

oacloc, too Duncan Ros, at the officez ov the Leghe, 7 Poaps Coert, Flete Strete."

"Whaut on erth duz this mene?" I ejacculated aafter I had twice red over the extrordinary anounsment.

Hoamz chuckeld and riggheld in hiz chare, az wauz hiz habbit when in hi

spirrits. "It iz a littel of the beten trac, iznt it?" ced he. "And nou, Mr. Wilson, of u go at scrach and tel us aul about yorcelf, yor hous'hoald, and the efect which this advertiazment had uppon yor forchuenz. U wil ferst make a note, Doctor, ov the paper and the date."

"It iz The Morning Cronnikel ov Aipril 27, 1890. Just too munths ago."

"Verry good. Nou, Mr. Wilson?"

"Wel, it iz just az I hav bene telling u, Mr. Sherloc Hoamz," ced Jabez Wilson, mopping hiz foerhed; "I hav a smaual paunbrokerz biznes at Coberg Sqware, nere the City. Its not a verry larj afare, and ov late yeerz it haz not dun moer dhan just ghiv me a livving. I uest too be abel too kepe too acistants, but nou I oonly kepe wun; and I wood hav a job too pa him but dhat he iz willing too cum for haaf wagez so az too lern the biznes."

"Whaut iz the name ov this obliging ueth?" aasct Sherloc Hoamz.

"Hiz name iz Vincent Spaulding, and hese not such a ueth, iather. Its hard too sa hiz age. I shood not wish a smarter acistant, Mr. Hoamz; and I no verry wel dhat he cood better himcelf and ern twice whaut I am abel too ghiv him.

But, aafter aul, if he iz sattisfide, whi shood I poot ideyaaz in hiz hed?"

"Whi, indede? U ceme moast forchunate in havving an emploiya whoo cumz under the fool market price. It iz not a common expereyens amung employerz in this age. I doant no dhat yor acistant iz not az remarcabel az yor advertiazment."

"O, he haz hiz faults, too," ced Mr. Wilson. "Nevver wauz such a fello for

fotografy. Snapping awa withe a cammeraa when he aut too be improving
hiz
miand, and then diving doun intoo the cellar like a rabbit intoo its hole too
devellop hiz picchuerz. Dhat iz hiz mane fault, but on the whole hese a
good
werker. Dhaerz no vice in him.”

“He iz stil withe u, I prezhume?”

“Yes, cer. He and a gherl ov foertene, whoo duz a bit ov cimpel coocking
and
keeps the place clene—dhats aul I hav in the hous, for I am a widdower
and
nevver had enny fammily. We liv verry qwiyetly, cer, the thre ov us; and we
kepe a
roofe over our hedz and pa our dets, if we doo nuthhing moer.

“The ferst thhing dhat poot us out wauz dhat advertiazment. Spaulding, he
came
doun intoo the office just this da ate weex, withe this verry paper in hiz
hand, and he cez:

“ ‘I wish too the Lord, Mr. Wilson, dhat I wauz a red-hedded man.’

“ ‘Whi dhat?’ I aasx.

“ ‘Whi,’ cez he, ‘heerz anuther vacancy on the Leghe ov the Red-hedded
Men.

Its werth qwite a littel forchune too enny man whoo ghets it, and I
understand dhat
dhare ar moer vacancese dhan dhare ar men, so dhat the trustese ar at
dhare
wits’ end whaut too doo withe the munny. If mi hare wood oanly chainj
cullor,

heerz a nice littel crib aul reddy for me too step intoo.'

" 'Whi, whaut iz it, then?' I aasct. U ce, Mr. Hoamz, I am a verry sta-at-home man, and az mi biznes came too me insted ov mi havving too go too it, I wauz often weex on end widhout pootting mi foot over the doer-mat. In dhat wa I didnt no much ov whaut wauz gowing on outcide, and I wauz aulwase glad ov a bit ov nuse.

" 'Hav u nevver herd ov the Leghe ov the Red-hedded Men?' he aasct withe hiz ise open.

" 'Nevver.'

" 'Whi, I wunder at dhat, for u ar elligibel yorcelf for wun ov the vacancese.'

" 'And whaut ar dha werth?' I aasct.

" 'O, meerly a cuppel ov hundred a yere, but the werc iz slite, and it nede not interfere verry much withe wunz uther ocupaishonz.'

"Wel, u can esily thhinc dhat dhat made me pric up mi eerz, for the biznes haz not bene over good for sum yeerz, and an extraa cuppel ov hundred wood hav bene verry handy.

" 'Tel me aul about it,' ced I.

" 'Wel,' ced he, showing me the advertiazment, 'u can ce for yorcelf dhat the Leghe haz a vacancy, and dhare iz the adres whare u shood apli for

particularz. Az far az I can make out, the Leghe wauz founded bi an
Amerrican
milleyonare, Esekeyah Hopkinz, whoo wauz verry peculeyar in hiz wase.
He wauz himcelf
red-hedded, and he had a grate cimpathhy for aul red-hedded men; so,
when he
dide, it wauz found dhat he had left hiz enormous forchune in the handz
ov
trustese, withe instrucshonz too apli the interest too the providing ov esy
berths too men whoose hare iz ov dhat cullor. From aul I here it iz splendid
pa
and verry littel too doo.'

" 'But,' ced I, 'dhare wood be milleyonz ov red-hedded men whoo wood
apli.'

" 'Not so menny az u mite thhinc,' he aancerd. 'U ce it iz reyaly confiand
too Lundonerz, and too grone men. This Amerrican had started from
Lundon when he
wauz yung, and he waunted too doo the oald toun a good tern. Then,
agane, I hav
herd it iz no uce yor aplying if yor hare iz lite red, or darc red, or
ennithhing but reyaly brite, blasing, firy red. Nou, if u caerd too apli, Mr.
Wilson, u wood just wauc in; but perhaps it wood hardly be werth yor
while
too poot yorcelf out ov the wa for the sake ov a fu hundred poundz.'

"Nou, it iz a fact, gentelmen, az u ma ce for yorcelvz, dhat mi hare iz
ov a verry fool and rich tint, so dhat it ceemd too me dhat if dhare wauz
too be
enny competishon in the matter I stood az good a chaans az enny man dhat
I had
evver met. Vincent Spaulding ceemd too no so much about it dhat I thaut
he

mite proove uesfool, so I just orderd him too poot up the shutterz for the da and too cum rite awa withe me. He wauz verry willing too hav a hollida, so we shut the biznes up and started of for the adres dhat wauz ghivven us in the advertiazment.

“I nevver hope too ce such a cite az dhat agane, Mr. Hoamz. From north, south, east, and west evvery man whoo had a shade ov red in hiz hare had trumpt intoo the citty too aancer the advertiazment. Flete Strete wauz choact withe red-hedded foke, and Poaps Coert looct like a costerz oranj barro. I shood not hav thaut dhare wer so menny in the whole cuntry az wer braut tooghether bi dhat cin’ghel advertiazment. Evvery shade ov cullor dha wer—strau, lemmon, oranj, bric, Irish-cetter, livver, cla; but, az Spaulding ced, dhare wer not menny whoo had the reyal vivvid flame-cullord tint. When I sau hou menny wer wating, I wood hav ghivven it up in despare; but Spaulding wood not here ov it. Hou he did it I cood not imadgine, but he poosht and poold and butted until he got me throo the croud, and rite up too the steps which led too the office. Dhare wauz a dubbel streme uppon the stare, sum gowing up in hope, and sum cumming bac degeted; but we wejd in az wel az we cood and soone found ourcelvz in the office.”

“Yor expereyens haz bene a moast entertaning wun,” remarct Hoamz az hiz cliyent pauzd and refresht hiz memmory withe a huge pinch ov snuf. “Pra continnu yor verry interesting staitment.”

“Dhare wauz nuthhing in the office but a cuppel ov wooden chaerz and a dele

tabel, behiand which sat a smaull man withe a hed dhat wauz even redder dhan mine.

He ced a fu werdz too eche candidate az he came up, and then he aulwase mannajd

too fiand sum fault in them which wood disqwaulifi them. Ghetting a vacancy did

not ceme too be such a verry esy matter, aafter aul. Houwevver, when our tern came

the littel man wauz much moer favorabel too me dhan too enny ov the utherz, and he

cloazd the doer az we enterd, so dhat he mite hav a private werd withe us.

“ ‘This iz Mr. Jabez Wilson,’ ced mi acistant, ‘and he iz willing too fil a vacancy in the Leghe.’

“ ‘And he iz admirably suted for it,’ the uther aancerd. ‘He haz evvery reqwiarment. I canot recaul when I hav cene ennithhing so fine.’ He tooc a step

baqword, coct hiz hed on wun cide, and gaizd at mi hare until I felt qwite bashfool. Then suddenly he plunjed forword, rung mi hand, and con’gratchulated me wormly on mi suxes.

“ ‘It wood be injustice too hezsitate,’ ced he. ‘U wil, houwevver, I am shure, excuse me for taking an obveyous precaushon.’ Withe dhat he ceezd mi hare in

boath hiz handz, and tugd until I yeld withe the pane. ‘Dhare iz wauter in yor ise,’ ced he az he releest me. ‘I perceve dhat aul iz az it shood be.

But we hav too be caerfool, for we hav twice bene deceevd bi wigz and wuns bi

paint. I cood tel u tailz ov coblerz wax which wood disgust u withe

human nature.' He stepped over to the window and shouted through it at the top
of his voice that the vacancy was filled. A groan of disappointment came up
from below, and the folk all drifted away in different directions until there
was not a red-head to be seen except mine and that of the manager.

" 'My name,' said he, 'is Mr. Duncan Ross, and I am myself won over the
pensioners upon the fund left by our noble benefactor. Are you a married
man,
Mr. Wilson? Have you a family?'

"I answered that I had not.

"His face fell immediately.

" 'Dear me!' he said gravely, 'that is very curious indeed! I am sorry too
here
you say that. The fund was, of course, for the propagation and spread of the
red-heads as well as for their maintenance. It is exceedingly unfortunate that
you should be a bachelor.'

"My face lengthened at this, Mr. Hoams, for I thought that I was not too
far from the vacancy after all; but after thinking it over for a few minutes he said
that it would be all right.

" 'In the case of another,' said he, 'the objection might be fatal, but we must
stretch a point in favor of a man with such a head over his ears as yours. When
shall you be able to enter upon your new duties?'

" 'Well, it is a little awkward, for I have a business already,' said I.

" 'Oh, never mind about that, Mr. Wilson!' said Vincent Spaulding. 'I
should be
able to look after that for you.'

“ ‘Whaut wood be the ourz?’ I aasct.

“ ‘Ten too too.’

“Nou a paunbrokerz biznes iz moastly dun ov an evening, Mr. Hoamz, espeshaly Thherzda and Frida evening, which iz just befoer pa-da; so it wood sute me verry wel too ern a littel in the morningz. Beciadz, I nu dhat mi acistant wauz a good man, and dhat he wood ce too ennithhing dhat ternd up.

“ ‘Dhat wood sute me verry wel,’ ced I. ‘And the pa?’

“ ‘Iz 4 a weke.’

“ ‘And the werc?’

“ ‘Iz puerly nomminal.’

“ ‘Whaut doo u caul puerly nomminal?’

“ ‘Wel, u hav too be in the office, or at leest in the bilding, the whole time. If u leve, u forfeete yor whole posishon forevver. The wil iz verry clere uppon dhat point. U doant compli withe the condishonz if u buj from the office juring dhat time.’

“ ‘Its oanly foer ourz a da, and I shood not thhinc ov leving,’ ced I.

“ ‘No excuce wil avale,’ ced Mr. Duncan Ros; ‘niather cicnes nor biznes nor ennithhing els. Dhare u must sta, or u loose yor billet.’

“ ‘And the werc?’

“ ‘Iz too cobby out the Enciclopedjaa Britannicaa. Dhare iz the ferst vollume ov it in dhat pres. U must fiand yor one inc, penz, and blotting-paper, but we provide this tabel and chare. Wil u be reddy too-moro?’

“ ‘Certainly,’ I aancerd.

“ ‘Then, good-bi, Mr. Jabez Wilson, and let me con’gratchulate u wuns moer on the important posishon which u hav bene forchunate enuf too gane.’ He boud me out ov the roome and I went home withe mi acistant, hardly nowing whaut too sa or doo, I wauz so pleezd at mi one good forchune.

“Wel, I thaut over the matter aul da, and bi evening I wauz in lo spirrits agane; for I had qwite perswaded micelf dhat the whole afare must be sum grate hoax or fraud, dho whaut its obgett mite be I cood not imadgine. It ceemd aultooghether paast belefe dhat enniwun cood make such a wil, or dhat dha wood pa such a sum for doowing ennithhing so cimpel az coppeying out the Enciclopedjaa Britannicaa. Vincent Spaulding did whaut he cood too chere me up, but bi bedtime I had rezond micelf out ov the whole thhing. Houwevver, in the morning I determiand too hav a looc at it ennihou, so I baut a penny bottel ov inc, and withe a qwil-pen, and cevven sheets ov fuilscap paper, I started of for Poaps Coert.

“Wel, too mi cerprise and delite, evverithhing wauz az rite az poscibel. The tabel wauz cet out reddy for me, and Mr. Duncan Ros wauz dhare too ce dhat I got

faerly too werc. He started me of uppon the letter A, and then he left me;
but
he wood drop in from time too time too ce dhat aul wauz rite withe me. At
too
oacloc he bad me good-da, complimented me uppon the amount dhat I had
ritten, and loct the doer ov the office aafter me.

“This went on da aafter da, Mr. Hoamz, and on Satterda the mannager
came in
and planct doun foer goalden sovverainz for mi weex werc. It wauz the
same
next weke, and the same the weke aafter. Evvery morning I wauz dhare at
ten, and
evvery aafternoone I left at too. Bi degrese Mr. Duncan Ros tooc too
cumming in
oonly wuns ov a morning, and then, aafter a time, he did not cum in at aul.
Stil, ov coers, I nevver daerd too leve the roome for an instant, for I wauz
not
shure when he mite cum, and the billet wauz such a good wun, and suted
me so
wel, dhat I wood not risc the los ov it.

“Ate weex paast awa like this, and I had ritten about Abbots and Archery
and Armor and Arkitecchure and Atticaa, and hoapt withe dilligens dhat I
mite
ghet on too the B'z befoer verry long. It cost me sumthhing in fuilscap, and
I had
pritty neerly fild a shelf withe mi ritingz. And then suddenly the whole
biznes came too an end.”

“Too an end?”

“Yes, cer. And no later dhan this morning. I went too mi werc az uezhuwal
at ten

oacloc, but the doer wauz shut and loct, withe a littel sqware ov cardbord hammerd on too the middel ov the pannel withe a tac. Here it iz, and u can rede for yorcelf.”

He held up a pece ov white cardbord about the cise ov a shete ov note-paper.

It red in this fashon:

THE RED-HEDDED LEGHE

IZ

DIZOLVD.

October 9, 1890.

Sherloc Hoamz and I cervade this kert anounsment and the rufool face behiand it, until the commical cide ov the afare so compleetly overtopt evvery

uther concideraishon dhat we boath berst out intoo a roer ov laafter.

“I canot ce dhat dhare iz ennithhing verry funny,” cride our cliyent, flushing up

too the ruits ov hiz flaming hed. “If u can doo nuthhing better dhan laaf at

me, I can go elsewhere.”

“No, no,” cride Hoamz, shuvving him bac intoo the chare from which he had haaf rizen. “I reyaly woodnt mis yor cace for the werld. It iz moast refreshingly unnuezhual. But dhare iz, if u wil excuse mi saying so, sumthhing just a littel funny about it. Pra whaut steps did u take when u found the card uppon the doer?”

“I wauz staggherd, cer. I did not no whaut too doo. Then I cauld at the officez round, but nun ov them ceemd too no ennithhing about it. Finaly, I went too the landlord, whoo iz an acountant livving on the ground floer, and I aasct him if he cood tel me whaut had becum ov the Red-hedded Leghe. He ced dhat he had nevver herd ov enny such boddy. Then I aasct him whoo Mr. Duncan Ros wauz. He aancerd dhat the name wauz nu too him.

“ ‘Wel,’ ced I, ‘the gentelman at No. 4.’

“ ‘Whaut, the red-hedded man?’

“ ‘Yes.’

“ ‘O,’ ced he, ‘hiz name wauz Willeyam Moris. He wauz a soliscitor and wauz using mi roome az a temporary conveyens until hiz nu premmicez wer reddy. He muivd out yesterda.’

“ ‘Whare cood I fiand him?’

“ ‘O, at hiz nu officez. He did tel me the adres. Yes, 17 King Edword Strete, nere St. Paulz.’

“I started of, Mr. Hoamz, but when I got too dhat adres it wauz a manufactory ov artifishal ne-caps, and no wun in it had evver herd ov iather Mr. Willeyam Moris or Mr. Duncan Ros.”

“And whaut did u doo then?” aasct Hoamz.

“I went home too Sax-Coberg Sqware, and I tooc the advice ov mi acistant. But he cood not help me in enny wa. He cood oanly sa dhat if I wated I shood here bi poast. But dhat wauz not qwite good enuf, Mr. Hoamz. I did not wish too loose such a place widhout a strugghel, so, az I had herd dhat u wer good enuf too ghiv advice too poor foke whoo wer in nede ov it, I came rite awa too u.”

“And u did verry wiazly,” ced Hoamz. “Yor cace iz an exedingly remarcabel wun, and I shal be happy too looc intoo it. From whaut u hav toald me I thhinc dhat it iz poscibel dhat graver ishuse hang from it dhan mite at ferst cite apere.”

“Grave enuf!” ced Mr. Jabez Wilson. “Whi, I hav lost foer pound a weke.”

“Az far az u ar personaly concernd,” remarct Hoamz, “I doo not ce dhat

u hav enny grevans against this extrordinary leghe. On the contrary, u ar, az I understand, ritcher bi sum 30, too sa nuthhing ov the minute nollej which u hav gaind on evvery subject which cumz under the letter A. U hav lost nuthhing bi them."

"No, cer. But I waunt too fiand out about them, and whoo dha ar, and whaut dhare obgett wauz in playing this pranc—if it wauz a pranc—uppon me. It wauz a pritty expencive joke for them, for it cost them too and thherty poundz."

"We shal endevvor too clere up these points for u. And, ferst, wun or too qweschonz, Mr. Wilson. This acistant ov yorz whoo ferst cauld yor atenshon too the advertiazment—hou long had he bene withe u?"

"About a munth then."

"Hou did he cum?"

"In aancer too an advertiazment."

"Wauz he the oonly aplicant?"

"No, I had a duzsen."

"Whi did u pic him?"

"Becauz he wauz handy and wood cum chepe."

"At haaf wagez, in fact."

"Yes."

"Whaut iz he like, this Vincent Spaulding?"

"Smaul, stout-bilt, verry qwic in hiz wase, no hare on hiz face, dho hese not short ov thherty. Haz a white splash ov ascid uppon hiz foerhed."

Hoamz sat up in hiz chare in concidderabel exiatment. "I thaut az much," ced he. "Hav u evver observd dhat hiz eerz ar peerst for eringz?"

"Yes, cer. He toald me dhat a gipcy had dun it for him when he wauz a lad."

"Hum!" ced Hoamz, cinking bac in depe thaut. "He iz stil withe u?"

"O, yes, cer; I hav oanly just left him."

"And haz yor biznes bene atended too in yor abcens?"

"Nuthhing too complane ov, cer. Dhaerz nevver verry much too doo ov a morning."

"Dhat wil doo, Mr. Wilson. I shal be happy too ghiv u an opinyon uppon the subject in the coers ov a da or too. Too-da iz Satterda, and I hope dhat bi Munda we ma cum too a concluezhon."

"Wel, Wautson," ced Hoamz when our vizsitor had left us, "whaut doo u make ov it aul?"

"I make nuthhing ov it," I aancerd francly. "It iz a moast mistereyous biznes."

"Az a rule," ced Hoamz, "the moer bizar a thhing iz the les mistereyous it

pruivz too be. It iz yor commonplace, fechuerles criamz which ar reyaly puzling, just az a commonplace face iz the moast difficult too identifi. But I must be prompt over this matter."

"Whaut ar u gowing too doo, then?" I aasct.

"Too smoke," he aancerd. "It iz qwite a thre pipe problem, and I beg dhat u woant speke too me for fifty minnuets." He kerld himcelf up in hiz chare, withe hiz thhin nese draun up too hiz hauc-like nose, and dhare he sat withe hiz ise cloazd and hiz blac cla pipe thrusting out like the bil ov sum strainj berd. I had cum too the concluezhon dhat he had dropt aslepe, and indede wauz nodding micelf, when he suddenly sprang out ov hiz chare withe the geschure ov a man whoo haz made up hiz miand and poot hiz pipe down uppon the mantelpece.

"Sarazate plase at the St. Jaimsez Haul this aafternoone," he remarct.

"Whaut doo u thhinc, Wautson? Cood yor paishents spare u for a fu ourz?"

"I hav nuthhing too doo too-da. Mi practice iz nevver verry abzorbing."

"Then poot on yor hat and cum. I am gowing throo the Citty ferst, and we can hav sum lunch on the wa. I observ dhat dhare iz a good dele ov German music on the proogram, which iz raather moer too mi taist dhan Italleyan or French. It iz introspective, and I waunt too introspect. Cum along!"

We travveld bi the Underground az far az Alderzgate; and a short wauc
tooc us
too Sax-Coberg Sqware, the cene ov the cin'gular stoery which we had
liscend too
in the morning. It wauz a poky, littel, shabby-gentele place, whare foer
lianz
ov din'gy too-stoerede bric housez looct out intoo a smaul raild-in
encloazhure,
whare a laun ov wedy graas and a fu clumps ov faded lorel booshez made
a hard
fite against a smoke-laden and uncon'geenyal atmosfere. Thre ghilt baulz
and a
broun boerd withe "JABEZ WILSON" in white letterz, uppon a corner
hous,
anounst the place whare our red-hedded cliyent carrede on hiz biznes.
Sherloc Hoamz stopt in frunt ov it withe hiz hed on wun cide and looct it
aul over, withe hiz ise shining briatly betwene puckerd lidz. Then he wauct
sloly up the strete, and then doun agane too the corner, stil loocking keenly
at the housez. Finaly he reternd too the paunbrokerz, and, havving thumt
vigorously uppon the pavment withe hiz stic too or thre tiamz, he went
up too
the doer and noct. It wauz instantly opennd bi a brite-loocking, clene-shaven
yung fello, whoo aasct him too step in.

"Thanc u," ced Hoamz, "I oanly wisht too aasc u hou u wood go from here
too the Strand."

"Thherd rite, foerth left," aancerd the acistant promptly, closing the doer.

"Smart fello, dhat," observd Hoamz az we wauct awa. "He iz, in mi
jujment, the foerth smartest man in Lunden, and for daring I am not shure
dhat
he haz not a clame too be thherd. I hav none sumthhing ov him befoer."

“Evvidently,” ced I, “Mr. Wilsonz acistant counts for a good dele in this mistery ov the Red-hedded Leghe. I am shure dhat u inqwiard yor wa meerly in order dhat u mite ce him.”

“Not him.”

“Whaut then?”

“The nese ov hiz trouserz.”

“And whaut did u ce?”

“Whaut I expected too ce.”

“Whi did u bete the paivment?”

“Mi dere doctor, this iz a time for observaishon, not for tauc. We ar spise in an ennemese cuntry. We no sumthng ov Sax-Coberg Sqware. Let us nou exploer the parts which li behiand it.”

The rode in which we found ourcelvz az we ternd round the corner from the retiard Sax-Coberg Sqware presented az grate a contraast too it az the frunt ov a picchure duz too the bac. It wauz wun ov the mane arterese which convade the traffic ov the Citty too the north and west. The roadwa wauz bloct withe the imens streme ov commers flowing in a dubbel tide inword and outword, while the footpaaths wer blac withe the hurreying swarm ov pedestreyanz. It wauz

difficult too reyalise az we looct at the line ov fine shops and staitly
biznes premmicez dhat dha reyal abutted on the uthar cide uppon the
faded and
stagnant sqware which we had just qwitted.

“Let me ce,” ced Hoamz, standing at the corner and glaancing along the
line,

“I shood like just too remember the order ov the housez here. It iz a hobby
ov

mine too hav an exact nollej ov Lundon. Dhare iz Mortimerz, the
tobacconist, the littel nuespaper shop, the Coberg braanch ov the Citty and
Suberban Banc, the Vegetareyan Restorant, and McFarlainz carrage-bilding
deppo. Dhat carrese us rite on too the uthar bloc. And nou, Doctor, weve
dun

our werc, so its time we had sum pla. A sandwich and a cup ov coffy, and
then of too viyolin-land, whare aul iz sweetnes and dellicacy and harmony,
and

dhare ar no red-hedded cliyents too vex us withe dhare conundrumz.”

Mi frend wauz an enthuseyaastic musishan, beying himcelf not oonly a
verry capabel

performer but a composer ov no ordinary merrit. Aul the aafternoone he
sat in the

staulz rapt in the moast perfect happines, gently waving hiz long, thhin
fin’gherz in time too the music, while hiz gently smiling face and hiz
lan’gwid,

dremy ise wer az unlike dhose ov Hoamz the slueth-hound, Hoamz the
relentles, kene-witted, reddy-handed crimminal agent, az it wauz poscibel
too

conceve. In hiz cin’gular carracter the juwal nachure aulternaitly acerted
itcelf, and hiz extreme exactnes and aschuetnes represented, az I hav often
thaut, the reyacshon against the powettic and contemplative moode which
ocaizhonaly predominated in him. The swing ov hiz nachure tooc him
from extreme

lan'gor too devouring ennergy; and, az I nu wel, he wauz nevver so truly formiddabel az when, for dase on end, he had bene loun'ging in hiz armchare amid hiz improvizaishonz and hiz blac-letter edishonz. Then it wauz dhat the lust ov the chace wood suddenly cum uppon him, and dhat hiz brilleyant rezoning pouwer wood rise too the levvel ov inchuwishon, until dhose whoo wer unaqwainted withe hiz methodz wood looc ascaans at him az on a man whose nollej wauz not dhat ov uther mortalz. When I sau him dhat aafternoone so enrapt in the music at St. Jaimsez Haul I felt dhat an evil time mite be cumming uppon dhose whoome he had cet himcelf too hunt doun.

"U waunt too go home, no dout, Doctor," he remarct az we emerjd.

"Yes, it wood be az wel."

"And I hav sum biznes too doo which wil take sum ourz. This biznes at Coberg Sqware iz cereyous."

"Whi cereyous?"

"A concidderabel crime iz in contemplaishon. I hav evvery rezon too beleve dhat we shal be in time too stop it. But too-da beying Satterda raather complicaits matterz. I shal waunt yor help too-nite."

"At whaut time?"

“Ten wil be erly enuf.”

“I shal be at Baker Strete at ten.”

“Verry wel. And, I sa, Doctor, dhare ma be sum littel dain’ger, so kiandly poot yor army revolver in yor pocket.” He waivd hiz hand, ternd on hiz hele, and disapeerd in an instant among the croud.

I trust dhat I am not moer dens dhan mi naborz, but I wauz aulwase oprest withe a cens ov mi one schupiddity in mi delingz withe Sherloc Hoamz. Here I had herd whaut he had herd, I had cene whaut he had cene, and yet from hiz werdz it wauz evvident dhat he sau cleerly not oonly whaut had happend but whaut wauz about too happen, while too me the whole biznes wauz stil confuezd and grotesc. Az I drove home too mi hous in Kensington I thaut over it aul, from the extrordinary stoery ov the red-hedded coppeyer ov the Enciaclopejaa doun too the vizsit too Sax-Coberg Sqware, and the omminous werdz withe which he had parted from me. Whaut wauz this nocternal expedishon, and whi shood I go armd? Whare wer we gowing, and whaut wer we too doo? I had the hint from Hoamz dhat this smuithe-faist paunbrokerz acistant wauz a formiddabel man—a man whoo mite pla a depe game. I tride too puzsel it out, but gave it up in despare and cet the matter acide until nite shood bring an explanaishon.

It wauz a qworter-paast nine when I started from home and made mi wa
acros the
Parc, and so throo Oxford Strete too Baker Strete. Too hansomz wer
standing
at the doer, and az I enterd the passage I herd the sound ov voicez from
abuv. On entering hiz roome, I found Hoamz in animated conversaishon
withe too
men, wun ov whoome I reccogniazd az Peter Joanz, the ofishal polece
agent, while
the uther wauz a long, thhin, sad-faist man, withe a verry shiny hat and
opresciavly respectabel froc-cote.

“Haa! Our party iz complete,” ced Hoamz, buttoning up hiz pe-jacket and
taking hiz hevvy hunting crop from the rac. “Wautson, I thhinc u no Mr.
Joanz, ov Scotland Yard? Let me introjuce u too Mr. Merriwether, whoo iz
too be
our companyon in too-niats advenchure.”

“Were hunting in cuppelz agane, Doctor, u ce,” ced Joanz in hiz
conceqwenshal wa. “Our frend here iz a wunderfool man for starting a
chace.
Aul he waunts iz an oald dog too help him too doo the running down.”

“I hope a wiald gooce ma not prove too be the end ov our chace,” observd
Mr.
Merriwether gloomily.

“U ma place concidderabel confidens in Mr. Hoamz, cer,” ced the polece
agent loftily. “He haz hiz one littel methodz, which ar, if he woant miand
mi
saying so, just a littel too thheyorettical and fantastic, but he haz the
makingz
ov a detective in him. It iz not too much too sa dhat wuns or twice, az in
dhat

biznes ov the Sholto merder and the Agra trezhure, he haz bene moer neerly corect dhan the ofishal foers."

"O, if u sa so, Mr. Joanz, it iz aul rite," ced the strain'ger withe defferens. "Stil, I confes dhat I mis mi rubber. It iz the ferst Satterda nite for cevven-and-twenty yeerz dhat I hav not had mi rubber."

"I thhinc u wil fiand," ced Sherloc Hoamz, "dhat u wil pla for a hiyer stake too-nite dhan u hav evver dun yet, and dhat the pla wil be moer exiting. For u, Mr. Merriwether, the stake wil be sum 30,000; and for u, Joanz, it wil be the man uppon whoome u wish too la yor handz."

"Jon Cla, the merderer, thhefe, smasher, and foerger. Hese a yung man, Mr. Merriwether, but he iz at the hed ov hiz profeshon, and I wood raather hav mi braislets on him dhan on enny crimminal in Lundon. Hese a remarcabel man, iz yung Jon Cla. Hiz grandfaather wauz a roiyal juke, and he himcelf haz bene too Eton and Oxford. Hiz brane iz az cunning az hiz fin'gherz, and dho we mete cianz ov him at evvery tern, we nevver no whare too fiand the man himcelf. Hele crac a crib in Scotland wun weke, and be rasing munny too bild an orfanage in Cornwaul the next. Ive bene on hiz trac for yeerz and hav nevver cet ise on him yet."

"I hope dhat I ma hav the plezhure ov introjucing u too-nite. Ive had wun or too littel ternz aulso withe Mr. Jon Cla, and I agry withe u dhat he iz at the hed ov hiz profeshon. It iz paast ten, houwevver, and qwite time dhat we started. If u too wil take the ferst hansom, Wautson and I wil follo in the cecond."

Sherloc Hoamz wauz not verry comunicative juring the long drive and la
bac
in the cab humming the chuenz which he had herd in the aafternoone. We
ratteld
throo an endles labbirinth ov gas-lit streets until we emerjd intoo
Faarington Strete.

“We ar cloce dhare nou,” mi frend remarct. “This fello Merriwether iz a
banc director, and personaly interested in the matter. I thaut it az wel too
hav Joanz withe us aulso. He iz not a bad fello, dho an absolute imbecele in
hiz profeshon. He haz wun pozsitive verchu. He iz az brave az a booldog
and az
tenaishous az a lobster if he ghets hiz clauz uppon enniwun. Here we ar,
and dha
ar wating for us.”

We had reecht the same crouded thurrofare in which we had found
ourcelvz in
the morning. Our cabz wer dismist, and, following the ghidans ov Mr.
Merriwether, we paast doun a narro passage and throo a cide doer, which
he
opend for us. Within dhare wauz a smaul coridor, which ended in a verry
mascive
iarn gate. This aulso wauz opend, and led doun a flite ov wianding stone
steps,
which terminated at anuther formiddabel gate. Mr. Merriwether stopt too
lite
a lantern, and then conducted us doun a darc, erth-smelling passage, and
so,
aafter opening a thherd doer, intoo a huge vault or cellar, which wauz piald
aul
round withe craits and mascive boxez.

“U ar not verry vulnerabel from abuv,” Hoamz remarct az he held up the lantern and gaizd about him.

“Nor from belo,” ced Mr. Merriwether, striking hiz stic uppon the flagz which liand the floer. “Whi, dere me, it soundz qwite hollo!” he remarct, loocking up in cerprise.

“I must reyaly aasc u too be a littel moer qwiyet!” ced Hoamz ceveerly. “U hav aulreddy imperrild the whole suxes ov our expedishon. Mite I beg dhat u wood hav the goodnes too cit doun uppon wun ov dhose boxez, and not too interfere?”

The sollem Mr. Merriwether percht himcelf uppon a crate, withe a verry injuerd expreshon uppon hiz face, while Hoamz fel uppon hiz nese uppon the floer and, withe the lantern and a magnifying lenz, began too exammine minuety the crax betwene the stoanz. A fu cecondz sufiast too sattisfi him, for he sprang too hiz fete agane and poot hiz glaas in hiz pocket.

“We hav at leest an our befoer us,” he remarct, “for dha can hardly take enny steps until the good paunbroker iz saifly in bed. Then dha wil not loose a minnute, for the sooner dha doo dhare werc the lon’gher time dha wil hav for dhare escape. We ar at prezsent, Doctor—az no dout u hav diviand—in the cellar ov the Citty braanch ov wun ov the principal Lundon banx. Mr. Merriwether iz the chaerman ov directorz, and he wil explane too u dhat dhare ar rezonz whi the moer daring crimminalz ov Lundon shood take a concidderabel interest in this cellar at prezsent.”

“It iz our French goald,” whisperd the director. “We hav had cevveral
worningz
dhat an atempt mite be made uppon it.”

“Yor French goald?”

“Yes. We had ocaizhon sum munths ago too strengthnen our rezoercez and
borode
for dhat perpoce 30,000 napoleyonz from the Banc ov Fraans. It haz becum
none
dhat we hav nevver had ocaizhon too unpac the munny, and dhat it iz stil
liying
in our cellar. The crate uppon which I cit containz 2,000 napoleyonz pact
betwene layerz ov led foil. Our reserv ov boolleyon iz much larger at
prezsent
dhan iz uezhuwaly kept in a cin’ghel braanch office, and the directorz hav
had
misghivvingz uppon the subject.”

“Which wer verry wel justifide,” observd Hoamz. “And nou it iz time dhat
we
arainjd our littel planz. I expect dhat within an our matterz wil cum too a
hed. In the meentime Mr. Merriwether, we must poot the screne over dhat
darc
lantern.”

“And cit in the darc?”

“I am afrade so. I had braut a pac ov cardz in mi pocket, and I thaut
dhat, az we wer a party carra, u mite hav yor rubber aafter aul. But I
ce dhat the ennemese preparaishonz hav gon so far dhat we canot risc the
prezsens ov a lite. And, ferst ov aul, we must chuse our posishonz. These ar
daring men, and dho we shal take them at a disadvaantage, dha ma doo us

sum harm unles we ar caerfool. I shal stand behiand this crate, and doo u concele yorcelvz behiand dhose. Then, when I flash a lite uppon them, cloce in swiftly. If dha fire, Wautson, hav no compuncshon about shooting them doun.”

I plaist mi revolver, coct, uppon the top ov the wooden cace behiand which I croucht. Hoamz shot the slide acros the frunt ov hiz lantern and left us in pich darcnes—such an absolute darcnes az I hav nevver befoer expereyenst.

The smel ov hot mettal remaind too ashure us dhat the lite wauz stil dhare, reddy too flash out at a moments notice. Too me, withe mi nervz werct up too a

pich ov expectancy, dhare wauz sumthhing deprecscing and subjuwing in the sudden

gloome, and in the coald danc are ov the vault.

“Dha hav but wun retrete,” whisperd Hoamz. “Dhat iz bac throo the hous intoo Sax-Coberg Sqware. I hope dhat u hav dun whaut I aasct u, Joanz?”

“I hav an inspector and too officerz wating at the frunt doer.”

“Then we hav stopt aul the hoalz. And nou we must be cilent and wate.”

Whaut a time it ceemd! From comparing noats aafterwordz it wauz but an our and a

qworter, yet it apeerd too me dhat the nite must hav aulmoast gon, and the daun be braking abuv us. Mi limz wer wery and stif, for I feerd too chainj mi posishon; yet mi nervz wer werct up too the hiyest pich ov tenshon, and mi hering wauz so acute dhat I cood not oonly here the gentel breething ov mi companyonz, but I cood distin'gwish the deper, hevveyer in-breth ov the bulky Joanz from the thhin, ciying note ov the banc director. From mi posishon I cood looc over the cace in the direcshon ov the floer.

Suddenly mi ise caut the glint ov a lite.

At ferst it wauz but a lurid sparc uppon the stone paivment. Then it lengthhend out until it became a yello line, and then, widhout enny worning or sound, a gash ceemd too open and a hand apeerd, a white, aulmoast woommanly hand, which felt about in the center ov the littel areyaa ov lite. For a minnute or moer the hand, withe its riathing fin'gherz, protruded out ov the floer. Then it wauz widhdraun az suddenly az it apeerd, and aul wauz darc agane save the cin'ghel lurid sparc which marct a chinc betwene the stoanz.

Its disaperans, houwevver, wauz but momentary. Withe a rending, taring sound, wun ov the braud, white stoanz ternd over uppon its cide and left a sqware, gaping hole, throo which streemd the lite ov a lantern. Over the ej dhare peept a clene-cut, boiyish face, which looct keenly about it, and then, withe a hand on iather cide ov the aperchure, dru itcelf shoalder-hi and waist-hi, until wun ne rested uppon the ej. In anuther instant he stood at the cide ov the hole and wauz hauling aafter him a companyon, liathe and smaul like himcelf, withe a pale face and a shoc ov verry red hare.

"Its aul clere," he whisperd. "Hav u the chizsel and the bagz? Grate Scot! Jump, Archy, jump, and Ile swing for it!"

Sherloc Hoamz had sprung out and ceezd the intruder bi the collar. The uther diavd doun the hole, and I herd the sound ov rending cloth az Joanz clucht

at hiz skerts. The lite flasht uppon the barrel ov a revolver, but Hoamz' hunting crop came down on the manz rist, and the pistol clinct uppon the stone floer.

"Its no uce, Jon Cla," ced Hoamz blandly. "U hav no chaans at aul."

"So I ce," the uther aancerd withe the utmoast cuilnes. "I fancy dhat mi pal iz aul rite, dho I ce u hav got hiz cote-tailz."

"Dhare ar thre men wating for him at the doer," ced Hoamz.

"O, indede! U ceme too hav dun the thhing verry compleetly. I must compliment u."

"And I u," Hoamz aancerd. "Yor red-hedded ideyaa wauz verry nu and efective."

"Ule ce yor pal agane prezsently," ced Joanz. "Hese qwicker at climing doun hoalz dhan I am. Just hoald out while I fix the darbese."

"I beg dhat u wil not tuch me withe yor filthhy handz," remarct our prizzoner az the handcufs clatterd uppon hiz rists. "U ma not be aware dhat I hav roiyal blud in mi vainz. Hav the goodnes, aulso, when u adres me aulwase too sa 'cer' and 'plese.' "

"Aul rite," ced Joanz withe a stare and a sniggher. "Wel, wood u plese, cer, march upstaerz, whare we can ghet a cab too carry yor Hines too the polece-staishon?"

"Dhat iz better," ced Jon Cla cereenly. He made a sweping bou too the thre ov us and wauct qwiyetly of in the custody ov the detective.

“Reyaly, Mr. Hoamz,” ced Mr. Merriwether az we follode them from the cellar, “I doo not no hou the banc can thanc u or repa u. Dhare iz no dout dhat u hav detected and defeted in the moast complete manner wun ov the moast determiand atempts at banc robbery dhat hav evver cum within mi expereyens.”

“I hav had wun or too littel scoerz ov mi one too cettel withe Mr. Jon Cla,” ced Hoamz. “I hav bene at sum smaul expens over this matter, which I shal expect the banc too refund, but beyond dhat I am amply repade bi havving had an expereyens which iz in menny wase uneke, and bi hering the verry remarcabel narrative ov the Red-hedded Leghe.”

“U ce, Wautson,” he explaind in the erly ourz ov the morning az we sat over a glaas ov whisky and sodaa in Baker Strete, “it wauz perfectly obveyous from the ferst dhat the oonly poscibel obgett ov this raather fantastic biznes ov the advertiazment ov the Leghe, and the coppeying ov the Enciaclopejaa, must be too ghet this not over-brite paunbroker out ov the wa for a number ov ourz evvery da. It wauz a cureyous wa ov mannaging it, but, reyaly, it wood be difficult too sugest a better. The method wauz no dout sugested too Clase in’geenyous miand bi the cullor ov hiz acumplizez hare. The 4 a weke wauz a lure which must drau him, and whaut wauz it too them, whoo wer playing for thousandz?

Dha poot in the advertiazment, wun roghe haz the temporary office, the uther roghe inciats the man too apli for it, and tooghether dha mannage too cezure hiz abcens evvery morning in the weke. From the time dhat I herd ov the acistant havving cum for haaf wagez, it wauz obveyous too me dhat he had sum strong motive for ceuring the cichuwaishon.”

“But hou cood u ghes whaut the motive wauz?”

“Had dhare bene wimmen in the hous, I shood hav suspected a mere vulgar intreghe. Dhat, houwevver, wauz out ov the qweschon. The manz biznes wauz a smaul wun, and dhare wauz nuthhing in hiz hous which cood acount for such elaborate preparaishonz, and such an expendichure az dha wer at. It must, then, be sumthhing out ov the hous. Whaut cood it be? I thaut ov the acistants fondnes for fotografy, and hiz tric ov vannishing intoo the cellar. The cellar! Dhare wauz the end ov this tan’gheld clu. Then I made inqwires az too this mistereyous acistant and found dhat I had too dele withe wun ov the coolest and moast daring crimminalz in Lundon. He wauz doowing sumthhing in the cellar—sumthhing which tooc menny ourz a da for munths on end. Whaut cood it be, wuns moer? I cood thhinc ov nuthhing save dhat he wauz running a tunnel too sum uther bilding.

“So far I had got when we went too vizsit the cene ov acshon. I cerpriazd u
bi
beting uppon the pavment withe mi stic. I wauz ascertaining whether the
cellar
strecht out in frunt or behiand. It wauz not in frunt. Then I rang the bel,
and, az I hoapt, the acistant aancerd it. We hav had sum skermishez, but we
had nevver cet ise uppon eche uther befoer. I hardly looct at hiz face. Hiz
nese wer whaut I wisht too ce. U must yorcelf hav remarct hou woern,
rinkeld, and staid dha wer. Dha spoke ov dhose ourz ov burrowing. The
oonly remaning point wauz whaut dha wer burrowing for. I wauct round
the
corner, sau the Citty and Suberban Banc abutted on our frendz premmicez,
and
felt dhat I had solvd mi problem. When u drove home aafter the concert I
cauld uppon Scotland Yard and uppon the chaerman ov the banc directorz,
withe the
rezult dhat u hav cene.”

“And hou cood u tel dhat dha wood make dhare atempt too-nite?” I aasct.

“Wel, when dha cloazd dhare Leghe officez dhat wauz a cine dhat dha
caerd no
lon’gher about Mr. Jabez Wilsonz prezsens—in uther werdz, dhat dha had
completed dhare tunnel. But it wauz ecenshal dhat dha shood use it soone,
az
it mite be discuvverd, or the boolleyon mite be remuivd. Satterda wood
sute
them better dhan enny uther da, az it wood ghiv them too dase for dhare
escape. For aul these rezonz I expected them too cum too-nite.”

“U rezond it out butifooly,” I exclaimd in unfaind admiraishon. “It iz
so long a chane, and yet evvery linc ringz tru.”

“It saivd me from enwy,” he aancerd, yauning. “Alaas! I aulreddy fele it

closing in uppon me. Mi life iz spent in wun long effort too escape from the commonplacez ov existens. These littel problemz help me too doo so.”

“And u ar a bennefactor ov the race,” ced I.

He shrugd hiz shoalderz. “Wel, perhaps, aafter aul, it iz ov sum littel uce,” he remarct. “ ‘L’homme c’est rien—l’oeuvre c’est tout,’ az Gustave Flaubert rote too Jorj Sand.”

3

A Cace ov Identity

“Mi dere fello,” ced Sherloc Hoamz az we sat on iather cide ov the fire in hiz lodgingz at Baker Strete, “life iz infiniatly strain’ger dhan ennithhing which the miand ov man cood invent. We wood not dare too conceive the thhingz which ar reyaly mere commonplacez ov existens. If we cood fli out ov dhat windo hand in hand, hovver over this grate citty, gently remoove the ruifs, and pepe in at the qwere thhingz which ar gowing on, the strainj cowincidencez, the planningz, the cros-perpocez, the wunderfool chainz ov events, werking throo

generaishonz, and leding too the moast uitra rezults, it wood make aul
ficshon
withe its convenshonallitese and foercene concluezhonz moast stale and
unproffitabel.”

“And yet I am not convinst ov it,” I aancerd. “The cacez which cum too lite
in the paperz ar, az a rule, bauld enuf, and vulgar enuf. We hav in our
polece repoerts reyalizm poosht too its extreme limmits, and yet the rezult
iz, it
must be confest, niather fascinating nor artistic.”

“A certane celecshon and disreshon must be uezd in projucing a reyalistic
efect,” remarct Hoamz. “This iz waunting in the polece repoert, whare
moer
stres iz lade, perhaps, uppon the plattichuedz ov the madgistrate dhan
uppon the
detailz, which too an observer contane the vital escens ov the whole matter.
Depend uppon it, dhare iz nuthhing so un’natchural az the commonplace.”

I smiald and shooc mi hed. “I can qwite understand yor thhinking so,” I
ced.

“Ov coers, in yor posishon ov unnofishal adviser and helper too
evveriboddy whoo
iz absolutely puzseld, throowout thre continents, u ar braut in contact
withe aul dhat iz strainj and bizar. But here”—I pict up the morning paper
from the ground—“let us poot it too a practical test. Here iz the ferst
hedding
uppon which I cum. ‘A huzbandz cruwelty too hiz wife.’ Dhare iz haaf a
collum ov
print, but I no widhout reding it dhat it iz aul perfectly familleyar too me.
Dhare iz, ov coers, the uther woomman, the drinc, the poosh, the blo, the
bruse, the cimpathhettic cister or landlady. The crudest ov riterz cood
invent
nuthhing moer crude.”

“Indede, yor exaampel iz an unforchunate wun for yor argument,” ced Hoamz, taking the paper and glaancing hiz i doun it. “This iz the Dundaz ceparashon cace, and, az it happenz, I wauz en’gajd in clering up sum smaul points in conecshon withe it. The huzband wauz a tetotaler, dhare wauz no uther woomman, and the conduct complaind ov wauz dhat he had drifted intoo the habbit ov wianding up evvery mele bi taking out hiz fauls teeth and herling them at hiz wife, which, u wil alou, iz not an acshon liacly too oker too the imaginaishon ov the avverage stoery-teller. Take a pinch ov snuf, Doctor, and acnollej dhat I hav scoerd over u in yor exaampel.”

He held out hiz snufbox ov oald goald, withe a grate ammethhist in the center ov the lid. Its splendor wauz in such contraast too hiz hoamly wase and cimpel life dhat I cood not help commenting uppon it.

“Aa,” ced he, “I forgot dhat I had not cene u for sum weex. It iz a littel soovenere from the King ov Bohemeyaa in retern for mi acistans in the cace ov the Irene Adler paperz.”

“And the ring?” I aasct, glaancing at a remarcabel brilleyant which sparkeld uppon hiz fin’gher.

“It wauz from the raning fammily ov Holland, dho the matter in which I cervd them wauz ov such dellicacy dhat I canot confide it even too u, whoo hav

bene good enuf too cronnikel wun or too ov mi littel problemz."

"And hav u enny on hand just nou?" I aasct withe interest.

"Sum ten or twelv, but nun which present enny fechure ov interest. Dha ar important, u understand, widhout beying interesting. Indede, I hav found dhat

it iz uezhuwaly in unnimportant matterz dhat dhare iz a feeld for the observaishon,

and for the qwic anallicis ov cauz and efect which ghivz the charm too an investigaishon. The larger criamz ar apt too be the cimpler, for the biggher the

crime the moer obveyous, az a rule, iz the motive. In these cacez, save for wun

raather intricate matter which haz bene referd too me from Marsaye, dhare iz

nuthhing which presents enny fechuerz ov interest. It iz poscibel, houwevver, dhat

I ma hav sumthhing better befoer verry menny minnuets ar over, for this iz wun

ov mi cliyents, or I am much mistaken."

He had rizsen from hiz chare and wauz standing betwene the parted bliandz gasing

doun into the dul nuetral-tinted Lundon strete. Looeking over hiz shoalder, I

sau dhat on the paivment opposite dhare stood a larj woomman withe a hevvy fer

bowaa round her nec, and a larj kerling red fether in a braud-brimd hat which wauz tilted in a cokettish Dutches ov Devvonshire fashon over her ere.

From under this grate pannoply she peept up in a nervous, hezsitating fashon at

our windose, while her boddy oscilated baqword and forword, and her
fin'gherz
fidgeted withe her gluv buttonz. Suddenly, withe a plunj, az ov the
swimmer whoo
leevz the banc, she hurrede acros the rode, and we herd the sharp clang ov
the bel.

"I hav cene dhose cimptomz befoer," ced Hoamz, throwing hiz ciggaret
intoo
the fire. "Ocilaishon uppon the paivment aulwase meenz an afare de ker.
She
wood like advice, but iz not shure dhat the matter iz not too dellicate for
comunicaishon. And yet even here we ma discrimminate. When a
woomman haz bene
cereyously rongd bi a man she no lon'gher oscilaits, and the uezhuwal
cimptom iz a
broken bel wire. Here we ma take it dhat dhare iz a luv matter, but dhat the
maden iz not so much an'gry az perplext, or greevd. But here she cumz in
person too rezolv our douts."

Az he spoke dhare wauz a tap at the doer, and the boi in buttonz enterd too
anouns Mis Mary Sutherland, while the lady hercelf luimd behiand hiz
smaul
blac figgure like a fool-saild merchant-man behiand a tiny pilot bote.
Sherloc
Hoamz welcumd her withe the esy kertecy for which he wauz remarcabel,
and,
havving cloazd the doer and boud her intoo an armchare, he looct her over
in
the minnute and yet abstracted fashon which wauz peculeyar too him.

"Doo u not fiand," he ced, "dhat withe yor short cite it iz a littel trying
too doo so much tiapriting?"

“I did at ferst,” she aancerd, “but nou I no whare the letterz ar widhout loocking.” Then, suddenly reyalising the fool perport ov hiz werdz, she gave a viyolent start and looct up, withe fere and astonishment uppon her braud, good-humord face. “Uve herd about me, Mr. Hoamz,” she cride, “els hou cood u no aul dhat?”

“Nevver miand,” ced Hoamz, laafing; “it iz mi biznes too no thhingz. Perhaps I hav traird micelf too ce whaut utherz overlooc. If not, whi shood u cum too consult me?”

“I came too u, cer, becauz I herd ov u from Mrs. Ethherege, whoose huzband u found so esy when the polece and evveriwun had ghivven him up for ded. O, Mr. Hoamz, I wish u wood doo az much for me. Ime not rich, but stil I hav a hundred a yere in mi one rite, beciadz the littel dhat I make bi the mashene, and I wood ghiv it aul too no whaut haz becum ov Mr. Hozmer Ain’gel.”

“Whi did u cum awa too consult me in such a hurry?” aasct Sherloc Hoamz, withe hiz fin’gher-tips toogheter and hiz ise too the celing.

Agane a starteld looc came over the sumwhaut vaccuwous face ov Mis Mary Sutherland. “Yes, I did bang out ov the hous,” she ced, “for it made me an’gry too ce the esy wa in which Mr. Windibanc—dhat iz, mi faather—tooc it aul. He wood not go too the polece, and he wood not go too u, and so at laast, az he

wood doo nuthhing and kept on saying dhat dhare wauz no harm dun, it made me mad, and I just on withe mi thhingz and came rite awa too u."

"Yor faather," ced Hoamz, "yor stepfaather, shuerly, cins the name iz different."

"Yes, mi stepfaather. I caul him faather, dho it soundz funny, too, for he iz oonly five yeerz and too munths oalder dhan micelf."

"And yor muther iz alive?"

"O, yes, muther iz alive and wel. I wauznt best pleezd, Mr. Hoamz, when she marrede agane so soone aafter faatherz deth, and a man whoo wauz neerly fiftene yeerz yun'gher dhan hercelf. Faather wauz a plumber in the Tottenam Coert Rode, and he left a tidy biznes behiand him, which muther carrede on withe Mr. Hardy, the foerman; but when Mr. Windibanc came he made her cel the biznes, for he wauz verry supereyor, beying a travveler in wianz. Dha got 4700 for the goodwill and interest, which wauznt nere az much az faather cood hav got if he had bene alive."

I had expected too ce Sherloc Hoamz impaishent under this rambling and inconceqwenshal narrative, but, on the contrary, he had liscend withe the gratest concentraishon ov atenshon.

"Yor one littel incum," he aasct, "duz it cum out ov the biznes?"

“O, no, cer. It iz qwite cepparate and wauz left me bi mi unkel Ned in Aucland.

It iz in Nu Seland stoc, paying 4½ per cent. Too thousand five hundred poundz wauz the amount, but I can oonly tuch the interest.”

“U interest me extreemly,” ced Hoamz. “And cins u drau so larj a sum az a hundred a yere, withe whaut u ern intoo the bargane, u no dout travvel a littel and indulj yorcelf in evvery wa. I beleve dhat a cin’ghel lady can ghet on verry niasly uppon an incum ov about 60.”

“I cood doo withe much les dhan dhat, Mr. Hoamz, but u understand dhat az long az I liv at home I doant wish too be a berden too them, and so dha hav the uce ov the munny just while I am staying withe them. Ov coers, dhat iz oonly just for the time. Mr. Windibanc drauz mi interest evvery qworter and pase it over too muther, and I fiand dhat I can doo pritty wel withe whaut I ern at tiapriting. It bringz me tuppens a shete, and I can often doo from fiftene too twenty sheets in a da.”

“U hav made yor posishon verry clere too me,” ced Hoamz. “This iz mi frend, Dr. Wautson, befoer whoome u can speke az frely az befoer micelf. Kiandly tel us nou aul about yor conecshon withe Mr. Hozmer Ain’gel.”

A flush stole over Mis Sutherlandz face, and she pict nervously at the frinj ov her jacket. “I met him ferst at the gasfitterz’ baul,” she ced. “Dha uest too cend faather tickets when he wauz alive, and then aafterwordz dha rememberd us, and cent them too muther. Mr. Windibanc did not wish us too go. He nevver did wish us too go enniwhare. He wood ghet qwite mad if I waunted so much az

too join a Sunda-scoole trete. But this time I wauz cet on gowing, and I
wood
go; for whaut rite had he too prevent? He ced the foke wer not fit for us too
no, when aul faatherz frendz wer too be dhare. And he ced dhat I had
nuthhing fit too ware, when I had mi perpel plush dhat I had nevver so
much az
taken out ov the drauwer. At laast, when nuthhing els wood doo, he went
of too
Fraans uppon the biznes ov the ferm, but we went, muther and I, withe Mr.
Hardy, whoo uest too be our foerman, and it wauz dhare I met Mr. Hozmer
Ain' gel."

"I supose," ced Hoamz, "dhat when Mr. Windibanc came bac from Fraans
he wauz
verry anoid at yor havving gon too the baul."

"O, wel, he wauz verry good about it. He laaft, I remember, and shrugd hiz
shoalderz, and ced dhare wauz no uce deniying ennithhing too a
woomman, for she wood
hav her wa."

"I ce. Then at the gasfitterz' baul u met, az I understand, a gentelman
cauld Mr. Hozmer Ain' gel."

"Yes, cer. I met him dhat nite, and he cauld next da too aasc if we had got
home aul safe, and aafter dhat we met him—dhat iz too sa, Mr. Hoamz, I
met him
twice for waux, but aafter dhat faather came bac agane, and Mr. Hozmer
Ain' gel
cood not cum too the hous enny moer."

"No?"

"Wel, u no faather didnt like ennithhing ov the sort. He woodnt hav enny

vizsitorz if he cood help it, and he uest too sa dhat a woomman shood be happy in her one fammily cerkel. But then, az I uest too sa too muther, a woomman waunts her one cerkel too beghin withe, and I had not got mine yet.”

“But hou about Mr. Hozmer Ain’gel? Did he make no atempt too ce u?”

“Wel, faather wauz gowing of too Fraans agane in a weke, and Hozmer rote and ced dhat it wood be safer and better not too ce eche uther until he had gon. We cood rite in the meentime, and he uest too rite evvery da. I tooc the letterz in in the morning, so dhare wauz no nede for faather too no.”

“Wer u en’gaijd too the gentelman at this time?”

“O, yes, Mr. Hoamz. We wer en’gaijd aafter the ferst wauc dhat we tooc. Hozmer—Mr. Ain’gel—wauz a casheyer in an office in Leddenhaul Strete—and—”

“Whaut office?”

“Dhats the werst ov it, Mr. Hoamz, I doant no.”

“Whare did he liv, then?”

“He slept on the premmicez.”

“And u doant no hiz adres?”

“No—exept dhat it wauz Leddenhaul Strete.”

“Whare did u adres yor letterz, then?”

“Too the Leddenhaul Strete Poast Office, too be left til cauld for. He ced dhat if dha wer cent too the office he wood be chaaft bi aul the uther clarx about havving letterz from a lady, so I offerd too tiaprite them, like he did hiz, but he woodnt hav dhat, for he ced dhat when I rote them dha ceemd too cum from me, but when dha wer tiapritten he aulwase felt dhat the mashene had cum betwene us. Dhat wil just sho u hou fond he wauz ov me, Mr. Hoamz, and the littel thhingz dhat he wood thhinc ov.”

“It wauz moast sugestive,” ced Hoamz. “It haz long bene an axeyom ov mine dhat the littel thhingz ar infiniatly the moast important. Can u remember enny uther littel thhingz about Mr. Hozmer Ain’gel?”

“He wauz a verry shi man, Mr. Hoamz. He wood raather wauc withe me in the evening dhan in the dalite, for he ced dhat he hated too be conspicuwous. Verry retiring and gentelmanly he wauz. Even hiz vois wauz gentel. Hede had the qwincy and swollen glandz when he wauz yung, he toald me, and it had left him withe a weke throte, and a hezsitating, whispering fashon ov speche. He wauz aulwase wel drest, verry nete and plane, but hiz ise wer weke, just az mine ar, and he woer tinted glaacez against the glare.”

“Wel, and whaut happend when Mr. Windibanc, yor stepfaather, reternd too Fraans?”

“Mr. Hozmer Ain’gel came too the hous agane and propoazd dhat we shood marry befoer faather came bac. He wauz in dredfool ernest and made me sware, withe mi handz on the Testament, dhat whautevver happend I wood aulwase be tru too him. Muther ced he wauz qwite rite too make me sware, and dhat it wauz a cine ov hiz pashon. Muther wauz aul in hiz favor from the ferst and wauz even fonder ov him dhan I wauz. Then, when dha tauct ov marreying within the weke, I began too aasc about faather; but dha boath ced nevver too miand about faather, but just too tel him aafterwordz, and muther ced she wood make it aul rite withe him. I didnt qwite like dhat, Mr. Hoamz. It ceemd funny dhat I shood aasc hiz leve, az he wauz oonly a fu yeerz oalder dhan me; but I didnt waunt too doo ennithhing on the sli, so I rote too faather at Bordo, whare the cumpany haz its French officez, but the letter came bac too me on the verry morning ov the wedding.”

“It mist him, then?”

“Yes, cer; for he had started too In’gland just befoer it ariavd.”

“Haa! dhat wauz unforchunate. Yor wedding wauz arainjd, then, for the Frida. Wauz it too be in cherch?”

“Yes, cer, but verry qwiyetly. It wauz too be at St. Saveyorz, nere Kingz Cros,

and we wer too hav brecfast aafterwordz at the St. Pancras Hotel. Hozmer came for us in a hansom, but az dhare wer too ov us he poot us boath intoo it and stept himcelf intoo a foer-wheler, which happend too be the oonly uther cab in the strete. We got too the chersch ferst, and when the foer-wheler drove up we wated for him too step out, but he nevver did, and when the cabman got doun from the box and looct dhare wauz no wun dhare! The cabman ced dhat he cood not imadgine whaut had becum ov him, for he had cene him ghet in withe hiz one ise.

Dhat wauz laast Frida, Mr. Hoamz, and I hav nevver cene or herd ennithhing cins then too thro enny lite uppon whaut became ov him."

"It ceemz too me dhat u hav bene verry shaimfooly treted," ced Hoamz.

"O, no, cer! He wauz too good and kiand too leve me so. Whi, aul the morning he wauz saying too me dhat, whautevver happend, I wauz too be tru; and dhat even if sumthhing qwite unfoercene okerd too cepparate us, I wauz aulwase too remember dhat I wauz plejd too him, and dhat he wood clame hiz plej sooner or later. It ceemd strainj tauc for a wedding-morning, but whaut haz happend cins ghivz a mening too it."

"Moast certainly it duz. Yor one opinyon iz, then, dhat sum unfoercene catastrofy haz okerd too him?"

“Yes, cer. I beleve dhat he foersau sum dain’ger, or els he wood not hav tauct so. And then I thhinc dhat whaut he foersau happend.”

“But u hav no noashon az too whaut it cood hav bene?”

“Nun.”

“Wun moer qweschon. Hou did yor muther take the matter?”

“She wauz an’gry, and ced dhat I wauz nevver too speke ov the matter agane.”

“And yor faather? Did u tel him?”

“Yes; and he ceemd too thhinc, withe me, dhat sumthhing had happend, and dhat I shood here ov Hozmer agane. Az he ced, whaut interest cood enniwun hav in bringing me too the doerz ov the cherch, and then leving me? Nou, if he had borode mi munny, or if he had marrede me and got mi munny cetteld on him, dhare mite be sum rezon, but Hozmer wauz verry independent about munny and nevver wood looc at a shilling ov mine. And yet, whaut cood hav happend? And whi cood he not rite? O, it driavz me haaf-mad too thhinc ov it, and I caant slepe a winc at nite.” She poold a littel hankerchefe out ov her muf and began too sob hevvely intoo it.

“I shal glaans intoo the cace for u,” ced Hoamz, rising, “and I hav no dout dhat we shal reche sum deffinite rezult. Let the wate ov the matter rest uppon me nou, and doo not let yor miand dwel uppon it ferther. Abuv aul,

tri too let Mr. Hozmer Ain'gel vannish from yor memmory, az he haz dun from yor life."

"Then u doant thhinc Ile ce him agane?"

"I fere not."

"Then whaut haz happend too him?"

"U wil leve dhat qweschon in mi handz. I shood like an accurate descripshon ov him and enny letterz ov hiz which u can spare."

"I advertiazd for him in laast Satterdase Cronnikel," ced she. "Here iz the slip and here ar foer letterz from him."

"Thanc u. And yor adres?"

"No. 31 Leyon Place, Camberwel."

"Mr. Ain'gelz adres u nevver had, I understand. Whare iz yor faatherz place ov biznes?"

"He travvelz for West'hous & Marbanc, the grate clarret impoerterz ov Fencherch Strete."

"Thanc u. U hav made yor staitment verry cleerly. U wil leve the paperz here, and remember the advice which I hav ghivven u. Let the whole incident be a ceeld booc, and doo not alou it too afect yor life."

"U ar verry kiand, Mr. Hoamz, but I canot doo dhat. I shal be tru too

Hozmer. He shal fiand me reddy when he cumz bac.”

For aul the preposterous hat and the vaccuwous face, dhare wauz sumthhing nobel in the cimpel faith ov our vizsitor which compeld our respect. She lade her littel bundel ov paperz uppon the tabel and went her wa, withe a prommice too cum agane whenever she mite be summond.

Sherloc Hoamz sat cilent for a fu minnuets withe hiz fin'ghertips stil prest tooghether, hiz legz strecht out in frunt ov him, and hiz gase directed upword too the celing. Then he tooc doun from the rac the oald and oily cla pipe, which wauz too him az a councelor, and, havving lit it, he leend bac in hiz chare, withe the thhic blu cloud-reeths spinning up from him, and a looc ov infinite lan'gor in hiz face.

“Qwite an interesting studdy, dhat maden,” he observd. “I found her moer interesting dhan her littel problem, which, bi the wa, iz raather a trite wun. U wil fiand parralel cacez, if u consult mi index, in Andover in '77, and dhare wauz sumthhing ov the sort at The Haghe laast yere. Oald az iz the ideyaa, houwevver, dhare wer wun or too detailz which wer nu too me. But the maden hercelf wauz moast instructive.”

“U apeerd too rede a good dele uppon her which wauz qwite invizsibel too me,” I remarct.

“Not invizsibel but unnotiast, Wautson. U did not no whare too looc, and so u mist aul dhat wauz important. I can nevver bring u too reyalise the importans ov sleevez, the sugestiavnes ov thum-nailz, or the grate ishuse

dhat ma hang from a boote-lace. Nou, whaut did u gather from dhat
woommanz
aperans? Describe it.”

“Wel, she had a slate-cullord, braud-brimd strau hat, withe a fether ov a
brickish red. Her jacket wauz blac, withe blac beedz sone uppon it, and a
frinj
ov littel blac get ornaments. Her dres wauz broun, raather darker dhan
coffy
collor, withe a littel perpel plush at the nec and sleevz. Her gluvz wer
grayish and wer woern throo at the rite foerfin’gher. Her buits I didnt
observ. She had smaul round, hanging goald eringz, and a genneral are ov
beying
faerly wel-too-doo in a vulgar, cumfortabel, esy-gowing wa.”

Sherloc Hoamz clapt hiz handz softly tooghether and chuckeld.

“ Pon mi werd, Wautson, u ar cumming along wunderfooly. U hav reyal
dun
verry wel indede. It iz tru dhat u hav mist evverithhing ov importans, but
u hav hit uppon the method, and u hav a qwic i for cullor. Nevver trust
too genneral impreshonz, mi boi, but concentrate yorcelf uppon detailz. Mi
ferst
glaans iz aulwase at a woommanz sleeve. In a man it iz perhaps better ferst
too
take the ne ov the trouser. Az u observ, this woomman had plush uppon
her
sleevz, which iz a moast uesfool matereyal for showing tracez. The dubbel
line a
littel abuv the rist, whare the tiapritist prescez against the tabel, wauz
butifooly defiad. The sowing-mashene, ov the hand tipe, leevz a cimmilar
marc, but oonly on the left arm, and on the cide ov it farthest from the
thum,
insted ov beying rite acros the braudest part, az this wauz. I then glaanst at

her face, and, observing the dint ov a pans-na at iather side ov her nose, I venchuerd a remarc uppon short cite and tiapriting, which ceemd too cerprise her."

"It cerpriazd me."

"But, shuerly, it wauz obveyous. I wauz then much cerpriazd and interested on glaancing doun too observ dhat, dho the buits which she wauz waring wer not unlike eche uther, dha wer reyaly od wunz; the wun havving a sliatly deccorated to-cap, and the uther a plane wun. Wun wauz buttond oanly in the too lower buttonz out ov five, and the uther at the ferst, thherd, and fifth. Nou, when u ce dhat a yung lady, utherwise neetly drest, haz cum awa from home withe od buits, haaf-buttond, it iz no grate deducshon too sa dhat she came awa in a hurry."

"And whaut els?" I aasct, keenly interested, az I aulwase wauz, bi mi frendz incicive rezoning.

"I noted, in paacing, dhat she had ritten a note befoer leving home but aafter beying foolly drest. U observd dhat her rite gluv wauz toern at the foerfin'gher, but u did not aparrently ce dhat boath gluv and fin'gher wer staind withe vियोlet inc. She had ritten in a hurry and dipt her pen too depe. It must hav bene this morning, or the marc wood not remane clere uppon the fin'gher. Aul this iz amusing, dho raather elementary, but I must go bac too biznes, Wautson. Wood u miand reding me the advertiazd descripshon ov Mr. Hozmer Ain'gel?"

I held the littel printed slip too the lite.

“Miscing,” it ced, “on the morning ov the forteenth, a gentelman naimd Hozmer

Ain’ gel. About five ft. cevven in. in hite; strongly bilt, sallo complecshon, blac hare, a littel bauld in the center, booshy, blac cide-whiskerz and moostaash; tinted glaacez, slite infermity ov speche. Wauz drest, when laast

cene, in blac froc-cote faist withe cilc, blac waistcote, goald Albert chane, and gra Harris twede trouserz, withe broun gaterz over elaastic-cided buits.

None too hav bene emploid in an office in Leddenhaul Strete. Enniboddy bringing—”

“Dhat wil doo,” ced Hoamz. “Az too the letterz,” he continnude, glaancing over

them, “dha ar verry commonplace. Absoluetly no clu in them too Mr.

Ain’ gel, save

dhat he qwoats Balzac wuns. Dhare iz wun remarcabel point, houwevver, which wil

no dout strike u.”

“Dha ar tiapritten,” I remarct.

“Not oonly dhat, but the cignachure iz tiapritten. Looc at the nete littel

‘Hozmer Ain’ gel’ at the bottom. Dhare iz a date, u ce, but no

superscripshon

exept Leddenhaul Strete, which iz raather vaghe. The point about the

cignachure

iz verry sugestive—in fact, we ma caul it conclucive.”

“Ov whaut?”

“Mi dere fello, iz it poscibel u doo not ce hou strongly it baerz uppon the cace?”

“I canot sa dhat I doo unles it wer dhat he wisht too be abel too deni hiz cignachure if an acshon for breche ov prommice wer instichuted.”

“No, dhat wauz not the point. Houwevver, I shal rite too letterz, which shood cettel the matter. Wun iz too a ferm in the Citty, the uther iz too the yung ladese stepfaather, Mr. Windibanc, aasking him whether he cood mete us here at six oacloc toomoro evening. It iz just az wel dhat we shood doo biznes withe the male rellatiavz. And nou, Doctor, we can doo nuthing until the aancerz too dhose letterz cum, so we ma poot our littel problem uppon the shelf for the interim.”

I had had so menny rezonz too beleve in mi frendz suttel pouwerz ov rezoning and extrordinary ennergy in acshon dhat I felt dhat he must hav sum sollid groundz for the ashuerd and esy demenor withe which he treted the cin'gular mistery which he had bene cauld uppon too fadhom. Wuns oonly had I none him too fale, in the cace ov the King ov Bohemeyaa and ov the Irene Adler fotograaf; but when I looct bac too the weerd biznes ov the Cine ov Foer, and the extrordinary circumstaancez conected withe the Studdy in Scarlet, I felt dhat it wood be a strainj tan'ghel indede which he cood not unravvel.

I left him then, stil puffing at hiz blac cla pipe, withe the convicshon dhat

when I came agane on the next evening I wood fiand dhat he held in hiz handz
aul the cluse which wood lede up too the identity ov the disapering briadgroom ov Mis Mary Sutherland.

A profeshonal cace ov grate gravvity wauz en'gaging mi one atenshon at the time,
and the whole ov next da I wauz bizsy at the bedcide ov the sufferer. It wauz not
until cloce uppon cix oacloc dhat I found micelf fre and wauz abel too spring
intoo a hansom and drive too Baker Strete, haaf afrade dhat I mite be too late
too acist at the danoomon ov the littel mistery. I found Sherloc Hoamz alone, houwevver, haaf aslepe, withe hiz long, thhin form kerld up in the rececez
ov hiz armchare. A formiddabel ara ov bottelz and test-chuebz, withe the pun'gent
clenly smel ov hiadrocloric ascid, toald me dhat he had spent hiz da in the kemmical werc which wauz so dere too him.

"Wel, hav u solvd it?" I aasct az I enterd.

"Yes. It wauz the bisulfate ov baritaa."

"No, no, the mistery!" I cride.

"O, dhat! I thaut ov the sault dhat I hav bene werking uppon. Dhare wauz nevver
enny mistery in the matter, dho, az I ced yesterda, sum ov the detailz ar ov interest. The oonly draubac iz dhat dhare iz no lau, I fere, dhat can tuch the scoundrel."

“Whoo wauz he, then, and whaut wauz hiz obgett in deserting Mis Sutherland?”

The qweschon wauz hardly out ov mi mouth, and Hoamz had not yet opend hiz lips too repli, when we herd a hevvy footfaul in the passage and a tap at the doer.

“This iz the gherlz stepfaather, Mr. Jaimz Windibanc,” ced Hoamz. “He haz ritten too me too sa dhat he wood be here at cix. Cum in!”

The man whoo enterd wauz a sterdy, middel-ciazd fello, sum therty yeez ov age, clene-shaven, and sallo-skind, withe a bland, incinnuwating manner, and a pare ov wunderfooly sharp and pennetrating gra ise. He shot a qweschoning glaans at eche ov us, plaist hiz shiny top-hat uppon the ciadboerd, and withe a slite bou cideld doun intoo the nerest chare.

“Good-evening, Mr. Jaimz Windibanc,” ced Hoamz. “I thhinc dhat this tiapritten letter iz from u, in which u made an apointment withe me for cix oacloc?”

“Yes, cer. I am afrade dhat I am a littel late, but I am not qwite mi one maaster, u no. I am sory dhat Mis Sutherland haz trubbed u about this littel matter, for I thhinc it iz far better not too waush linnen ov the sort in public. It wauz qwite against mi wishez dhat she came, but she iz a verry exitabel, impulcive gherl, az u ma hav notiast, and she iz not esily controald when she haz made up her miand on a point. Ov coers, I did not miand u so much, az u ar not conected withe the ofishal polece, but it iz not

plezzant too hav a fammily misforchune like this noizd abraud. Beciadz, it iz a uesles expens, for hou cood u poscibly fiand this Hozmer Ain'gel?"

"On the contrary," ced Hoamz qwiyetly; "I hav evvery rezon too beleve dhat I wil suxede in discuvvering Mr. Hozmer Ain'gel."

Mr. Windibanc gave a viyolent start and dropt hiz gluvz. "I am delited too here it," he ced.

"It iz a cureyous thhing," remarct Hoamz, "dhat a tiapriter haz reyaly qwrite az much indivijuwality az a manz handriting. Unles dha ar qwrite nu, no too ov them rite exactly alike. Sum letterz ghet moer woern dhan utherz, and sum ware oonly on wun cide. Nou, u remarc in this note ov yorz, Mr. Windibanc, dhat in evvery cace dhare iz sum littel sluuring over ov the 'e,' and a slite defect in the tale ov the 'r.' Dhare ar foertene uther characteristix, but dhose ar the moer obveyous."

"We doo aul our corespondens withe this mashene at the office, and no dout it iz a littel woern," our vizsitor aancerd, glaancing keenly at Hoamz withe hiz brite littel ise.

"And nou I wil sho u whaut iz reyaly a verry interesting studdy, Mr. Windibanc," Hoamz continnude. "I thhinc ov riting anuther littel monnograaf sum ov these dase on the tiapriter and its relaishon too crime. It iz a subject too which I hav devoted sum littel atenshon. I hav here foer letterz which

perport too cum from the miscing man. Dha ar aul tiapritten. In eche cace, not oonly ar the 'e'z' slerd and the 'r'z' tail'les, but u wil observ, if u care too use mi magnifiying lenz, dhat the foertene uther caracteristix too which I hav aluded ar dhare az wel."

Mr. Windibanc sprang out ov hiz chare and pict up hiz hat. "I canot waist time over this sort ov fantastic tauc, Mr. Hoamz," he ced. "If u can cach the man, cach him, and let me no when u hav dun it."

"Certainly," ced Hoamz, stepping over and terning the ke in the doer. "I let u no, then, dhat I hav caut him!"

"Whaut! whare?" shouted Mr. Windibanc, terning white too hiz lips and glaancing about him like a rat in a trap.

"O, it woant doo—reyaly it woant," ced Hoamz swaavly. "Dhare iz no poscibel ghetting out ov it, Mr. Windibanc. It iz qwite too traansparent, and it wauz a verry bad compliment when u ced dhat it wauz imposcibel for me too solv so cimpel a qweschon. Dhats rite! Cit doun and let us tauc it over."

Our vizsitor colapst intoo a chare, withe a gaastly face and a glitter ov moischure on hiz brou. "It—its not acshonabel," he stammerd.

"I am verry much afrade dhat it iz not. But betwene ourcelvz, Windibanc, it wauz az cruwel and celfish and hartles a tric in a petty wa az evver came befoer me. Nou, let me just run over the coers ov events, and u wil contradict me if I go rong."

The man sat huddled up in his chair, with his head sunk upon his breast, like
wun whoo iz utterly crushed. Hoamz stuc his fete up on the corner ov the
mantelpece and, lening bac with his handz in his pockets, began tauking,
raather too himself, az it ceemd, dhan too us.

“The man marrede a wooman verry much oalder dhan himself for her
munny,” ced he,

“and he enjoid the uce ov the munny ov the dauter az long az she livd
with

them. It wauz a concidderabel sum, for pepel in dhare posishon, and the
los ov

it wood hav made a cereyous differens. It wauz werth an effort too preserv
it.

The dauter wauz ov a good, ameyabel disposishon, but afecshonate and
worm-harted in her wase, so dhat it wauz evvident dhat with her fare
personal

advaantagez, and her littel incum, she wood not be aloud too remane
cin’ghel

long. Nou her marrage wood mene, ov coers, the los ov a hundred a yere,
so

whaut duz her stepfaather doo too prevent it? He taix the obveyous coers
ov

keping her at home and forbidding her too ceke the cumpany ov pepel ov
her one

age. But soone he found dhat dhat wood not aancer forevver. She became
restive,

incisted uppon her riats, and finaly anounst her pozsitive intenshon ov
gowing

too a certane baul. Whaut duz her clevver stepfaather doo then? He
conceevz an

ideyaa moer creditabel too his hed dhan too his hart. With the conivans
and

acistans ov his wife he disghiazd himself, cuvverd dhose kene ise with

tinted glaacez, maasct the face withe a moostaash and a pare ov booshy
whiskerz,
sunc dhat clere vois intoo an incinnuwating whisper, and dubly ceure on
acount
ov the gherlz short cite, he apeerz az Mr. Hozmer Ain'gel, and keeps of
uther
luvverz bi making luv himcelf."

"It wauz oanly a joke at ferst," groand our vizsitor. "We nevver thaut dhat
she
wood hav bene so carrede awa."

"Verry liacly not. Houwevver dhat ma be, the yung lady wauz verry
decidedly
carrede awa, and, havving qwite made up her miand dhat her stepfaather
wauz in
Fraans, the suspishon ov tretchery nevver for an instant enterd her miand.
She
wauz flatterd bi the gentelmanz atenshonz, and the efect wauz increest bi
the loudly exprest admiraishon ov her muther. Then Mr. Ain'gel began too
caul,
for it wauz obveyous dhat the matter shood be poosht az far az it wood go
if a
reyal efect wer too be projuest. Dhare wer metingz, and an en'gajment,
which
wood finaly ceure the gherlz afecshonz from terning toowordz enniwun
els.
But the decepshon cood not be kept up forevver. These pretended gernese
too
Fraans wer raather cumbrous. The thhing too doo wauz cleerly too bring
the biznes
too an end in such a dramattic manner dhat it wood leve a permanent
impreshon

uppon the yung ladese miand and prevent her from loocking uppon enny uther sutor for sum time too cum. Hens dhose vouz ov fidellity exacted uppon a Testament, and hens aulso the aluezhonz too a pocibillity ov sumthhing happening on the verry morning ov the wedding. Jaimz Windibanc wisht Mis Sutherland too be so bound too Hozmer Ain'gel, and so uncertane az too hiz fate, dhat for ten yearz too cum, at enny rate, she wood not liscen too anuther man. Az far az the cherch doer he braut her, and then, az he cood go no farther, he conveyently vannisht awa bi the oald tric ov stepping in at wun doer ov a foer-wheler and out at the uther. I thhinc dhat wauz the chane ov events, Mr. Windibanc!"

Our vizsitor had recuvverd sumthhing ov hiz ashurans while Hoamz had bene tauking, and he rose from hiz chare nou withe a coald snere uppon hiz pale face.

"It ma be so, or it ma not, Mr. Hoamz," ced he, "but if u ar so verry sharp u aut too be sharp enuf too no dhat it iz u whoo ar braking the lau nou, and not me. I hav dun nuthhing acshonabel from the ferst, but az long az u kepe dhat doer loct u la yorcelf open too an acshon for asault and ilegal constraint."

"The lau canot, az u sa, tuch u," ced Hoamz, unlocking and throwing open the doer, "yet dhare nevver wauz a man whoo deservd punnishment moer. If the yung lady haz a bruther or a frend, he aut too la a whip acros yor

shoalderz. Bi Jove!" he continnude, flushing up at the cite ov the bitter snere
uppon the manz face, "it iz not part ov mi jutese too mi cliyent, but heerz a hunting crop handy, and I thhinc I shal just trete micelf too—" He tooc too swift steps too the whip, but befoer he cood graasp it dhare wauz a wiald clatter
ov steps uppon the staerz, the hevvy haul doer bangd, and from the windo we
cood ce Mr. Jaimz Windibanc running at the top ov hiz spede down the rode.

"Dhaerz a coald-bludded scoundrel!" ced Hoamz, laafing, az he thru himcelf
doun intoo hiz chare wuns moer. "Dhat fello wil rise from crime too crime until
he duz sumthhing verry bad, and endz on a gallose. The cace haz, in sum respects, bene not entiarly devoid ov interest."

"I canot nou entiarly ce aul the steps ov yor rezoning," I remarct.

"Wel, ov coers it wauz obveyous from the ferst dhat this Mr. Hozmer Ain'gel must
hav sum strong obgett for hiz cureyous conduct, and it wauz eeqwaly clere dhat
the oanly man whoo reyaly proffited bi the incident, az far az we cood ce, wauz
the stepfaather. Then the fact dhat the too men wer nevver tooghether, but dhat
the wun aulwase apeerd when the uther wauz awa, wauz sugestive. So wer the
tinted spektakelz and the cureyous vois, which boath hinted at a disghise, az
did the booshy whiskerz. Mi suspishonz wer aul confermd bi hiz peculeyar acshon

in tiapriting hiz cignachure, which, ov coers, inferd dhat hiz handriting wauz so familleyar too her dhat she wood reccognise even the smaulest saampel ov it.

U ce aul these isolated facts, tooghether withe menny minor wunz, aul pointed in the same direcshon.”

“And hou did u verrifi them?”

“Havving wuns spotted mi man, it wauz esy too ghet coroboraishon. I nu the ferm for which this man werct. Havving taken the printed descriphon. I eliminated evverithhing from it which cood be the rezult ov a disghise—the whiskerz, the glaacez, the vois, and I cent it too the ferm, withe a reqwest dhat dha wood inform me whether it aancerd too the descriphon ov enny ov dhare travvelerz. I had aulreddy notiast the peculeyarritese ov the tiapriter, and I rote too the man himcelf at hiz biznes adres aasking him if he wood cum here. Az I expected, hiz repli wauz tiapritten and reveeld the same trivveyal but characteristic defects. The same poast braut me a letter from West’hous & Marbanc, ov Fencherch Strete, too sa dhat the descriphon tallede in evvery respect withe dhat ov dhare employi Jaimz Windibanc. Vwaalaatoo!”

“And Mis Sutherland?”

“If I tel her she wil not beleve me. U ma remember the oald Perzhan saying, ‘Dhare iz dain’ger for him whoo taketh the tigher cub, and dain’ger aulso for whooso snatchez a deluezhon from a woomman.’ Dhare iz az much cens in Hafiz az in Horace, and az much nollej ov the world.”

The Boscome Vally Mistery

We wer ceted at brecfast wun morning, mi wife and I, when the made braut in a tellegram. It wauz from Sherloc Hoamz and ran in this wa:

“Hav u a cuppel ov dase too spare? Hav just bene wiard for from the west ov

In’gland in conecshon withe Boscome Vally tradgedy. Shal be glad if u wil cum withe me. Are and cenary perfect. Leve Paddington bi the 11:15.”

“Whaut doo u sa, dere?” ced mi wife, loocking acros at me. “Wil u go?”

“I reyaly doant no whaut too sa. I hav a faerly long list at prezsent.”

“O, Anstruther wood doo yor werc for u. U hav bene loocking a littel pale laitley. I thhinc dhat the chainj wood doo u good, and u ar aulwase so interested in Mr. Sherloc Hoamsez cacez.”

“I shood be un’graitfool if I wer not, ceying whaut I gaind throo wun ov them,” I aancerd. “But if I am too go, I must pac at wuns, for I hav oanly haaf an our.”

Mi expereyens ov camp life in Afganistan had at leest had the efect ov making me a prompt and reddy travveler. Mi waunts wer fu and cimpel, so dhat in les dhan the time stated I wauz in a cab withe mi valse, ratling awa too Paddington Staishon. Sherloc Hoamz wauz pacing up and doun the platform, hiz taul, gaunt figgure made even gaunter and tauler bi hiz long gra travveling-cloke and cloce-fitting cloth cap.

“It iz reyaly verry good ov u too cum, Wautson,” ced he. “It maix a concidderabel differens too me, havving sumwun withe me on whoome I can thurroly reli. Local ade iz aulwase iather werthles or els biast. If u wil kepe the too corner ceets I shal ghet the tickets.”

We had the carrage too ourcelvz save for an imens litter ov paperz which Hoamz had braut withe him. Amung these he rummaid and red, withe intervalz ov note-taking and ov meditaishon, until we wer paast Redding. Then he suddenly roald them aul intoo a gigantic baul and tost them up ontoo the rac.

“Hav u herd ennithing ov the cace?” he aasct.

“Not a werd. I hav not cene a paper for sum dase.”

“The Lundon pres haz not had verry fool acounts. I hav just bene loocking throo aul the recent paperz in order too maaster the particcularz. It ceemz, from whaut I gather, too be wun ov dhose cimpel cacez which ar so extreemly difficult.”

“Dhat soundz a littel paradoxical.”

“But it iz profoundly tru. Cin’gularrrity iz aulmoast invareyably a clu. The moer fechuerles and commonplace a crime iz, the moer difficult it iz too bring it home. In this cace, houwevver, dha hav establisht a verry cereyous cace against the sun ov the merderd man.”

“It iz a merder, then?”

“Wel, it iz con’gechuerd too be so. I shal take nuthhing for graanted until I hav the oporchunity ov loocking personaly intoo it. I wil explane the state ov thhingz too u, az far az I hav bene abel too understand it, in a verry fu werdz.

“Boscome Vally iz a cuntry district not verry far from Ros, in Herefordshire. The largest landed propriyetor in dhat part iz a Mr. Jon Turner, whoo made hiz munny in Australeyaa and reternd sum yeeرز ago too the oald cuntry. Wun ov the farmz which he held, dhat ov Hathherly, wauz let too Mr. Charlz McCarthy, whoo wauz aulso an ex-Australeyan. The men had none eche uther in the collonese, so dhat it wauz not un’natchural dhat when dha came too cettel doun dha shood doo so az nere eche uther az poscibel. Turner wauz aparrently the ritcher man, so McCarthy became hiz tennant but stil remaind, it ceemz, uppon termz ov perfect eqwaulity, az dha wer freeqwently tooghether. McCarthy had wun sun, a lad

ov atene, and Turner had an oonly dauter ov the same age, but niather ov them had wiavz livving. Dha apere too hav avoided the sociyety ov the naboring In'glish fammilese and too hav led retiard liavz, dho both the McCarthses wer fond ov spoert and wer freeqwently cene at the race-metingz ov the naborhood. McCarthy kept too cervants—a man and a gherl. Turner had a concidderabel hous'hoald, sum haaf-duzsen at the leest. Dhat iz az much bene abel too gather about the fammilese. Nou for the facts.

“On June 3rd, dhat iz, on Munda laast, McCarthy left hiz hous at Hathherly about thre in the aafternoone and wauct down too the Boscome Poole, which iz a smaul lake formd bi the spredding out ov the streme which runz down the Boscome Vally. He had bene out withe hiz cerving-man in the morning at Ros, and he had toald the man dhat he must hurry, az he had an apointment ov importans too kepe at thre. From dhat apointment he nevver came bac alive.

“From Hathherly Farmhous too the Boscome Poole iz a qworter ov a mile, and too pepel sau him az he paast over this ground. Wun wauz an oald woomman, whoose name iz not menshond, and the uther wauz Willeyam Crouder, a game-keper in the emploi ov Mr. Turner. Both these witnecez depose dhat Mr. McCarthy wauz wauking alone. The game-keper adz dhat within a fu minnuets ov hiz ceying Mr. McCarthy paas he had cene hiz sun, Mr. Jaimz McCarthy, gowing the same wa withe

a gun under hiz arm. Too the best ov hiz belefe, the faather wauz
acchuwaly in
cite at the time, and the sun wauz following him. He thaut no moer ov the
matter until he herd in the evening ov the tradgedy dhat had okerd.

“The too McCarthese wer cene aafter the time when Willeyam Crouder,
the
game-keper, lost cite ov them. The Boscome Poole iz thhicly woodded
round,
withe just a frinj ov graas and ov reedz round the ej. A gherl ov foertene,
Paishens Moran, whoo iz the dauter ov the loj-keper ov the Boscome Vally
estate, wauz in wun ov the woodz picking flouwerz. She staits dhat while
she wauz
dhare she sau, at the border ov the wood and cloce bi the lake, Mr.
McCarthy
and hiz sun, and dhat dha apeerd too be havving a viyolent qworel. She
herd
Mr. McCarthy the elder using verry strong lan’gwage too hiz sun, and she
sau the
latter rase up hiz hand az if too strike hiz faather. She wauz so fritend bi
dhare viyolens dhat she ran awa and toald her muther when she reecht
home dhat
she had left the too McCarthese qworeling nere Boscome Poole, and dhat
she wauz
afrade dhat dha wer gowing too fite. She had hardly ced the werdz when
yung
Mr. McCarthy came running up too the loj too sa dhat he had found hiz
faather
ded in the wood, and too aasc for the help ov the loj-keper. He wauz much
exited, widhout iather hiz gun or hiz hat, and hiz rite hand and sleve wer
observd too be staid withe fresh blud. On following him dha found the
ded
boddy strecht out uppon the graas becide the poole. The hed had bene
beten in

bi repeted blose ov sum hevvy and blunt weppon. The injurese wer such az mite verry wel hav bene inflicted bi the but-end ov hiz sunz gun, which wauz found liying on the graas within a fu pacez ov the boddy. Under these cercumstaancez the yung man wauz instantly arested, and a verdict ov 'wilfool merder' havving bene reternd at the inqwest on Chuezdá, he wauz on Wednzda braut befoer the madgistraits at Ros, whoo hav referd the cace too the next Acisez. Dhose ar the mane facts ov the cace az dha came out befoer the coroner and the polece-coert."

"I cood hardly imadgine a moer damming cace," I remarct. "If evver cercumstaanshal evvidens pointed too a crimminal it duz so here."

"Cercumstaanshal evvidens iz a verry tricky thhing," aancerd Hoamz thautfooly.

"It ma ceme too point verry strate too wun thhing, but if u shift yor one point ov vu a littel, u ma fiand it pointing in an eeqwaly uncompromising manner too sumthhing entiarily different. It must be confest, houwevver, dhat the

cace loox exedingly grave against the yung man, and it iz verry poscibel dhat he iz indede the culprit. Dhare ar cevveral pepel in the naborhood, houwevver, and amung them Mis Turner, the dauter ov the naboring landowner, whoo beleve in hiz innocens, and whoo hav retaind Lestrade, whoome

u ma recolect in conecshon withe the Studdy in Scarlet, too werc out the cace

in hiz interest. Lestrade, beying raather puzseld, haz referd the cace too me, and hens it iz dhat too middel-aijd gentelmen ar fliying westword at fifty mialz an our insted ov qwiyetly digesting dhare brecfasts at home."

"I am afrade," ced I, "dhat the facts ar so obveyous dhat u wil fiand littel credit too be gaind out ov this cace."

“Dhare iz nuthhing moer deceptive dhan an obveyous fact,” he aancerd, laafing.

“Beciadz, we ma chaans too hit uppon sum uther obveyous facts which ma hav

bene bi no meenz obveyous too Mr. Lestrade. U no me too wel too thhinc dhat I

am boasting when I sa dhat I shal iather conferm or destroi hiz ththeyory bi meenz which he iz qwite incapabel ov employiing, or even ov understanding. Too

take the ferst exaampel too hand, I verry cleerly perceve dhat in yor bedroome

the windo iz uppon the rite-hand cide, and yet I qweschon whether Mr. Lestrade

wood hav noted even so celf-evvident a thhing az dhat.”

“Hou on erth—”

“Mi dere fello, I no u wel. I no the millitary neetnes which carracterizez u. U shave evvery morning, and in this cezon u shave bi the sunlite; but cins yor shaving iz les and les complete az we ghet farther bac on the left cide, until it becumz pozsitiavly sluvvenly az we ghet round the

an’ghel ov the jau, it iz shuerly verry clere dhat dhat cide iz les iluminated dhan the uther. I cood not imadgine a man ov yor habbits loocking at himcelf in

an eeqwal lite and beying sattisfide withe such a rezult. I oonly qwote this az a

trivveyal exaampel ov observaishon and inferens. Dharin lise mi mateyer, and it iz

just poscibel dhat it ma be ov sum cervice in the investigaishon which lise befoer us. Dhare ar wun or too minor points which wer braut out in the inqwest, and which ar werth conciddering.”

“Whaut ar dha?”

“It apeerz dhat hiz arest did not take place at wuns, but aafter the retern too Hathherly Farm. On the inspector ov constabbulary informing him dhat he wauz a prizzoner, he remarct dhat he wauz not cerpriazd too here it, and dhat it wauz no moer dhan hiz deserts. This observaishon ov hiz had the natchural efect ov remooving enny tracez ov dout which mite hav remaind in the miandz ov the coronerz jury.”

“It wauz a confeshon,” I ejacculated.

“No, for it wauz follode bi a protestaishon ov innocens.”

“Cumming on the top ov such a damming cerese ov events, it wauz at leest a moast suspishous remarc.”

“On the contrary,” ced Hoamz, “it iz the britest rift which I can at prezsent ce in the cloudz. Houwevver innocent he mite be, he cood not be such an absolute imbecele az not too ce dhat the cercumstaancez wer verry blac against him. Had he apeerd cerpriazd at hiz one arest, or faind indignaishon at it, I shood hav looct uppon it az hily suspishous, becauz such cerprise or an’gher wood not be natchural under the cercumstaancez, and yet mite apere too be the best pollicy too a skeming man. Hiz franc axeptans ov the cichuwaishon marx him az iather an innocent man, or els az a man ov concidderabel celf-restraint and fermnes. Az too hiz remarc about hiz deserts,

it wauz aulso not un'natchural if u concidder dhat he stood becide the ded boddy ov hiz faather, and dhat dhare iz no dout dhat he had dhat verry da so far forgotten hiz feleyal juty az too bandy werdz withe him, and even, acording too the littel gherl whoose evvidens iz so important, too rase hiz hand az if too strike him. The celf-reproche and contrishon which ar displade in hiz remarc apere too me too be the cianz ov a helthhy miand raather dhan ov a ghilty wun."

I shooc mi hed. "Menny men hav bene hangd on far sliter evvidens," I remarct.

"So dha hav. And menny men hav bene rongfooly hangd."

"Whaut iz the yung manz one acount ov the matter?"

"It iz, I am afrade, not verry encurraging too hiz supoerterz, dho dhare ar wun or too points in it which ar sugestive. U wil fiand it here, and ma rede it for yorcelf."

He pict out from hiz bundel a cobby ov the local Herefordshire paper, and havving ternd down the shete he pointed out the parragraaf in which the unforchunate yung man had ghivven hiz one staitment ov whaut had okerd. I

cetteld micelf doun in the corner ov the carrage and rede it verry caerfooly. It ran in this wa:

"Mr. Jaimz McCarthy, the oonly sun ov the deceest, wauz then cauld and gave evvidens az follose: 'I had bene awa from home for thre dase at Bristol, and had oonly just reternd uppon the morning ov laast Munda, the 3rd. Mi faather wauz

absent from home at the time ov mi arival, and I wauz informd bi the made
dhat
he had drivven over too Ros withe Jon Cob, the groome. Shortly aafter mi
retern I
herd the wheelz ov hiz trap in the yard, and, loocking out ov mi windo, I
sau
him ghet out and wauc rappidly out ov the yard, dho I wauz not aware in
which
direcshon he wauz gowing. I then tooc mi gun and stroald out in the
direcshon ov
the Boscome Poole, withe the intenshon ov vizsiting the rabbit woren
which iz
uppon the uther side. On mi wa I sau Willeyam Crouder, the game-keper,
az he
had stated in hiz evvidens; but he iz mistaken in thhinking dhat I wauz
following
mi faather. I had no ideyaa dhat he wauz in frunt ov me. When about a
hundred yardz
from the poole I herd a cri ov "Coowy!" which wauz a uezhuwal cignal
betwene mi
faather and micelf. I then hurrede forword, and found him standing bi the
poole.
He apeerd too be much cerpriazd at ceying me and aasct me raather rufly
whaut
I wauz doowing dhare. A conversaishon ensude which led too hi werdz
and aulmoast too
blose, for mi faather wauz a man ov a verry viyolent temper. Ceying dhat
hiz
pashon wauz becumming un'guvvernabel, I left him and reternd toowordz
Hathherly
Farm. I had not gon moer dhan 150 yardz, houwevver, when I herd a
hidjous
outcri behiand me, which cauzd me too run bac agane. I found mi faather
expiring

uppon the ground, withe hiz hed terribly injuerd. I dropt mi gun and held him
in mi armz, but he aulmoast instantly expiard. I nelt beside him for sum
minnuets, and then made mi wa too Mr. Ternorz loj-keper, hiz hous beying
the
nerest, too aasc for acistans. I sau no wun nere mi faather when I reternd,
and I hav no ideyaa hou he came bi hiz injurese. He wauz not a poppular
man, beying
sumwhaut coald and forbidding in hiz mannerz, but he had, az far az I no,
no
active ennemese. I no nuthhing ferther ov the matter.'

"The Coroner: Did yor faather make enny staitment too u befoer he dide?

"Witnes: He mumbeld a fu werdz, but I cood oanly cach sum aluezhon too
a
rat.

"The Coroner: Whaut did u understand bi dhat?

"Witnes: It convade no mening too me. I thaut dhat he wauz delereyous.

"The Coroner: Whaut wauz the point uppon which u and yor faather had
this final
qworel?

"Witnes: I shood prefer not too aancer.

"The Coroner: I am afrade dhat I must pres it.

"Witnes: It iz reyaly imposcibel for me too tel u. I can ashure u dhat it
haz nuthhing too doo withe the sad tradgedy which follode.

“The Coroner: Dhat iz for the coert too decide. I nede not point out too u dhat
yor refuzal too aancer wil prejudice yor cace concidderably in enny
fuchure
procedingz which ma arise.

“Witnes: I must stil refuse.

“The Coroner: I understand dhat the cri ov ‘Coowy’ wauz a common signal
betwene
u and yor faather?

“Witnes: It wauz.

“The Coroner: Hou wauz it, then, dhat he utterd it befoer he sau u, and
befoer he even nu dhat u had reternd from Bristol?

“Witnes (withe concidderabel confuezhon): I doo not no.

“A Juriman: Did u ce nuthhing which arouzd yor suspishonz when u
reternd
on hering the cri and found yor faather fataly injuerd?

“Witnes: Nuthhing deffinite.

“The Coroner: Whaut doo u mene?

“Witnes: I wauz so disterbd and exited az I rusht out intoo the open, dhat I
cood thhinc ov nuthhing exept ov mi faather. Yet I hav a vaghe impreshon
dhat
az I ran forword sumthhing la uppon the ground too the left ov me. It
ceemd too
me too be sumthhing gra in cullor, a cote ov sum sort, or a plad perhaps.
When I rose from mi faather I looct round for it, but it wauz gon.

“ ‘Doo u mene dhat it disapeerd befoer u went for help?’

“ ‘Yes, it wauz gon.’

“ ‘U canot sa whaut it wauz?’

“ ‘No, I had a feling sumthhing wauz dhare.’

“ ‘Hou far from the boddy?’

“ ‘A duzsen yardz or so.’

“ ‘And hou far from the ej ov the wood?’

“ ‘About the same.’

“ ‘Then if it wauz remuivd it wauz while u wer within a duzsen yardz ov it?’

“ ‘Yes, but withe mi bac toowordz it.’

“This concluded the examinaishon ov the witnes.”

“I ce,” ced I az I glaanst doun the collum, “dhat the coroner in hiz concluding remarx wauz raather cevere uppon yung McCarthy. He caulz atenshon, and withe rezon, too the discreppancy about hiz faather havving cignald too him befoer ceyng him, aulso too hiz refuzal too ghiv detailz ov hiz conversaishon withe hiz faather, and hiz cin’gular acount ov hiz faatherz diying werdz. Dha ar aul, az he remarx, verry much against the sun.”

Hoamz laaft softly too himcelf and strecht himcelf out uppon the cooshond cete. "Boath u and the coroner hav bene at sum painz," ced he, "too cin'ghel out the verry stron'ghest points in the yung manz favor. Doant u ce dhat u aulternaitly ghiv him creddit for havving too much imaginaishon and too littel? Too littel, if he cood not invent a cauz ov qworel which wood ghiv him the cimpathhy ov the jury; too much, if he evolvd from hiz one inner conshousnes ennithhing so uitra az a diying refferens too a rat, and the incident ov the vannishing cloth. No, cer, I shal aproche this cace from the point ov vu dhat whaut this yung man cez iz tru, and we shal ce whither dhat hipothhecis wil lede us. And nou here iz mi pocket Petrarc, and not anuther werd shal I sa ov this cace until we ar on the cene ov acshon. We lunch at Swindon, and I ce dhat we shal be dhare in twenty minnuets."

It wauz neerly foer oacloc when we at laast, aafter paacing throo the butifool Stroud Vally, and over the braud gleming Cevern, found ourcelvz at the pritty littel cuntry-toun ov Ros. A lene, ferret-like man, fertive and sli-loocking, wauz wating for us uppon the platform. In spite ov the lite broun dustcote and lether-legghingz which he woer in defferens too hiz rustic surroundingz, I had no difficulty in reccognising Lestrade, ov Scotland Yard. Withe him we drove too the Hereford Armz whare a roome had aulreddy bene en'gaijd for us.

"I hav orderd a carrage," ced Lestrade az we sat over a cup ov te. "I nu yor energettich nature, and dhat u wood not be happy until u had bene on the cene ov the crime."

"It wauz verry nice and complimentary ov u," Hoamz aancerd. "It iz entiarly a qweschon ov barometric preshure."

Lestrade looct starteld. "I doo not qwite follo," he ced.

"Hou iz the glaas? Twenty-nine, I ce. No wind, and not a cloud in the ski. I hav a caisfool ov ciggarets here which nede smoking, and the sofaa iz verry much supereyor too the uezhuwal cuntry hotel abominaishon. I doo not thhinc dhat it iz probbabel dhat I shal use the carrage too-nite."

Lestrade laaft indulgently. "U hav, no dout, aulreddy formd yor concluezhonz from the nuespaperz," he ced. "The cace iz az plane az a pikestaf, and the moer wun gose intoo it the planer it becumz. Stil, ov coers, wun caant refuse a lady, and such a verry pozsitive wun, too. She haz herd ov u, and wood hav yor opinyon, dho I repetedly toald her dhat dhare wauz nuthhing which u cood doo which I had not aulreddy dun. Whi, bles mi sole! here iz her carrage at the doer."

He had hardly spoken befoer dhare rusht intoo the roome wun ov the moast luvly yung wimmen dhat I hav evver cene in mi life. Her vियोlet ise shining, her lips parted, a pinc flush uppon her cheex, aul thaut ov her natchural reserv lost in her overpouwering exiatment and concern.

"O, Mr. Sherloc Hoamz!" she cride, glaancing from wun too the uther ov us, and finally, withe a woommanz qwic inchuwishon, faacening uppon mi companyon, "I am so

glad dhat u hav cum. I hav drivven doun too tel u so. I no dhat Jaimz didnt doo it. I no it, and I waunt u too start uppon yor werc nowing it, too. Nevver let yorcelf dout uppon dhat point. We hav none eche uther cins we wer littel children, and I no hiz faults az no wun els duz; but he iz too tender-harted too hert a fli. Such a charj iz abcerd too enniwun whoo reyaly nose him."

"I hope we ma clere him, Mis Turner," ced Sherloc Hoamz. "U ma reli uppon mi doowing aul dhat I can."

"But u hav red the evvidens. U hav formd sum concluezhon? Doo u not ce sum luiphole, sum flau? Doo u not yorcelf thhinc dhat he iz innocent?"

"I thhinc dhat it iz verry probbabel."

"Dhare, nou!" she cride, throwing bac her hed and loocking defiyantly at Lestrade. "U here! He ghivz me hoaps."

Lestrade shrugd hiz shoalderz. "I am afrade dhat mi colleghe haz bene a littel qwic in forming hiz concluezhonz," he ced.

"But he iz rite. O! I no dhat he iz rite. Jaimz nevver did it. And about hiz qworel withe hiz faather, I am shure dhat the rezon whi he wood not speke about it too the coroner wauz becauz I wauz concernd in it."

"In whaut wa?" aasct Hoamz.

"It iz no time for me too hide ennithing. Jaimz and hiz faather had menny disagreements about me. Mr. McCarthy wauz verry ancshous dhat dhare shood be a marrage betwene us. Jaimz and I hav aulwase luvd eche uther az bruther and

cister; but ov coers he iz yung and haz cene verry littel ov life yet, and—and—wel, he natchuraly did not wish too doo ennithhing like dhat yet. So dhare wer qworelz, and this, I am shure, wauz wun ov them.”

“And yor faather?” aasct Hoamz. “Wauz he in favor ov such a uenyon?”

“No, he wauz avers too it aulso. No wun but Mr. McCarthy wauz in favor ov it.” A qwic blush paast over her fresh yung face az Hoamz shot wun ov hiz kene, qweschoning glaancez at her.

“Thanc u for this informaishon,” ced he. “Ma I ce yor faather if I caul too-moro?”

“I am afrade the doctor woant alou it.”

“The doctor?”

“Yes, hav u not herd? Poor faather haz nevver bene strong for yeez bac, but this haz broken him doun compleetly. He haz taken too hiz bed, and Dr. Willose cez dhat he iz a rec and dhat hiz nervous cistem iz shatterd. Mr. McCarthy wauz the oanly man alive whoo had none dad in the oald dase in Victoereyaa.”

“Haa! In Victoereyaa! Dhat iz important.”

“Yes, at the mianz.”

“Qwite so; at the goald-mianz, whare, az I understand, Mr. Turner made hiz munny.”

"Yes, certainly."

"Thank u, Mis Ternar. U hav bene ov matereyal acistans too me."

"U wil tel me if u hav enny nuse too-moro. No dout u wil go too the prizzon too ce Jaimz. O, if u doo, Mr. Hoamz, doo tel him dhat I no him too be innocent."

"I wil, Mis Ternar."

"I must go home nou, for dad iz verry il, and he miscez me so if I leve him. Good-bi, and God help u in yor undertaking." She hurrede from the roome az
impulciavly az she had enterd, and we herd the wheelz ov her carrage rattel
of doun the strete.

"I am ashaimd ov u, Hoamz," ced Lestrade withe dignity aafter a fu minnuets' cilens. "Whi shood u rase up hoaps which u ar bound too disapoint? I am not over-tender ov hart, but I caul it cruwel."

"I thhinc dhat I ce mi wa too clering Jaimz McCarthy," ced Hoamz. "Hav u an order too ce him in prizzon?"

"Yes, but oanly for u and me."

"Then I shal reconcider mi rezolueshon about gowing out. We hav stil time too take a trane too Hereford and ce him too-nite?"

"Ampel."

“Then let us doo so. Wautson, I fere dhat u wil fiand it verry slo, but I shal oonly be awa a cuppel ov ourz.”

I wauct down too the staishon withe them, and then waunderd throo the streets

ov the littel toun, finally reterning too the hotel, whare I la uppon the sofaa and tride too interest micelf in a yello-bact novvel. The puny plot ov the stoery wauz so thhin, houwevver, when compaerd too the depe mistery throo which we

wer groping, and I found mi atenshon waunder so continnuwaly from the acshon too

the fact, dhat I at laast flung it acros the roome and gave micelf up entiarly too a concideraishon ov the events ov the da. Suposing dhat this unhappy yung

manz stoery wer absoluetly tru, then whaut hellish thhing, whaut absoluetly

unfoercene and extrordinary calammitiy cood hav okerd betwene the time when

he parted from hiz faather, and the moment when, draun bac bi hiz screemz, he

rusht intoo the glade? It wauz sumthhing terribel and dedly. Whaut cood it be?

Mite not the nachure ov the injurese revele sumthhing too mi meddical instincts?

I rang the bel and cauld for the weecly county paper, which containd a verbatim acount ov the inqwest. In the cerjonz deposishon it wauz stated dhat

the postereyor thherd ov the left pariyetal bone and the left haaf ov the oxipital bone had bene shatterd bi a hevvy blo from a blunt weppon. I marct

the spot uppon mi one hed. Cleerly such a blo must hav bene struc from behiand. Dhat wauz too sum extent in favor ov the acuezd, az when cene qworeling he wauz face too face withe hiz faather. Stil, it did not go for verry

much, for the oalder man mite hav ternd hiz bac befoer the blo fel. Stil,
it mite be werth while too caul Hoamz' atenshon too it. Then dhare wauz
the
peculeyar diying refferens too a rat. Whaut cood dhat mene? It cood not be
delereyum. A man diying from a sudden blo duz not commonly becum
delereyous.
No, it wauz moer liacly too be an atempt too explane hou he met hiz fate.
But
whaut cood it indicate? I cudgeld mi brainz too fiand sum poscibel
explanaishon. And then the incident ov the gra cloth cene bi yung
McCarthy. If
dhat wer tru the merderer must hav dropt sum part ov hiz dres,
preezhumably hiz overcote, in hiz flite, and must hav had the hardihood
too
retern and too carry it awa at the instant when the sun wauz neling withe
hiz
bac ternd not a duzsen pacez of. Whaut a tishu ov misterese and
improbabillitese the whole thhing wauz! I did not wunder at Lestraidz
opinyon,
and yet I had so much faith in Sherloc Hoamz' incite dhat I cood not loose
hope az long az evvery fresh fact ceemd too strengththen hiz convicshon ov
yung
McCarthyese innocens.

It wauz late befoer Sherloc Hoamz reternd. He came bac alone, for Lestrade
wauz staying in lodgingz in the toun.

"The glaas stil keeps verry hi," he remarct az he sat doun. "It iz ov
importans dhat it shood not rane befoer we ar abel too go over the ground.
On
the uther hand, a man shood be at hiz verry best and kenest for such nice
werc
az dhat, and I did not wish too doo it when fagd bi a long gerny. I hav cene
yung McCarthy."

“And whaut did u lern from him?”

“Nuthhing.”

“Cood he thro no lite?”

“Nun at aul. I wauz incliand too thhinc at wun time dhat he nu whoo had dun it and wauz screning him or her, but I am convinst nou dhat he iz az puzseld az evveriwun els. He iz not a verry qwic-witted ueth, dho cumly too looc at and, I shood thhinc, sound at hart.”

“I canot admire hiz taist,” I remarct, “if it iz indede a fact dhat he wauz avers too a marrage withe so charming a yung lady az this Mis Ternner.”

“Aa, dhaerbi hangz a raather painfool tale. This fello iz madly, insainly, in luv withe her, but sum too yeeرز ago, when he wauz oonly a lad, and befoer he reyaly nu her, for she had bene awa five yeeرز at a boerding-scoole, whaut duz the iddeyot doo but ghet intoo the clutcher ov a barmade in Bristol and marry her at a registry office? No wun nose a werd ov the matter, but u can imadgine hou maddening it must be too him too be upbraded for not doowing whaut he wood ghiv hiz verry ise too doo, but whaut he nose too be absoluetly impscibel. It wauz shere frensy ov this sort which made him thro hiz handz up intoo the are when hiz faather, at dhare laast intervuu, wauz goding him on too propose too Mis Ternner. On the uther hand, he had no meenz ov supoerting himcelf, and hiz

faather, whoo wauz bi aul acounts a verry hard man, wood hav throne him
over
utterly had he none the trueth. It wauz withe hiz barmade wife dhat he had
spent
the laast thre dase in Bristol, and hiz faather did not no whare he wauz.
Marc
dhat point. It iz ov importans. Good haz cum out ov evil, houwevver, for
the
barmade, fianding from the paperz dhat he iz in cereyous trubbel and liacly
too be
hangd, haz throne him over utterly and haz ritten too him too sa dhat she
haz
a huzband aulreddy in the Bermudaa Docyard, so dhat dhare iz reyaly no
ti
betwene them. I thhinc dhat dhat bit ov nuse haz consoald yung
McCarthy for aul
dhat he haz sufferd.”

“But if he iz innocent, whoo haz dun it?”

“Aa! whoo? I wood caul yor atenshon verry particcularly too too points.
Wun iz
dhat the merderd man had an apointment withe sumwun at the poole, and
dhat the
sumwun cood not hav bene hiz sun, for hiz sun wauz awa, and he did not
no
when he wood retern. The cecond iz dhat the merderd man wauz herd too
cri
'Coowy!' befoer he nu dhat hiz sun had reternd. Dhose ar the crueshal
points
uppon which the cace dependz. And nou let us tauc about Jorj Merredith, if
u
plese, and we shal leve aul minor matterz until too-moro.”

Dhare wauz no rane, az Hoamz had foertoald, and the morning broke brite and cloudles. At nine oacloc Lestrade cauld for us withe the carrage, and we cet of for Hathherly Farm and the Boscome Poole.

“Dhare iz cereyous nuse this morning,” Lestrade observd. “It iz ced dhat Mr. Turner, ov the Haul, iz so il dhat hiz life iz despaerd ov.”

“An elderly man, I prezume?” ced Hoamz.

“About cixty; but hiz constichueshon haz bene shatterd bi hiz life abraud, and he haz bene in faling helth for sum time. This biznes haz had a verry bad efect uppon him. He wauz an oald frend ov McCarthhese, and, I ma ad, a grate benefactor too him, for I hav lernd dhat he gave him Hathherly Farm rent fre.”

“Indede! Dhat iz interesting,” ced Hoamz.

“O, yes! In a hundred uther wase he haz helpt him. Evveriboddy about here speex ov hiz kiandnes too him.”

“Reyaly! Duz it not strike u az a littel cin’gular dhat this McCarthhy, whoo apeerz too hav had littel ov hiz one, and too hav bene under such obligaishonz too Turner, shood stil tauc ov marreying hiz sun too Turnerz dauter, whoo iz, preezhumably, ares too the estate, and dhat in such a verry cocshure manner, az if it wer meerly a cace ov a propozal and aul els wood follo? It iz the moer strainj, cins we no dhat Turner himcelf wauz avers too the ideyaa. The

dauter toald us az much. Doo u not dejuce sumthhing from dhat?"

"We hav got too the deducshonz and the inferencez," ced Lestrade, winking at me. "I fiand it hard enuf too tackel facts, Hoamz, widhout fliying awa aafter ththeyorese and fancese."

"U ar rite," ced Hoamz demuerly; "u doo fiand it verry hard too tackel the facts."

"Ennihou, I hav graaspt wun fact which u ceme too fiand it difficult too ghet hoald ov," replide Lestrade withe sum wormth.

"And dhat iz—"

"Dhat McCarthy ceenyor met hiz deth from McCarthy juenyor and dhat aul ththeyorese too the contrary ar the merest muinshine."

"Wel, muinshine iz a briter thhing dhan fog," ced Hoamz, laafing. "But I am verry much mistaken if this iz not Hathherly Farm uppon the left."

"Yes, dhat iz it." It wauz a wiadspred, cumfortabel-loocking bilding, too-stoerede, slate-ruift, withe grate yello blotchez ov litchen uppon the gra waulz. The draun bliandz and the smoacles chimnese, houwevver, gave it a stricken

looc, az dho the wate ov this horror stil la hevvy uppon it. We cauld at the doer, when the made, at Hoamz' reqwest, shode us the buits which her maaster woer at the time ov hiz deth, and aulso a pare ov the sunz, dho not the pare which he had then had. Havving mezhuerd these verry caerfooly from cevven

or ate different points, Hoamz desiard too be led too the coert-yard, from

which we aul follode the wianding trac which led too Boscome Poole.

Sherloc Hoamz wauz traansformd when he wauz hot uppon such a cent az this. Men

whoo had oonly none the qwiyet thhinker and logishan ov Baker Strete wood hav

faild too reccognise him. Hiz face flusht and darkend. Hiz brouz wer draun intoo too hard blac lianz, while hiz ise shon out from beneeth them withe a stely glitter. Hiz face wauz bent downword, hiz shoalderz boud, hiz lips comprest, and the vainz stood out like whipcord in hiz long, cinnuwy nec.

Hiz

nostrilz ceemd too dilate withe a puerly annimal lust for the chace, and hiz miand

wauz so absolutly concentrated uppon the matter befoer him dhat a qweschon or

remarc fel unheded uppon hiz eerz, or, at the moast, oonly provoact a qwic, impaishent snarl in repli. Swiftly and cilently he made hiz wa along the trac

which ran throo the meddose, and so bi wa ov the woodz too the Boscome Poole.

It wauz damp, marshy ground, az iz aul dhat district, and dhare wer marx ov

menny fete, boath uppon the paath and amid the short graas which bounded it on

iather cide. Sumtiamz Hoamz wood hurry on, sumtiamz stop ded, and wuns he

made qwite a littel detoor intoo the meddo. Lestrade and I waucht behiand him,

the detective indifferent and contempchuwous, while I waucht mi frend withe the

interest which sprang from the convicshon dhat evvery wun ov hiz acshonz wauz

directed toowordz a deffinite end.

The Boscome Poole, which iz a littel rede-ghert shete ov wauter sum fifty yardz
acros, iz citchuwated at the boundary betwene the Hathherly Farm and the private
parc ov the welthhy Mr. Terner. Abuv the woodz which liand it uppon the farther
cide we cood ce the red, jutting pinnakelz which marct the cite ov the rich landownerz dwelling. On the Hathherly cide ov the poole the woodz gru verry
thhic, and dhare wauz a narro belt ov sodden graas twenty pavez acros betwene
the ej ov the trese and the reedz which liand the lake. Lestrade shode us the exact spot at which the boddy had bene found, and, indede, so moist wauz the
ground, dhat I cood plainly ce the tracez which had bene left bi the faul ov the stricken man. Too Hoamz, az I cood ce bi hiz egher face and pering ise, verry menny uther thhingz wer too be red uppon the trampeld graas. He ran round,
like a dog whoo iz picking up a cent, and then ternd uppon mi companyon.

“Whaut did u go intoo the poole for?” he aasct.

“I fisht about withe a rake. I thaut dhare mite be sum weppon or uther trace. But hou on erth—”

“O, tut, tut! I hav no time! Dhat left foot ov yorz withe its inword twist iz aul over the place. A mole cood trace it, and dhare it vannishez among the reedz. O, hou cimpel it wood aul hav bene had I bene here befoer dha came like a herd ov buffalo and waulode aul over it. Here iz whare the party withe
the loj-keper came, and dha hav cuvverd aul trax for cix or ate fete round the boddy. But here ar thre cepparate trax ov the same fete.” He dru out a lenz and la doun uppon hiz wauterproofe too hav a better vu, taucking aul

the time rather too himself than too us. "These are young McCarthys' fête.
Twice
he was walking, and wuns he ran swiftly, so that the soles are deeply
marked
and the heels hardly visible. That bears out his story. He ran when he
saw his
father on the ground. Then here are the father's fête as he picked up and
down.
What is this, then? It is the butt-end of the gun as the sun stood listening.
And this? Haa, haa! What have we here? Tiptose! tiptose! Square, too,
quite
unusually built! Dha cum, dha go, dha cum agane—over coers that
was for the
cloak. Now where did dha cum from?" He ran up and down, sometimes
loosing,
sometimes finding the track until we were well within the edge of the wood and
under the shadow of a great beech, the largest tree in the neighborhood.
Hoamz traist his way too the farther side of this and lay down wuns moer
upon
his face with a little cry of satisfaction. For a long time he remained there,
turning over the leaves and dried sticks, gathering up what seemed too me
too be
dust into an envelope and examining with his lens not only the
ground but even
the bark of the tree as far as he could reach. A jagged stone was lying
among
the moss, and this also he carefully examined and retained. Then he
followed a
pathway through the wood until he came to the hirode, where all traces were
lost.

"It has been a case of considerable interest," he remarked, returning too his
natural manner. "I fancy that this grasshopper on the rite must be the loj. I

thhinc dhat I wil go in and hav a werd withe Moran, and perhaps rite a littel note. Havving dun dhat, we ma drive bac too our lunchon. U ma wauc too the cab, and I shal be withe u prezsently."

It wauz about ten minnuets befoer we regaind our cab and drove bac intoo Ros, Hoamz stil carreying withe him the stone which he had pict up in the wood.

"This ma interest u, Lestrade," he remarct, hoalding it out. "The merder wauz dun withe it."

"I ce no marx."

"Dhare ar nun."

"Hou doo u no, then?"

"The graas wauz growing under it. It had oonly lane dhare a fu dase. Dhare wauz no cine ov a place whens it had bene taken. It corespondz withe the injurese. Dhare iz no cine ov enny uther weppon."

"And the merderer?"

"Iz a taul man, left-handed, limps withe the rite leg, waerz thhic-soald shooting-buits and a gra cloke, smoax Injan cigarz, usez a cigar-hoalder, and carrese a blunt pen-nife in hiz pocket. Dhare ar cevveral uther indicaishonz,

but these ma be enuf too ade us in our cerch."

Lestrade laaft. "I am afrade dhat I am stil a skeptic," he ced. "Ththeyorese ar aul verry wel, but we hav too dele withe a hard-hedded British jury."

"Nous verronz," aancerd Hoamz caalmly. "U werc yor one method, and I shal werc mine. I shal be bizsy this aafternoone, and shal probbably retern too Lunden bi the evening trane."

"And leve yor cace unfinnisht?"

"No, finnisht."

"But the mistery?"

"It iz solvd."

"Whoo wauz the crimminal, then?"

"The gentelman I describe."

"But whoo iz he?"

"Shuerly it wood not be difficult too fiand out. This iz not such a poppulous naborhood."

Lestrade shrugd hiz shoalderz. "I am a practical man," he ced, "and I reyalry canot undertake too go about the cuntry loocking for a left-handed gentelman withe a game leg. I shood becum the laafing-stoc ov Scotland Yard."

"Aul rite," ced Hoamz qwiyetly. "I hav ghivven u the chaans. Here ar yor lodgingz. Good-bi. I shal drop u a line befoer I leve."

Havving left Lestrade at hiz ruimz, we drove too our hotel, whare we found lunch uppon the tabel. Hoamz wauz cilent and berrede in thaut withe a paind expreshon uppon hiz face, az wun whoo fiandz himcelf in a perplexing posishon.

"Looc here, Wautson," he ced when the cloth wauz cleerd "just cit doun in this chare and let me preche too u for a littel. I doant no qwite whaut too doo, and I shood vallu yor advice. Lite a cigar and let me expound."

"Pra doo so."

"Wel, nou, in conciddering this cace dhare ar too points about yung McCarthhese narrative which struc us boath instantly, auldho dha imprest me in hiz favor and u against him. Wun wauz the fact dhat hiz faather shood, acording too hiz acount, cri 'Coowy!' befoer ceying him. The uther wauz hiz cin'gular diyng refferens too a rat. He mumbeld cevveral werdz, u understand, but dhat wauz aul dhat caut the sunz ere. Nou from this dubbel point our recerch must comens, and we wil beghin it bi prezhuming dhat whaut the lad cez iz absolutly tru."

"Whaut ov this 'Coowy!' then?"

"Wel, obveyously it cood not hav bene ment for the sun. The sun, az far az

he nu, wauz in Bristol. It wauz mere chaans dhat he wauz within eershot.
The
'Coowy!' wauz ment too atract the atenshon ov whoowevver it wauz dhat
he had the
apointment withe. But 'Coowy' iz a distinctly Australeyan cri, and wun
which iz
uezd betwene Australeyanz. Dhare iz a strong prezumpshon dhat the
person whoome
McCarthy expected too mete him at Boscome Poole wauz sumwun whoo
had bene in
Australeyaa."

"Whaut ov the rat, then?"

Sherloc Hoamz tooc a foalded paper from hiz pocket and flattend it out on
the
tabel. "This iz a map ov the Collony ov Victoereyaa," he ced. "I wiard too
Bristol
for it laast nite." He poot hiz hand over part ov the map. "Whaut doo u
rede?"

"ARAT," I red.

"And nou?" He raizd hiz hand.

"BALLARAT."

"Qwite so. Dhat wauz the werd the man utterd, and ov which hiz sun
oonly caut
the laast too cillabelz. He wauz trying too utter the name ov hiz merderer.
So and
so, ov Ballarat."

"It iz wunderfool!" I exclaimd.

"It iz obveyous. And nou, u ce, I had narrode the feeld doun concidderably. The poseshon ov a gra garment wauz a thherd point which, graanting the sunz staitment too be corect, wauz a certainty. We hav cum nou out ov mere vaignes too the deffinite concepshon ov an Australeyan from Ballarat withe a gra cloke."

"Certainly."

"And wun whoo wauz at home in the district, for the poole can oonly be aproacht bi the farm or bi the estate, whare strain'gerz cood hardly waunder."

"Qwite so."

"Then cumz our expedishon ov too-da. Bi an examinaishon ov the ground I gaind the triafling detailz which I gave too dhat imbecele Lestrade, az too the personallity ov the crimminal."

"But hou did u gane them?"

"U no mi method. It iz founded uppon the observaishon ov trifelz."

"Hiz hite I no dhat u mite rufly juj from the length ov hiz stride. Hiz buits, too, mite be toald from dhare tracez."

"Yes, dha wer peculeyar buits."

"But hiz laimnes?"

"The impreshon ov hiz rite foot wauz aulwase les distinct dhan hiz left. He

poot les wate uppon it. Whi? Becauz he limpt—he wauz lame.”

“But hiz left-handednes.”

“U wer yorcelf struc bi the nachure ov the injury az recorded bi the cerjon at the inqwest. The blo wauz struc from imejaitly behiand, and yet wauz uppon the left cide. Nou, hou can dhat be unles it wer bi a left-handed man? He had stood behiand dhat tre juring the intervü betwene the faather and sun. He had even smoact dhare. I found the ash ov a cigar, which mi speshal nollej ov tobacco ashez enabelz me too pronouns az an Injan cigar. I hav, az u no, devoted sum atenshon too this, and ritten a littel monnograaf on the ashez ov 140 different variyetese ov pipe, cigar, and ciggaret tobacco. Havving found the ash, I then looct round and discuvverd the stump among the mos whare he had tost it. It wauz an Injan cigar, ov the variyety which ar roald in Rotterdam.”

“And the cigar-hoalder?”

“I cood ce dhat the end had not bene in hiz mouth. Dhaerfoer he uezd a hoalder. The tip had bene cut of, not bitten of, but the cut wauz not a clene wun, so I dejuest a blunt pen-nife.”

“Hoamz,” I ced, “u hav draun a net round this man from which he canot escape, and u hav saivd an innocent human life az truly az if u had cut the cord which wauz hanging him. I ce the direcshon in which aul this points.
The culprit iz—”

“Mr. Jon Ternar,” cride the hotel water, opening the doer ov our citting-roome, and ushering in a vizsitor.

The man who entered wauz a strainj and imprescive figgure. Hiz slo,
limping step
and boud shoalderz gave the aperans ov decreppichude, and yet hiz hard,
depe-liand, cragghy fechuerz, and hiz enormous limz shode dhat he wauz
posest ov unnuezhuwal strength ov boddy and ov carracter. Hiz tan'gheld
beerd,
grizseld hare, and outstanding, drooping iabrouz combiand too ghiv an are
ov
dignity and pouwer too hiz aperans, but hiz face wauz ov an ashen white,
while
hiz lips and the cornerz ov hiz nostrilz wer tinjd withe a shade ov blu. It
wauz clere too me at a glaans dhat he wauz in the grip ov sum dedly and
cronic
disese.

"Pra cit doun on the sofaa," ced Hoamz gently. "U had mi note?"

"Yes, the loj-keper braut it up. U ced dhat u wisht too ce me here
too avoid scandal."

"I thaut pepel wood tauc if I went too the Haul."

"And whi did u wish too ce me?" He looct acros at mi companyon withe
despare
in hiz wery ise, az dho hiz qweschon wauz aulreddy aancerd.

"Yes," ced Hoamz, aancering the looc raather dhan the werdz. "It iz so. I no
aul about McCarthhy."

The oald man sanc hiz face in hiz handz. "God help me!" he cride. "But I
wood
not hav let the yung man cum too harm. I ghiv u mi werd dhat I wood hav
spoken out if it went against him at the Acisez."

"I am glad too here u sa so," ced Hoamz graivly.

"I wood hav spoken nou had it not bene for mi dere gherl. It wood brake her
her
hart—it wil brake her hart when she heerz dhat I am arested."

"It ma not cum too dhat," ced Hoamz.

"Whaut?"

"I am no ofishal agent. I understand dhat it wauz yor dauter whoo
reqwiard mi
prezsens here, and I am acting in her interests. Yung McCarthhy must be
got
of, houwevver."

"I am a diying man," ced oald Turner. "I hav had diyabetese for yeerz. Mi
doctor
cez it iz a qweschon whether I shal liv a munth. Yet I wood raather di
under mi one roofe dhan in a jale."

Hoamz rose and sat doun at the tabel withe hiz pen in hiz hand and a
bundel ov
paper befoer him. "Just tel us the trueth," he ced. "I shal jot doun the
facts. U wil cine it, and Wautson here can witnes it. Then I cood projuce
yor confeshon at the laast extremmity too save yung McCarthhy. I
prommice u
dhat I shal not use it unles it iz absolutly neded."

"Its az wel," ced the oald man; "its a qweschon whether I shal liv too the
Acisez, so it matterz littel too me, but I shood wish too spare Allice the
shoc. And nou I wil make the thhing clere too u; it haz bene a long time in
the acting, but wil not take me long too tel.

“U didnt no this ded man, McCarthhy. He wauz a devvil incarnate. I tel u dhat. God kepe u out ov the clutchez ov such a man az he. Hiz grip haz bene
uppon me these twenty yeerz, and he haz blaasted mi life. Ile tel u ferst hou
I came too be in hiz pouwer.

“It wauz in the erly '60's at the digghingz. I wauz a yung chap then, hot-bludded and recles, reddy too tern mi hand at ennithhing; I got among bad
companyonz, tooc too drinc, had no luc withe mi clame, tooc too the boosh, and in
a werd became whaut u wood caul over here a hiwa robber. Dhare wer cix ov
us, and we had a wiald, fre life ov it, sticking up a staishon from time too time, or stopping the waggonz on the rode too the digghingz. Blac Jac ov Ballarat wauz the name I went under, and our party iz stil rememberd in the
collony az the Ballarat Gang.

“Wun da a goald convoi came doun from Ballarat too Melborn, and we la in wate
for it and atact it. Dhare wer cix trooperz and cix ov us, so it wauz a cloce thhing, but we emptede foer ov dhare saddelz at the ferst volly. Thre ov
our boiz wer kild, houwevver, befoer we got the swag. I poot mi pistol too the
hed ov the waggon-driver, whoo wauz this verry man McCarthhy. I wish too the Lord
dhat I had shot him then, but I spaerd him, dho I sau hiz wicked littel ise fixt on mi face, az dho too remember evvery fechure. We got awa withe the goald, became welthhy men, and made our wa over too In'gland widhout beying

suspected. Dhare I parted from mi oald palz and determiand too cettel
doun too a
qwiyet and respectabel life. I baut this estate, which chaanst too be in the
market, and I cet micelf too doo a littel good withe mi munny, too make up
for the
wa in which I had ernd it. I marrede, too, and dho mi wife dide yung she
left me mi dere littel Allice. Even when she wauz just a baby her we hand
ceemd
too lede me doun the rite paath az nuthhing els had evver dun. In a werd, I
ternd over a nu lefe and did mi best too make up for the paast. Aul wauz
gowing
wel when McCarthy lade hiz grip uppon me.

“I had gon up too toun about an investment, and I met him in Regent Strete
withe
hardly a cote too hiz bac or a boote too hiz foot.

“ ‘Here we ar, Jac,’ cez he, tutching me on the arm; ‘wele be az good az a
fammily too u. Dhaerz too ov us, me and mi sun, and u can hav the keping
ov us. If u doant—its a fine, lau-abiding cuntry iz In’gland, and dhaerz
aulwase a poleesman within hale.’

“Wel, doun dha came too the west cuntry, dhare wauz no shaking them of,
and
dhare dha hav livd rent fre on mi best land evver cins. Dhare wauz no rest
for me, no pece, no forghetfoolnes; tern whare I wood, dhare wauz hiz
cunning,
grinning face at mi elbo. It gru wers az Allice gru up, for he soone sau I
wauz moer afrade ov her nowing mi paast dhan ov the polece. Whautevver
he waunted
he must hav, and whautevver it wauz I gave him widhout qweschon, land,
munny,
housez, until at laast he aasct a thhing which I cood not ghiv. He aasct for
Allice.

“Hiz sun, u ce, had grone up, and so had mi gherl, and az I wauz none too
be
in weke helth, it ceemd a fine stroke too him dhat hiz lad shood step intoo
the whole propperty. But dhare I wauz ferm. I wood not hav hiz kerst stoc
mixt withe mine; not dhat I had enny dislike too the lad, but hiz blud wauz
in
him, and dhat wauz enuf. I stood ferm. McCarthy threttend. I braivd him
too doo
hiz werst. We wer too mete at the poole midwa betwene our housez too
tauc it
over.

“When I went doun dhare I found him tauking withe hiz sun, so I smoact a
cigar
and wated behiand a tre until he shood be alone. But az I liscend too hiz
tauc aul dhat wauz blac and bitter in me ceemd too cum uppermoast. He
wauz
erging hiz sun too marry mi dauter withe az littel regard for whaut she
mite
thhinc az if she wer a slut from of the streets. It drove me mad too thhinc
dhat
I and aul dhat I held moast dere shood be in the pouwer ov such a man az
this.
Cood I not snap the bond? I wauz aulreddy a diying and a desperate man.
Dho
clere ov miand and faerly strong ov lim, I nu dhat mi one fate wauz ceeld.
But mi memmory and mi gherl! Boath cood be saivd if I cood but cilens
dhat foul
tung. I did it, Mr. Hoamz. I wood doo it agane. Deeply az I hav cind, I
hav led a life ov marterdom too atone for it. But dhat mi gherl shood be
entan’gheld in the same meshez which held me wauz moer dhan I cood
suffer. I

struc him doun withe no moer compuncshon dhan if he had bene sum foul and venomous beest. Hiz cri braut bac hiz sun; but I had gaind the cuvver ov the wood, dho I wauz foerst too go bac too fech the cloke which I had dropt in mi flite. Dhat iz the tru stoery, gentelmen, ov aul dhat okerd."

"Wel, it iz not for me too juj u," ced Hoamz az the oald man ciand the staitment which had bene draun out. "I pra dhat we ma nevver be expoazd too such a temptaishon."

"I pra not, cer. And whaut doo u intend too doo?"

"In vu ov yor helth, nuthhing. U ar yorcelf aware dhat u wil soone hav too aancer for yor dede at a hiyer coert dhan the Acisez. I wil kepe yor confeshon, and if McCarthhy iz condemd I shal be foerst too use it. If not, it shal nevver be cene bi mortal i; and yor ceecret, whether u be alive or ded, shal be safe withe us."

"Faerwel, then," ced the oald man sollemly. "Yor one dethbedz, when dha cum, wil be the eseyer for the thaut ov the pece which u hav ghivven too mine." Tottering and shaking in aul hiz giyant frame, he stumbeld sloly from the roome.

"God help us!" ced Hoamz aafter a long cilens. "Whi duz fate pla such trix withe poor, helples wermz? I nevver here ov such a cace az this dhat I doo not thhinc ov Baxterz werdz, and sa, 'Dhare, but for the grace ov God, gose Sherloc Hoamz.' "

Jaimz McCarthhy wauz aqwitted at the Acisez on the strength ov a number ov

obgecshonz which had bene draun out bi Hoamz and submitted too the
defending
council. Oald Turner livd for cevven munths aafter our intervuv, but he iz
nou
ded; and dhare iz evvery prospect dhat the sun and dauter ma cum too liv
happily tooghether in ignorans ov the blac cloud which rests uppon dhare
paast.

5

The Five Oranj Pips

When I glaans over mi noats and reccordz ov the Sherloc Hoamz cacez
betwene
the yeerz '82 and '90, I am faist bi so menny which present strainj and
interesting fechuerz dhat it iz no esy matter too no which too chuse and
which too leve. Sum, houwevver, hav aulreddy gaind publiscity throo the
paperz, and utherz hav not offerd a feeld for dhose peculeyar qwaulitese
which
mi frend posest in so hi a degry, and which it iz the obgect ov these
paperz too illustrate. Sum, too, hav baffeld hiz analittical skil, and wood
be, az narratiavz, beghinningz widhout an ending, while utherz hav bene
but
parshaly cleerd up, and hav dhare explanaishonz founded raather uppon

con'gechure and cermise dhan on dhat absolute lodgical prooffe which wauz so dere too him. Dhare iz, houwevver, wun ov these laast which wauz so remarcabel in its detailz and so startling in its rezults dhat I am tempted too ghiv sum account ov it in spite ov the fact dhat dhare ar points in conecshon withe it which nevvver hav bene, and probbably nevvver wil be, entiarly cleerd up.

The yere '87 fernisht us withe a long cerese ov cacez ov grater or les interest, ov which I retane the reccordz. Amung mi heddingz under this wun twelv munths I fiand an acount ov the advenchure ov the Paradol Chaimber, ov the Ammater Mendicant Sociyety, whoo held a lucshureyous club in the lower vault ov a fernichure waerhous, ov the facts conected withe the los ov the Brittish barc Sofy Anderson, ov the cin'gular advenchuerz ov the Grice Patersonz in the iland ov Uffaa, and finaly ov the Camberwel poizoning cace. In the latter, az ma be rememberd, Sherloc Hoamz wauz abel, bi wianding up the ded manz wauch, too prove dhat it had bene wound up too ourz befoer, and dhat dhaerfoer the deceest had gon too bed within dhat time—a deducshon which wauz ov the gratest importans in clering up the cace. Aul these I ma skech out at sum fuchure date, but nun ov them prezsent such cin'gular fechuerz az the strainj tranee ov circumstaancez which I hav nou taken up mi pen too describe.

It wauz in the latter dase ov Ceptember, and the eqwinocshal gailz had cet in withe exepshonal viyolens. Aul da the wind had screemd and the rane had

beten against the windose, so dhat even here in the hart ov grate, hand-
made
Lundon we wer foerst too rase our miandz for the instant from the rootene
ov
life and too reccognise the prezsens ov dhose grate elemental foercez which
shreke
at mankiand throo the barz ov hiz civilizaishon, like untaimd beests in a
cage.
Az evening dru in, the storm gru hiyer and louder, and the wind cride and
sobd like a chiald in the chimny. Sherloc Hoamz sat moodily at wun cide
ov
the fiarplace cros-indexing hiz reccordz ov crime, while I at the uther wauz
depe in wun ov Clarc Ruscelz fine ce-stoerese until the houl ov the gale
from
widhout ceemd too blend withe the text, and the splash ov the rane too
lengthhen
out intoo the long swaush ov the ce waivz. Mi wife wauz on a vizsit too her
mutherz, and for a fu dase I wauz a dweller wuns moer in mi oald
qworterz at
Baker Strete.

“Whi,” ced I, glaancing up at mi companyon, “dhat wauz shuerly the bel.
Whoo
cood cum too-nite? Sum frend ov yorz, perhaps?”

“Exept yorcelf I hav nun,” he aancerd. “I doo not encurrage vizsitorz.”

“A cliyent, then?”

“If so, it iz a cereyous cace. Nuthhing les wood bring a man out on such a
da
and at such an our. But I take it dhat it iz moer liacly too be sum crony ov
the landladese.”

Sherloc Hoamz wauz rong in hiz con'gecchure, houwevver, for dhare came a step in the passage and a tapping at the doer. He strecht out hiz long arm too tern the lamp awa from himcelf and toowordz the vacant chare uppon which a nucummer must cit.

"Cum in!" ced he.

The man whoo enterd wauz yung, sum too-and-twenty at the outside, wel-gruimd and trimly clad, withe sumthhing ov refianment and dellicacy in hiz baring. The streming umbrellaa which he held in hiz hand, and hiz long shining wauterproofe toald ov the feers wether throo which he had cum. He looct about him ancshously in the glare ov the lamp, and I cood ce dhat hiz face wauz pale and hiz ise hevvy, like dhose ov a man whoo iz wade doun withe sum grate anxiyety.

"I o u an apollogy," he ced, rasing hiz goalden pans-na too hiz ise. "I trust dhat I am not intruding. I fere dhat I hav braut sum tracez ov the storm and rane intoo yor snug chaimber."

"Ghiv me yor cote and umbrellaa," ced Hoamz. "Dha ma rest here on the hooc and wil be dri prezently. U hav cum up from the south-west, I ce."

"Yes, from Horsham."

"Dhat cla and chauc mixchure which I ce uppon yor to caps iz qwite distinctive."

"I hav cum for advice."

"Dhat iz esily got."

"And help."

"Dhat iz not aulwase so esy."

"I hav herd ov u, Mr. Hoamz. I herd from Major Prendergaast hou u saivd him in the Tankervil Club scandal."

"Aa, ov coers. He wauz rongfooly acuezd ov cheting at cardz."

"He ced dhat u cood solv ennithhing."

"He ced too much."

"Dhat u ar nevver beten."

"I hav bene beten foer tiamz—thre tiamz bi men, and wuns bi a woomman."

"But whaut iz dhat compaerd withe the number ov yor suxescez?"

"It iz tru dhat I hav bene genneraly suxesfool."

"Then u ma be so withe me."

"I beg dhat u wil drau yor chare up too the fire and favor me withe sum detailz az too yor cace."

"It iz no ordinary wun."

"Nun ov dhose which cum too me ar. I am the laast coert ov apele."

“And yet I qweschon, cer, whether, in aul yor expereyens, u hav evver liscend too a moer mistereyous and inexpliccabel chane ov events dhan dhose which hav happend in mi one fammily.”

“U fil me withe interest,” ced Hoamz. “Pra ghiv us the ecenshal facts from the comensment, and I can aafterwordz qweschon u az too dhose detailz which ceme too me too be moast important.”

The yung man poold hiz chare up and poosht hiz wet fete out toowordz the blase.

“Mi name,” ced he, “iz Jon Openshau, but mi one afaerz hav, az far az I can understand, littel too doo withe this afool biznes. It iz a heredditary matter; so in order too ghiv u an ideyaa ov the facts, I must go bac too the comensment ov the afare.

“U must no dhat mi grandfaather had too sunz—mi unkel Eliyas and mi faather Josef. Mi faather had a smaul factory at Cuvventry, which he enlarjd at the time ov the invenshon ov biciacling. He wauz a patenty ov the Openshau unbracabel tire, and hiz biznes met withe such suxes dhat he wauz abel too cel it and too retire uppon a handsum competens.

“Mi unkel Eliyas emmigrated too Amerricaa when he wauz a yung man and became a plaanter in Floridaa, whare he wauz repoerted too hav dun verry wel. At the time ov the wor he faut in Jaxonz army, and aafterwordz under Hood, whare he rose too be a cuunel. When Le lade doun hiz armz mi unkel reternd too hiz

plaantaishon, whare he remaind for thre or foer yeerz. About 1869 or 1870 he came bac too Urope and tooc a smaull estate in Suscex, nere Horsham. He had made a verry concidderabel forchune in the Staits, and hiz rezon for leving them wauz hiz averzhon too the neegrose, and hiz dislike ov the Republican pollicy in extending the franchise too them. He wauz a cin'gular man, feers and qwic-temperd, verry foul-moutht when he wauz an'gry, and ov a moast retiring disposishon. Juring aul the yeerz dhat he livd at Horsham, I dout if evver he cet foot in the toun. He had a garden and too or thre feeldz round hiz hous, and dhare he wood take hiz exercise, dho verry often for weex on end he wood nevver leve hiz roome. He dranc a grate dele ov brandy and smoact verry hevvily, but he wood ce no sociyety and did not waunt enny frendz, not even hiz one bruther.

“He didnt miand me; in fact, he tooc a fancy too me, for at the time when he sau me ferst I wauz a yungster ov twelv or so. This wood be in the yere 1878, aafter he had bene ate or nine yeerz in In'gland. He begd mi faather too let me liv withe him and he wauz verry kiand too me in hiz wa. When he wauz sober he uest too be fond ov playing bacgamon and draaftz withe me, and he wood make me hiz representative boath withe the cervants and withe the traidzpepel, so dhat bi the time dhat I wauz cixtene I wauz qwite maaster ov the hous. I kept aul the kесе

and cood go whare I liact and doo whaut I liact, so long az I did not disterb him in hiz privacy. Dhare wauz wun cin'gular exepshon, houwevver, for he had a cin'ghel roome, a lumber-roome up among the attix, which wauz invareyably loct, and which he wood nevver permit iather me or enniwun els too enter. Withe a boiz cureyosity I hav peept throo the kehole, but I wauz nevver abel too ce moer dhan such a colecshon ov oald trunx and bundelz az wood be expected in such a roome.

“Wun da—it wauz in March, 1883—a letter withe a forane stamp la uppon the tabel in frunt ov the cuunelz plate. It wauz not a common thhing for him too receive letterz, for hiz bilz wer aul pade in reddy munny, and he had no frendz ov enny sort. ‘From Injaa!’ ced he az he tooc it up, ‘Pondicherry poastmarc! Whaut can this be?’ Opening it hurreedly, out dhare jumpt five littel dride oranj pips, which patterd doun uppon hiz plate. I began too laaf at this, but the laaf wauz struc from mi lips at the cite ov hiz face. Hiz lip had faulen, hiz ise wer protruding, hiz skin the cullor ov putty, and he glaerd at the envelope which he stil held in hiz trembling hand, ‘K. K. K.!’ he shreect, and then, ‘Mi God, mi God, mi cinz hav overtaken me!’

“ ‘Whaut iz it, unkel?’ I cride.

“ ‘Deth,’ ced he, and rising from the tabel he retiard too hiz roome, leving me palpitating withe horror. I tooc up the envelope and sau scrauld in red inc uppon the inner flap, just abuv the gum, the letter K thre tiamz repeted.

Dhare wauz nuthhing els save the five dride pips. Whaut cood be the rezon
ov
hiz overpouwering terror? I left the brecfast-tabel, and az I acended the
stare I met him cumming doun withe an oald rusty ke, which must hav
belongd too
the attic, in wun hand, and a smaual braas box, like a cashbox, in the uther.

“ ‘Dha ma doo whaut dha like, but Ile checmate them stil,’ ced he withe an
oath. ‘Tel Mary dhat I shal waunt a fire in mi roome too-da, and cend doun
too
Foerdam, the Horsham lauyer.’

“I did az he orderd, and when the lauyer ariavd I wauz aasct too step up
too the
roome. The fire wauz barning briatly, and in the grate dhare wauz a mas ov
blac, fluffy ashez, az ov bernd paper, while the braas box stood open and
empty beside it. Az I glaanst at the box I notiast, withe a start, dhat uppon
the
lid wauz printed the trebbel K which I had red in the morning uppon the
envelope.

“ ‘I wish u, Jon,’ ced mi unkel, ‘too witnes mi wil. I leve mi estate,
withe aul its advaantagez and aul its disadvaantagez, too mi bruther, yor
faather,
whens it wil, no dout, decend too u. If u can enjoi it in pece, wel
and good! If u fiand u canot, take mi advice, mi boi, and leve it too yor
dedleyest ennemy. I am sory too ghiv u such a too-ejd thhing, but I caant sa
whaut tern thhingz ar gowing too take. Kiandly cine the paper whare Mr.
Foerdam
shose u.’

“I ciand the paper az directed, and the lauyer tooc it awa withe him. The
cin’gular incident made, az u ma thhinc, the depest impreshon uppon me,
and I

ponderd over it and ternd it evvery wa in mi miand widhout beying abel
too make
ennithhing ov it. Yet I cood not shake of the vaghe feling ov dred which it
left behiand, dho the censaishon gru les kene az the weex paast and
nuthhing happend too disterb the uezhual rootene ov our liavz. I cood ce
a
chainj in mi unkel, houwevver. He dranc moer dhan evver, and he wauz les
incliand
for enny sort ov sociyety. Moast ov hiz time he wood spend in hiz roome,
withe the
doer loct uppon the incide, but sumtiamz he wood emerj in a sort ov
drunken
frensy and wood berst out ov the hous and tare about the garden withe a
revolver in hiz hand, screming out dhat he wauz afrade ov no man, and
dhat he
wauz not too be cuipt up, like a shepe in a pen, bi man or devvil. When
these hot
fits wer over, houwevver, he wood rush chumulchuwously in at the doer
and loc and
bar it behiand him, like a man whoo can brasen it out no lon'gher against
the
terror which lise at the ruits ov hiz sole. At such tiamz I hav cene hiz face,
even on a coald da, gliscen withe moischure, az dho it wer nu raizd from a
bacin.

“Wel, too cum too an end ov the matter, Mr. Hoamz, and not too abuse yor
paishens, dhare came a nite when he made wun ov dhose drunken sallese
from
which he nevver came bac. We found him, when we went too cerch for
him, face
dounword in a littel grene-scumd poole, which la at the foot ov the garden.
Dhare wauz no cine ov enny viyolens, and the wauter wauz but too fete
depe, so dhat
the jury, havving regard too hiz none exentriscity, braut in a verdict ov

'suicide.' But I, whoo nu hou he winst from the verry thaut ov deth, had much adoo too perswade micelf dhat he had gon out ov hiz wa too mete it. The matter paast, houwevver, and mi faather enterd intoo poseshon ov the estate, and ov sum 14,000, which la too hiz credit at the banc."

"Wun moment," Hoamz interpoazd, "yor staitment iz, I foercy, wun ov the moast remarcabel too which I hav evver liscend. Let me hav the date ov the recepshon bi yor unkel ov the letter, and the date ov hiz suposed suicide."

"The letter ariavd on March 10, 1883. Hiz deth wauz cevven weex later, uppon the nite ov Ma 2nd."

"Thanc u. Pra procede."

"When mi faather tooc over the Horsham propperty, he, at mi reqwest, made a caerfool examinaishon ov the attic, which had bene aulwase loct up. We found the braas box dhare, auldho its contents had bene destroid. On the incide ov the cuvver wauz a paper label, withe the inishalz ov K. K. K. repeted uppon it, and 'Letterz, memorandaa, receets, and a redgister' ritten beneeth. These, we prezume, indicated the nachure ov the paperz which had bene destroid bi Cuunel Openshau. For the rest, dhare wauz nuthhing ov much importans in the attic save a grate menny scatterd paperz and note-boox baring uppon mi unkelz life in

America. Sum ov them wer ov the wor time and shode dhat he had dun
hiz juty
wel and had boern the repute ov a brave soalger. Utherz wer ov a date
juring
the reconstrucshon ov the Suthern staits, and wer moastly concernd withe
pollitix, for he had evvidently taken a strong part in oposing the carpet-bag
politishanz whoo had bene cent down from the North.

“Wel, it wauz the beghinning ov ’84 when mi faather came too liv at
Horsham, and
aul went az wel az poscibel withe us until the Jannuwary ov ’85. On the
foerth
da aafter the nu yere I herd mi faather ghiv a sharp cri ov cerprise az we sat
tooghether at the brecfast-tabel. Dhare he wauz, citting withe a nuly opend
envelope in wun hand and five dride oranj pips in the outstrecht paalm ov
the
uther wun. He had aulwase laaft at whaut he cauld mi coc-and-bool stoery
about
the cuunel, but he looct verry scaerd and puzseld nou dhat the same thhing
had
cum uppon himcelf.

“ ‘Whi, whaut on erth duz this mene, Jon?’ he stammerd.

“Mi hart had ternd too led. ‘It iz K. K. K.,’ ced I.

“He looct incide the envelope. ‘So it iz,’ he cride. ‘Here ar the verry
letterz. But whaut iz this ritten abuv them?’

“ ‘Poot the paperz on the sundiyal,’ I red, peping over hiz shoalder.

“ ‘Whaut paperz? Whaut sundiyal?’ he aasct.

“ ‘The sundiyal in the garden. Dhare iz no uther,’ ced I; ‘but the paperz must be dhose dhat ar destroid.’

“ ‘Poo!’ ced he, gripping hard at hiz currage. ‘We ar in a civviliazd land here, and we caant hav tomfoolery ov this kiand. Whare duz the thhing cum from?’

“ ‘From Dundy,’ I aancerd, glaancing at the poastmarc.

“ ‘Sum preposterous practical joke,’ ced he. ‘Whaut hav I too doo withe sundiyalz and paperz? I shal take no notice ov such noncens.’

“ ‘I shood certainly speke too the polece,’ I ced.

“ ‘And be laaft at for mi painz. Nuthhing ov the sort.’

“ ‘Then let me doo so?’

“ ‘No, I forbid u. I woant hav a fus made about such noncens.’

“It wauz in vane too argu withe him, for he wauz a verry obstinate man. I went about, houwevver, withe a hart which wauz fool ov foerbodingz.

“On the thherd da aafter the cumming ov the letter mi faather went from home too vizsit an oald frend ov hiz, Major Frebody, whoo iz in comaand ov wun ov the foerts uppon Portzdoun Hil. I wauz glad dhat he shood go, for it ceemd too me

dhat he wauz farther from dain'ger when he wauz awa from home. In
dhat, houwevver, I
wauz in error. Uppon the cecond da ov hiz abcens I receevd a tellegram
from the
major, imploering me too cum at wuns. Mi faather had faulen over wun ov
the depe
chauc-pits which abound in the naborhood, and wauz liying censles, withe
a
shatterd scul. I hurrede too him, but he paast awa widhout havving evver
recuvverd hiz consmousnes. He had, az it apeerz, bene reterning from
Fareham
in the twilite, and az the cuntry wauz un'none too him, and the chauc-pit
unfenst, the jury had no hesitaishon in bringing in a verdict ov 'deth from
axidental causez.' Caerfooly az I exammiand evvery fact conected withe
hiz
deth, I wauz unnabel too fiand ennithhing which cood sugest the ideyaa ov
merder.
Dhare wer no cianz ov viyolens, no footmarx, no robbery, no reccord ov
strain'gerz havving bene cene uppon the roadz. And yet I nede not tel u
dhat mi
miand wauz far from at ese, and dhat I wauz wel-ni certane dhat sum foul
plot
had bene woven round him.

"In this cinnister wa I came intoo mi inherritans. U wil aasc me whi I did
not
dispose ov it? I aancer, becauz I wauz wel convinst dhat our trubbelz wer
in
sum wa dependent uppon an incident in mi unkelz life, and dhat the
dain'ger
wood be az prescing in wun hous az in anuther.

"It wauz in Jannuwary, '85, dhat mi poor faather met hiz end, and too yeeرز
and

ate munths hav elapst cins then. Juring dhat time I hav livd happily at Horsham, and I had begun too hope dhat this kers had paast awa from the fammily, and dhat it had ended withe the laast generaishon. I had begun too take cumfort too soone, houwevver; yesterda morning the blo fel in the verry shape in which it had cum uppon mi faather.”

The yung man tooc from hiz waistcote a crumpeld envelope, and terning too the tabel he shooc out uppon it five littel dride oranj pips.

“This iz the envelope,” he continnude. “The poastmarc iz Lundoon—eastern divizhon.

Within ar the verry werdz which wer uppon mi faatherz laast message: ‘K. K. K.’;

and then ‘Poot the paperz on the sundiyal.’ ”

“Whaut hav u dun?” aasct Hoamz.

“Nuthhing.”

“Nuthhing?”

“Too tel the trueth”—he sanc hiz face intoo hiz thhin, white handz—“I hav felt helples. I hav felt like wun ov dhose poor rabbits when the snake iz riathing toowordz it. I ceme too be in the graasp ov sum resistles, inexorabel evil, which no foercite and no precaushonz can gard against.”

“Tut! tut!” cride Sherloc Hoamz. “U must act, man, or u ar lost. Nuthhing but ennergy can save u. This iz no time for despare.”

"I hav cene the polece."

"Aa!"

"But dha liscend too mi stoery withe a smile. I am convinst dhat the inspector haz formd the opinyon dhat the letterz ar aul practical joax, and dhat the deths ov mi relaishonz wer reyal axidents, az the jury stated, and wer not too be conected withe the worningz."

Hoamz shooc hiz clencht handz in the are. "Incredidibel imbecillity!" he cride.

"Dha hav, houwevver, aloud me a poleesman, whoo ma remane in the hous withe me."

"Haz he cum withe u too-nite?"

"No. Hiz orderz wer too sta in the hous."

Agane Hoamz raivd in the are.

"Whi did u cum too me," he cride, "and, abuv aul, whi did u not cum at wuns?"

"I did not no. It wauz oanly too-da dhat I spoke too Major Prendergaast about mi trubbelz and wauz adviazd bi him too cum too u."

"It iz reyal too dase cins u had the letter. We shood hav acted befoer this. U hav no ferther evvidens, I supose, dhan dhat which u hav plaist befoer us—no sugestive detale which mite help us?"

“Dhare iz wun thhing,” ced Jon Openshau. He rummaid in hiz cote pocket, and, drauwing out a pece ov discullord, blu-tinted paper, he lade it out uppon the tabel. “I hav sum remembrans,” ced he, “dhat on the da when mi unkel bernd the paperz I observd dhat the smaul, unbernd marginz which la amid the ashez wer ov this particcular cullor. I found this cin’ghel shete uppon the floer ov hiz roome, and I am incliand too thhinc dhat it ma be wun ov the paperz which haz, perhaps, flutterd out from among the utherz, and in dhat wa haz escaipt destrucshon. Beyond the menshon ov pips, I doo not ce dhat it helps us much. I thhinc micelf dhat it iz a page from sum private diyary. The riting iz undoutedly mi unkelz.”

Hoamz muivd the lamp, and we boath bent over the shete ov paper, which shode bi its ragghed ej dhat it had indede bene toern from a booc. It wauz hedded, “March, 1869,” and beneeth wer the following enigmattical noticez:

“4th. Hudson came. Same oald platform.

“7th. Cet the pips on McCauly, Parramor, and

Jon Swane, ov St. Augustine.

“9th. McCauly cleerd.

“10th. Jon Swane cleerd.

"12th. Vizsited Parramor. Aul wel."

"Thanc u!" ced Hoamz, foalding up the paper and reterning it too our vizsitor.

"And nou u must on no acount loose anuther instant. We canot spare time even too discus whaut u hav toald me. U must ghet home instantly and act."

"Whaut shal I doo?"

"Dhare iz but wun thhing too doo. It must be dun at wuns. U must poot this pece ov paper which u hav shone us intoo the braas box which u hav descriabd. U must aulso poot in a note too sa dhat aul the uther paperz wer bernd bi yor unkel, and dhat this iz the oanly wun which remainz. U must acert dhat in such werdz az wil carry convicshon withe them. Havving dun this, u must at wuns poot the box out uppon the sundiyal, az directed. Doo u understand?"

"Entiarly."

"Doo not thhinc ov revenj, or ennithhing ov the sort, at prezsent. I thhinc dhat we ma gane dhat bi meenz ov the lau; but we hav our web too weve, while dhaerz iz aulreddy woven. The ferst concideraishon iz too remoove the prescing dain'ger which threttenz u. The cecond iz too clere up the mistery and too punnish the ghilty partese."

"I thanc u," ced the yung man, rising and pooling on hiz overcote. "U hav ghivven me fresh life and hope. I shal certainly doo az u advise."

"Doo not loose an instant. And, abuv aul, take care ov yorcelf in the meenwhile, for I doo not thhinc dhat dhare can be a dout dhat u ar threttend

bi a verry reyal and imminent dain'ger. Hou doo u go bac?"

"Bi trane from Wauterloo."

"It iz not yet nine. The streets wil be crouded, so I trust dhat u ma be in saifty. And yet u canot gard yorcelf too cloasly."

"I am armd."

"Dhat iz wel. Too-moro I shal cet too werc uppon yor cace."

"I shal ce u at Horsham, then?"

"No, yor ceecret lise in Lundon. It iz dhare dhat I shal ceke it."

"Then I shal caul uppon u in a da, or in too dase, withe nuse az too the box and the paperz. I shal take yor advice in evvery particcular." He shooc handz

withe us and tooc hiz leve. Outcide the wind stil screemd and the rane splasht and pattered against the windose. This strainj, wiald stoery ceemd too

hav cum too us from amid the mad ellements—blone in uppon us like a shete ov

ce-wede in a gale—and nou too hav bene reyabzorbd bi them wuns moer.

Sherloc Hoamz sat for sum time in cilens, withe hiz hed sunc forword and hiz ise bent uppon the red glo ov the fire. Then he lit hiz pipe, and lening bac in hiz chare he waucht the blu smoke-ringz az dha chaist eche uther up

too the celing.

“I thhinc, Wautson,” he remarct at laast, “dhat ov aul our cacez we hav had nun moer fantastic dhan this.”

“Save, perhaps, the Cine ov Foer.”

“Wel, yes. Save, perhaps, dhat. And yet this Jon Openshau ceemz too me too be wauking amid even grater perrilz dhan did the Sholtose.”

“But hav u,” I aasct, “formd enny deffinite concepshon az too whaut these perrilz ar?”

“Dhare can be no qweschon az too dhare nachure,” he aancerd.

“Then whaut ar dha? Whoo iz this K. K. K., and whi duz he pershu this unhappy fammily?”

Sherloc Hoamz cloazd hiz ise and plaist hiz elbose uppon the armz ov hiz chare, withe hiz fin'gher-tips tooghether. “The ideyal rezoner,” he remarct, “wood, when he had wuns bene shone a cin'ghel fact in aul its baringz, dejuce from it not oonly aul the chane ov events which led up too it but aulso aul the results which wood follo from it. Az Cuveyer cood corectly describe a whole annimal bi the contemplaishon ov a cin'ghel bone, so the observer whoo haz thurroly understood wun linc in a cerese ov incidents shood be Abel too accuraitly state aul the uther wunz, both befoer and aafter. We hav not yet graaspt the results which the rezon alone can atane too. Problemz ma be

solv'd in the studdy which hav baffeld aul dhose whoo hav saut a
solueshon bi
the ade ov dhare cencez. Too carry the art, houwevver, too its hiyest pich, it
iz
nescesary dhat the rezoner shood be abel too utilise aul the facts which hav
cum too hiz nollej; and this in itself implise, az u wil reddily ce, a
poseshon ov aul nollej, which, even in these dase ov fre ejucaishon and
enciaclopejaaz, iz a sumwhaut rare acumplishment. It iz not so imposcibel,
houwevver, dhat a man shood poses aul nollej which iz liacly too be
uesfool
too him in hiz werc, and this I hav endevvord in mi cace too doo. If I
remember
riatly, u on wun ocaizhon, in the erly dase ov our frendship, defiaand mi
limmits in a verry precice fashon."

"Yes," I aancerd, laafing. "It wauz a cin'gular document. Filossofy,
astronny, and pollitix wer marct at sero, I remember. Bottany vareyabel,
geyollogy profound az regardz the mud-stainz from enny rejon within fifty
mialz
ov toun, kemmistry exentric, anatomy uncistemattic, censaishonal
litterachure and
crime recordz uneke, viyolin-player, boxer, soerdzman, lauyer, and
celf-poizoner bi cocane and tobacco. Dhose, I thhinc, wer the mane points
ov
mi anallicis."

Hoamz grind at the laast item. "Wel," he ced, "I sa nou, az I ced then,
dhat a man shood kepe hiz littel brane-attic stoct withe aul the fernichure
dhat he iz liacly too use, and the rest he can poot awa in the lumber-roome
ov
hiz liabrary, whare he can ghet it if he waunts it. Nou, for such a cace az the
wun which haz bene submitted too us too-nite, we nede certainly too
muster aul

our rezoercez. Kiandly hand me doun the letter K ov the Amerrican Enciaclopejaa which standz uppon the shelf becide u. Thanc u. Nou let us concidder the cichuwaishon and ce whaut ma be dejuest from it. In the ferst place, we ma start withe a strong prezumpshon dhat Cuunel Openshau had sum verry strong rezon for leving Amerricaa. Men at hiz time ov life doo not chainj aul dhare habbits and exchainj willingly the charming climate ov Floridaa for the loanly life ov an In'glissh provinshal toun. Hiz extreme luv ov sollichude in In'gland sugests the ideyaa dhat he wauz in fere ov sumwun or sumthhing, so we ma ashume az a werking hipothhecis dhat it wauz fere ov sumwun or sumthhing which drove him from Amerricaa. Az too whaut it wauz he feerd, we can oanly dejuce dhat bi conciddering the formiddabel letterz which wer receevd bi himcelf and hiz suxessorz. Did u remarc the poastmarx ov dhose letterz?"

"The ferst wauz from Pondicherry, the cecond from Dundy, and the thherd from Lundon."

"From Eest Lundon. Whaut doo u dejuce from dhat?"

"Dha ar aul cepoerts. Dhat the riter wauz on boerd ov a ship."

"Exelent. We hav aulreddy a clu. Dhare can be no dout dhat the probabillity—the strong probabillity—iz dhat the riter wauz on boerd ov a ship.

And nou let us concidder anuther point. In the cace ov Pondicherry, cevven weex elapst betwene the thret and its foolfilment, in Dundy it wauz oanly sum thre or foer dase. Duz dhat sugest ennithhing?"

"A grater distans too travvel."

"But the letter had aulso a grater distans too cum."

"Then I doo not ce the point."

"Dhare iz at leest a prezumpshon dhat the vescel in which the man or men ar iz a saling-ship. It loox az if dha aulwase cend dhare cin'gular worning or token befoer them when starting uppon dhare mishon. U ce hou qwicly the dede follode the cine when it came from Dundy. If dha had cum from Pondicherry in a stemer dha wood hav ariavd aulmoast az soone az dhare letter. But, az a matter ov fact, cevven weex elapst. I thhinc dhat dhose cevven weex represented the differens betwene the male-bote which braut the letter and the saling vescel which braut the riter."

"It iz poscibel."

"Moer dhan dhat. It iz probbabel. And nou u ce the dedly ergency ov this nu cace, and whi I erjd yung Openshau too caushon. The blo haz aulwase faulen at the end ov the time which it wood take the cenderz too travvel the distans. But

this wun cumz from Lundon, and dhaerfoer we canot count uppon dela.”

“Good God!” I cride. “Whaut can it mene, this relentles percecueshon?”

“The paperz which Openshau carrede ar obveyously ov vital importans too the

person or personz in the saling-ship. I thhinc dhat it iz qwite clere dhat dhare must be moer dhan wun ov them. A cin’ghel man cood not hav carrede out

too deths in such a wa az too deceve a coronerz jury. Dhare must hav bene cevveral in it, and dha must hav bene men ov rezoers and determinaishon.

Dhare

paperz dha mene too hav, be the hoalder ov them whoo it ma. In this wa u ce

K. K. K. cecez too be the inishalz ov an individjuwal and becumz the baj ov a

sociyety.”

“But ov whaut sociyety?”

“Hav u nevver—” ced Sherloc Hoamz, bending forword and cinking hiz vois—“hav u nevver herd ov the Cu Clux Clan?”

“I nevver hav.”

Hoamz ternd over the leevz ov the booc uppon hiz ne. “Here it iz,” ced he prezsently:

“ ‘Cu Clux Clan. A name deriavd from the fancifool resemblans too the sound

projest bi cocking a rifel. This terribel ceecret sociyety wauz formd bi sum ex-Confedderate soalgerz in the Suthern staitz aafter the Civvil Wor, and it rappidly formd local braanchez in different parts ov the cuntry, notably in

Tenece, Loowizhanaa, the Carolinaaz, Jorjaa, and Floridaa. Its pouwer
wauz uezd
for polittical perpocez, principaly for the terrorising ov the neegro voterz
and
the merdering and driving from the cuntry ov dhose whoo wer opoazd too
its
vuse. Its outragez wer uezhuwaly preceded bi a worning cent too the marct
man
in sum fantastic but genneraly reccogniazd shape—a sprig ov oke-leevz in
sum
parts, mellon ceedz or oranj pips in utherz. On receving this the victim mite
iather openly abjure hiz former wase, or mite fli from the cuntry. If he
braivd the matter out, deth wood unfalingly cum upon him, and
uezhuwaly in
sum strainj and unfoercene manner. So perfect wauz the organizaishon ov
the
society, and so cistemattic its methodz, dhat dhare iz hardly a cace upon
reccord
whare enny man suxeded in braving it withe impunity, or in which enny
ov its
outragez wer traist home too the perpetratorz. For sum yeerz the
organizaishon
flurrisht in spite ov the efforts ov the United Staits guvvernment and ov the
better claacez ov the comunity in the South. Evenchuwaly, in the yere 1869,
the
muivment raather suddenly colapst, auldho dhare hav bene sporadic
outbraix
ov the same sort cins dhat date.'

“U wil observ,” ced Hoamz, laying doun the vollume, “dhat the sudden
braking up ov the society wauz cowincident withe the disaperans ov
Openshau
from Amerricaa withe dhare paperz. It ma wel hav bene cauz and efect. It
iz

no wunder dhat he and hiz fammily hav sum ov the moer implaccabel
spirrits uppon
dhare trac. U can understand dhat this redgister and diyary ma implicate
sum
ov the ferst men in the South, and dhat dhare ma be menny whoo wil not
slepe
esy at nite until it iz recuverd.”

“Then the page we hav cene—”

“Iz such az we mite expect. It ran, if I remember rite, ‘cent the pips too A,
B, and C’—dhat iz, cent the sociyetese worning too them. Then dhare ar
suxescive entrese dhat A and B cleerd, or left the cuntry, and finaly dhat
C wauz vizsited, withe, I fere, a cinnister rezult for C. Wel, I thhinc, Doctor,
dhat we ma let sum lite intoo this darc place, and I beleve dhat the oonly
chaans yung Openshau haz in the meentime iz too doo whaut I hav toald
him. Dhare
iz nuthhing moer too be ced or too be dun too-nite, so hand me over mi
viyolin
and let us tri too forghet for haaf an our the mizserabel wether and the stil
moer mizserabel wase ov our fello men.”

It had cleerd in the morning, and the sun wauz shining withe a subjude
briatnes throo the dim vale which hangz over the grate citty. Sherloc
Hoamz wauz aulreddy at brecfast when I came down.

“U wil excuse me for not wating for u,” ced he; “I hav, I foercy, a
verry bizsy da befoer me in loocking intoo this cace ov yung Openshauz.”

“Whaut steps wil u take?” I aasct.

"It wil verry much depend uppon the rezults ov mi ferst inqwirese. I ma hav too go doun too Horsham, aafter aul."

"U wil not go dhare ferst?"

"No, I shal comens withe the Citty. Just ring the bel and the made wil bring up yor coffy."

Az I wated, I lifted the unnopend nuesdaypaper from the tabel and glaanst mi i over it. It rested uppon a hedding which cent a chil too mi hart.

"Hoamz," I cride, "u ar too late."

"Aa!" ced he, laying doun hiz cup, "I feerd az much. Hou wauz it dun?" He spoke caalmly, but I cood ce dhat he wauz deeply muivd.

"Mi i caut the name ov Openshau, and the hedding 'Tradgedy Nere Wauterloo Brij.' Here iz the acount:

" 'Betwene nine and ten laast nite Polece-Cunstabel Cooc, ov the H Divizhon, on juty nere Wauterloo Brij, herd a cri for help and a splash in the wauter. The nite, houwevver, wauz extreemly darc and stormy, so dhat, in spite ov the help ov cevveral paacerz-bi, it wauz qwite imposcibel too efect a rescu. The alarm, houwevver, wauz ghivven, and, bi the ade ov the wauter-polece, the boddy wauz evenchuwaly recuverd. It pruid too be dhat ov a yung gentelman whose name, az

it apeerz from an envelope which wauz found in hiz pocket, wauz Jon
Openshau,
and whoose rezsidens iz nere Horsham. It iz con'gechuerd dhat he ma hav
bene
hurreying doun too cach the laast trane from Wauterloo Staishon, and dhat
in hiz
haist and the extreme darcnes he mist hiz paath and wauct over the ej ov
wun ov the smaul landing-placez for rivver steemboats. The boddy
exibbited no
tracez ov viyolens, and dhare can be no dout dhat the deceest had bene the
victim ov an unforchunate axident, which shood hav the efect ov caulng
the
atenshon ov the authoritese too the condishon ov the rivvercide landing-
stagez.'

"

We sat in cilens for sum minnuets, Hoamz moer deprest and shaken dhan I
had
evver cene him.

"Dhat herts mi pride, Wautson," he ced at laast. "It iz a petty feling, no
dout, but it herts mi pride. It becumz a personal matter withe me nou, and,
if
God cendz me helth, I shal cet mi hand uppon this gang. Dhat he shood
cum too
me for help, and dhat I shood cend him awa too hiz deth—!" He sprang
from hiz
chare and paist about the roome in uncontrolabel agitaishon, withe a flush
uppon
hiz sallo cheex and a nervous claasping and unclaasping ov hiz long thin
handz.

"Dha must be cunning devvilz," he exclaimd at laast. "Hou cood dha hav
decoid him doun dhare? The Embancment iz not on the direct line too the

staishon. The brij, no dout, wauz too crouded, even on such a nite, for dhare
perpoce. Wel, Wautson, we shal ce whoo wil win in the long run. I am
gowing
out nou!”

“Too the polece?”

“No; I shal be mi one polece. When I hav spun the web dha ma take the
flise, but not befoer.”

Aul da I wauz en’ gajjd in mi profeshonal werc, and it wauz late in the
evening
befoer I reternd too Baker Strete. Sherloc Hoamz had not cum bac yet. It
wauz neerly ten oacloc befoer he enterd, loocking pale and woern. He
wauct up
too the ciadboerd, and taring a pece from the lofe he devourd it
voraishously,
waushing it down withe a long draaft ov wauter.

“U ar hun’gry,” I remarct.

“Starving. It had escaipt mi memmory. I hav had nuthhing cins breccfast.”

“Nuthhing?”

“Not a bite. I had no time too thhinc ov it.”

“And hou hav u suxeded?”

“Wel.”

“U hav a clu?”

"I hav them in the hollo ov mi hand. Yung Openshau shal not long remane unnavenjd. Whi, Wautson, let us poot dhare one devvilish trade-marc uppon them. It iz wel thaut ov!"

"Whaut doo u mene?"

He tooc an oranj from the cubbord, and taring it too pecez he sqweezd out the pips uppon the tabel. Ov these he tooc five and thrust them intoo an envelope. On the incide ov the flap he rote "S. H. for J. O." Then he ceeld it and adrest it too "Captane Jaimz Cal'houn, Barc Lone Star, Savanna, Jorjaa."

"Dhat wil awate him when he enterz poert," ced he, chuculing. "It ma ghiv him a sleeples nite. He wil fiand it az shure a prekursor ov hiz fate az Openshau did befoer him."

"And whoo iz this Captane Cal'houn?"

"The leder ov the gang. I shal hav the utherz, but he ferst."

"Hou did u trace it, then?"

He tooc a larj shete ov paper from hiz pocket, aul cuvverd withe daits and naimz.

"I hav spent the whole da," ced he, "over Loidz redgisterz and fialz ov the oald paperz, following the fuchure carere ov evvery vescel which tucht at Pondicherry in Jannuwary and Februwary in '83. Dhare wer thherty-cix ships ov fare tunnage which wer repoerted dhare juring dhose munths. Ov these, wun, the Lone Star, instantly atracted mi atenshon, cins, auldho it wauz repoerted az

havving cleerd from Lundon, the name iz dhat which iz ghivven too wun
ov the
staits ov the Uenyon."

"Texas, I thhinc."

"I wauz not and am not shure which; but I nu dhat the ship must hav an
Amerrican origin."

"Whaut then?"

"I cercht the Dundy reccordz, and when I found dhat the barc Lone Star
wauz
dhare in Jannuuary, '85, mi suspishon became a certainty. I then inqwiard
az too
the vescelz which la at prezsent in the poert ov Lundon."

"Yes?"

"The Lone Star had ariavd here laast weke. I went doun too the Albert Doc
and
found dhat she had bene taken doun the rivver bi the erly tide this
morning,
hoamword bound too Savanna. I wiard too Graivsend and lernd dhat she
had
paast sum time ago, and az the wind iz eesterly I hav no dout dhat she iz
nou paast the Goodwinz and not verry far from the Ile ov Wite."

"Whaut wil u doo, then?"

"O, I hav mi hand uppon him. He and the too maits, ar az I lern, the oonly
native-born Amerricanz in the ship. The utherz ar Finz and Germanz. I no,
aulso, dhat dha wer aul thre awa from the ship laast nite. I had it from the

stevedor whoo haz bene loding dhare cargo. Bi the time dhat dhare saling-
ship
rechez Savanna the male-bote wil hav carrede this letter, and the cabel
wil hav informd the polece ov Savanna dhat these thre gentelmen ar
badly
waunted here uppon a charj ov merder.”

Dhare iz evver a flau, houwevver, in the best lade ov human planz, and the
merdererz ov Jon Openshau wer nevver too receive the oranj pips which
wood
sho them dhat anuther, az cunning and az rezzolute az themcelvz, wauz
uppon
dhare trac. Verry long and verry cevere wer the eqwinocshal gailz dhat
yere. We
wated long for nuse ov the Lone Star ov Savanna, but nun evver reecht us.
We
did at laast here dhat sumwhare far out in the Atlantic a shatterd stern-
poast
ov a bote wauz cene swinging in the trof ov a wave, withe the letterz “L.
S.”
carvd uppon it, and dhat iz aul which we shal evver no ov the fate ov the
Lone Star.

Izaa Whitney, bruther ov the late Eliyas Whitney, D.D., Principal ov the
Theyolodgical College ov St. Jorgez, wauz much adicted too opeyum. The
habbit gru
uppon him, az I understand, from sum foolish freke when he wauz at
college; for
havving red De Qwincese descriphon ov hiz dreemz and censaishonz, he
had
drencht hiz tobacco withe laudanum in an atempt too projuce the same
efects.
He found, az so menny moer hav dun, dhat the practice iz eseyer too atane
dhan
too ghet rid ov, and for menny yeeرز he continnude too be a slave too the
drug, an
obgect ov min'gheld horror and pittty too hiz frendz and rellatiavz. I can ce
him
nou, withe yello, paisty face, drooping lidz, and pin-point pupilz, aul
huddeld
in a chare, the rec and ruwin ov a nobel man.

Wun nite—it wauz in June, '89—dhare came a ring too mi bel, about the
our when
a man ghivz hiz ferst yaun and glaancez at the cloc. I sat up in mi chare,
and
mi wife lade her nedel-werc down in her lap and made a littel face ov
disapointment.

“A paishent!” ced she. “Ule hav too go out.”

I groand, for I wauz nuly cum bac from a wery da.

We herd the doer open, a fu hurrede werdz, and then qwic steps uppon the
linoleyum. Our one doer flu open, and a lady, clad in sum darc-cullord stuf,

withe a blac vale, enterd the roome.

“U wil excuse mi caulng so late,” she began, and then, suddenly loosing her self-controle, she ran forword, thru her armz about mi wiafs nec, and sobd uppon her shoalder. “O, Ime in such trubbel!” she cride; “I doo so waunt a littel help.”

“Whi,” ced mi wife, poolling up her vale, “it iz Cate Whitney. Hou u starteld me, Cate! I had not an ideyaa whoo u wer when u came in.”

“I didnt no whaut too doo, so I came strate too u.” Dhat wauz aulwase the wa.

Foke whoo wer in grefe came too mi wife like berdz too a lite-hous.

“It wauz verry swete ov u too cum. Nou, u must hav sum wine and wauter, and cit here cumfortably and tel us aul about it. Or shood u raather dhat I cent Jaimz of too bed?”

“O, no, no! I waunt the doctorz advice and help, too. Its about Izaa. He haz not bene home for too dase. I am so fritend about him!”

It wauz not the ferst time dhat she had spoken too us ov her huzbandz trubbel, too me az a doctor, too mi wife az an oald frend and scoole companyon. We suidhd and cumforted her bi such werdz az we cood fiand. Did she no whare her huzband wauz? Wauz it poscibel dhat we cood bring him bac too her?

It ceemz dhat it wauz. She had the shurest informaishon dhat ov late he had, when

the fit wauz on him, made uce ov an opeyum den in the farthest eest ov the Citty.

Hithertoo hiz orgese had aulwase bene confiand too wun da, and he had cum bac,

twitching and shatterd, in the evening. But nou the spel had bene uppon him

ate-and-forty ourz, and he la dhare, doutles amung the dregz ov the dox, breething in the poizon or sleping of the efects. Dhare he wauz too be found, she wauz shure ov it, at the Bar ov Goald, in Upper Swandam Lane.

But whaut

wauz she too doo? Hou cood she, a yung and timmid woomman, make her wa intoo such a

place and pluc her huzband out from amung the ruffeyanz whoo surrounded him?

Dhare wauz the cace, and ov coers dhare wauz but wun wa out ov it. Mite I not

escort her too this place? And then, az a cecond thaut, whi shood she cum at

aul? I wauz Izaa Whitnese meddical adviser, and az such I had influwens over him.

I cood mannage it better if I wer alone. I prommiast her on mi werd dhat I wood cend him home in a cab within too ourz if he wer indede at the adres which she had ghivven me. And so in ten minnuets I had left mi armchare and chery

citting-roome behiand me, and wauz speding eestword in a hansom on a strainj

errand, az it ceemd too me at the time, dho the fuchure oonly cood sho hou strainj it wauz too be.

But dhare wauz no grate difficulty in the ferst stage ov mi advenchure.

Upper

Swandam Lane iz a vile ally lerking behiand the hi whorvz which line the

north side ov the rivver too the east ov Lndon Brij. Betwene a slop-shop
and a
gin-shop, aproacht bi a stepe flite ov steps leding down too a blac gap
like the mouth ov a cave, I found the den ov which I wauz in cerch.
Ordering mi
cab too wate, I paast down the steps, woern hollo in the center bi the
ceesles tred ov drunken fete; and bi the lite ov a flickering oil-lamp
abuv the doer I found the lach and made mi wa intoo a long, lo roome,
thhic
and hevvy withe the broun opeyum smoke, and terraist withe wooden
berths, like the
foaxl ov an emmigrant ship.

Throo the gloome wun cood dimly cach a glimps ov boddese liying in
strainj
fantastic posez, boud shoalderz, bent nese, hedz throne bac, and chinz
pointing upword, withe here and dhare a darc, lac-luster i ternd uppon the
nucummer. Out ov the blac shaddose dhare glimmerd littel red cerkelz ov
lite,
nou brite, nou faint, az the barning poizon waxt or waind in the boalz ov
the
mettal piaps. The moast la cilent, but sum mutterd too themcelvz, and
utherz
tauct tooggether in a strainj, lo, monottonous vois, dhare conversaishon
cumming
in gushez, and then suddenly taling of intoo cilens, eche mumbling out hiz
one thauts and paying littel hede too the werdz ov hiz nabor. At the
farther end wauz a smaul braseyer ov barning charcole, beside which on a
thre-legged wooden stoole dhare sat a taul, thhin oald man, withe hiz
jau resting
uppon hiz too fists, and hiz elbose uppon hiz nese, staring intoo the fire.

Az I enterd, a sallo Mala attendant had hurrede up withe a pipe for me and
a

supli ov the drug, beckoning me too an empty berth.

“Thanc u. I hav not cum too sta,” ced I. “Dhare iz a frend ov mine here, Mr. Izaa Whitney, and I wish too speke withe him.”

Dhare wauz a muivment and an exclamaishon from mi rite, and pering throo the gloome, I sau Whitney, pale, haggard, and unkempt, staring out at me.

“Mi God! Its Wautson,” ced he. He wauz in a pitteyabel state ov reyacshon, withe evvery nerv in a twitter. “I sa, Wautson, whaut oacloc iz it?”

“Neerly elevven.”

“Ov whaut da?”

“Ov Frida, June 19th.”

“Good hevvenz! I thaut it wauz Wednzda. It iz Wednzda. Whaut du waunt too friten a chap for?” He sanc hiz face ontoo hiz armz and began too sob in a hi trebbel ke.

“I tel u dhat it iz Frida, man. Yor wife haz bene wating this too dase for u. U shood be ashaimd ov yorcelf!”

“So I am. But uve got mixt, Wautson, for I hav oonly bene here a fu ourz, thre piaps, foer piaps—I forghet hou menny. But Ile go home withe u. I woodnt friten Cate—poor littel Cate. Ghiv me yor hand! Hav u a cab?”

“Yes, I hav wun wating.”

“Then I shal go in it. But I must o sumthhing. Fiand whaut I o, Wautson. I am aul of cullor. I can doo nuthhing for micelf.”

I wauct doun the narro passage betwene the dubbel ro ov sleperz, hoalding mi breth too kepe out the vile, schupefiying fuemz ov the drug, and loocking about for the mannager. Az I paast the taul man whoo sat bi the braseyer I felt a sudden pluc at mi skert, and a lo vois whisperd, “Wauc paast me, and then looc bac at me.” The werdz fel qwite distinctly uppon mi ere. I glaanst doun.

Dha cood oanly hav cum from the oald man at mi cide, and yet he sat nou az abzorbd az evver, verry thhin, verry rinkeld, bent withe age, an opeyum pipe dan’gling doun from betwene hiz nese, az dho it had dropt in shere lascichude from hiz fin’gherz. I tooc too steps forword and looct bac. It tooc aul mi celf-controle too prevent me from braking out intoo a cri ov astonishment.

He had ternd hiz bac so dhat nun cood ce him but I. Hiz form had fild out, hiz rinkelz wer gon, the dul ise had regaind dhare fire, and dhare, citting bi the fire and grinning at mi cerprise, wauz nun uther dhan Sherloc Hoamz. He made a slite moashon too me too aproche him, and instantly, az he ternd hiz face haaf round too the cumpany wuns moer, subcided intoo a doddering, looce-lipt cenillity.

“Hoamz!” I whisperd, “whaut on erth ar u doowing in this den?”

“Az lo az u can,” he aancerd; “I hav exelent eerz. If u wood hav the grate kiandnes too ghet rid ov dhat sottish frend ov yorz I shood be exedingly glad too hav a littel tauc withe u.”

"I hav a cab outside."

"Then pra cend him home in it. U ma saifly trust him, for he apeerz too be too limp too ghet intoo enny mischefe. I shood recomend u aulso too cend a note

bi the cabman too yor wife too sa dhat u hav throne in yor lot withe me. If u wil wate outside, I shal be withe u in five minnuets."

It wauz difficult too refuse enny ov Sherlock Hoamz' reqwests, for dha wer aulwase so exedingly deffinite, and poot forword withe such a qwiyet are ov

maastery. I felt, houwevver, dhat when Whitney wauz wuns confiand in the cab mi

mishon wauz practicaly acumplisht; and for the rest, I cood not wish ennithhing better dhan too be asoasheyated withe mi frend in wun ov dhose cin'gular

advenchuerz which wer the normal condishon ov hiz existens. In a fu minnuets I

had ritten mi note, pade Whitnese bil, led him out too the cab, and cene him

drivven throo the darcnes. In a verry short time a decreppit figgure had emerjd

from the opeyum den, and I wauz wauking doun the strete withe Sherlock Hoamz. For

too streets he shuffeld along withe a bent bac and an uncertane foot. Then, glaancing qwicly round, he stratend himcelf out and berst intoo a harty fit ov laafter.

"I supose, Wautson," ced he, "dhat u imadgine dhat I hav added opeyum-smoking

too cocane in'gecshonz, and aul the uther littel weecnecez on which u hav favord me withe yor meddical vuse."

“I wauz certainly cerpriazd too fiand u dhare.”

“But not moer so dhan I too fiand u.”

“I came too fiand a frend.”

“And I too fiand an ennemy.”

“An ennemy?”

“Yes; wun ov mi natchural ennemese, or, shal I sa, mi natchural pra.

Breefly,

Wautson, I am in the midst ov a verry remarcabel inqwiry, and I hav hoapt too

fiand a clu in the incoherent ramblingz ov these sots, az I hav dun befoer nou. Had I bene reccogniazd in dhat den mi life wood not hav bene werth an

ourz perchace; for I hav uezd it befoer nou for mi one perpocez, and the raascaly Lascar whoo runz it haz swoern too hav venjans uppon me. Dhare iz a

trap-doer at the bac ov dhat bilding, nere the corner ov Paulz Whorf, which cood tel sum strainj tailz ov whaut haz paast throo it uppon the muinles niats.”

“Whaut! U doo not mene boddese?”

“I, boddese, Wautson. We shood be rich men if we had 1000 for evvery poor devvil

whoo haz bene dun too deth in dhat den. It iz the vilest merder-trap on the whole rivvercide, and I fere dhat Nevvil St. Clare haz enterd it nevver too leve it moer. But our trap shood be here.” He poot hiz too foerfin’ gherz betwene

hiz teeth and whisceld shrilly—a cignal which wauz aancerd bi a cimmilar whiscel

from the distans, follode shortly bi the rattel ov wheelz and the clinc ov horcez' huifs.

"Nou, Wautson," ced Hoamz, az a taul dog-cart dasht up throo the gloome, throwing out too goalden tunnelz ov yello lite from its cide lanternz. "Ule cum withe me, woant u?"

"If I can be ov uce."

"O, a trusty comrade iz aulwase ov uce; and a cronniacler stil moer so. Mi roome at The Cedarz iz a dubbel-bedded wun."

"The Cedarz?"

"Yes; dhat iz Mr. St. Claerz hous. I am staying dhare while I conduct the inqwiry."

"Whare iz it, then?"

"Nere Le, in Kent. We hav a cevven-mile drive befoer us."

"But I am aul in the darc."

"Ov coers u ar. Ule no aul about it prezsently. Jump up here. Aul rite, Jon; we shal not nede u. Heerz haaf a croun. Looc out for me too-moro, about elevven. Ghiv her her hed. So long, then!"

He flict the hors withe hiz whip, and we dasht awa throo the endles suxeshon ov somber and deserted streets, which widend gradjuwaly, until we wer fliying acros a braud ballustrated brij, withe the merky rivver flowing sluggishly beneeth us. Beyond la anuther dul wildernes ov brix and mortar,

its cilens broken oanly bi the hevvy, reggular footfaul ov the poleesman, or
the
songz and shouts ov sum belated party ov revvelerz. A dul rac wauz
drifting
sloly acros the ski, and a star or too twinkeld dimly here and dhare throo
the rifts ov the cloudz. Hoamz drove in cilens, withe hiz hed sunc uppon
hiz
brest, and the are ov a man whoo iz lost in thaut, while I sat becide him,
cureyous too lern whaut this nu qwest mite be which ceemd too tax hiz
pouwerz so
soerly, and yet afrade too brake in uppon the current ov hiz thauts. We had
drivven cevveral mialz, and wer beghinning too ghet too the frinj ov the
belt ov
suberban villaaz, when he shooc himcelf, shrugd hiz shoalderz, and lit up
hiz
pipe withe the are ov a man whoo haz sattisfide himcelf dhat he iz acting
for the
best.

“U hav a grand ghift ov cilens, Wautson,” ced he. “It maix u qwite
invallubel az a companyon. Pon mi werd, it iz a grate thhing for me too hav
sumwun too tauc too, for mi one thauts ar not over-plezzant. I wauz
wundering
whaut I shood sa too this dere littel woomman too-nite when she meets me
at the
doer.”

“U forghet dhat I no nuthhing about it.”

“I shal just hav time too tel u the facts ov the cace befoer we ghet too Le.
It ceemz abcerdly cimpel, and yet, sumhou I can ghet nuthhing too go
uppon.
Dhaerz plenty ov thred, no dout, but I caant ghet the end ov it intoo mi
hand.

Nou, Ile state the cace cleerly and conciasly too u, Wautson, and maby u can ce a sparce whare aul iz darc too me.”

“Procede, then.”

“Sum yeerz ago—too be deffinite, in Ma, 1884—dhare came too Le a gentelman, Nevvil St. Clare bi name, whoo apeerd too hav plenty ov munny. He tooc a larj villaa, lade out the groundz verry niasly, and livd genneraly in good stile. Bi degrese he made frendz in the naborhood, and in 1887 he marrede the dauter ov a local bruwer, bi whoome he nou haz too children. He had no ocupaishon, but wauz interested in cevveral cumpanese and went intoo toun az a rule in the morning, reterning bi the 5:14 from Cannon Strete evvery nite. Mr. St. Clare iz nou thherty-cevven yeerz ov age, iz a man ov temperate habbits, a good huzband, a verry afecshonate faather, and a man whoo iz poppular withe aul whoo no him. I ma ad dhat hiz whole dets at the prezsent moment, az far az we hav bene abel too ascertain, amount too 88 poundz 10s., while he haz 220 poundz standing too hiz credit in the Cappital and Countese Banc. Dhare iz no rezon, dhaerfoer, too thhinc dhat munny trubbelz hav bene waying uppon hiz miand.

“Laast Munda Mr. Nevvil St. Clare went intoo toun raather erleyer dhan uezhuwal, remarking befoer he started dhat he had too important comishonz too perform, and dhat he wood bring hiz littel boi home a box ov brix. Nou, bi the merest

chaans, hiz wife receevd a tellegram uppon this same Munda, verry shortly
aafter
hiz deparchure, too the efect dhat a smaul parcel ov concidderabel vallu
which
she had bene expecting wauz wating for her at the officez ov the Aberdene
Shipping Cumpany. Nou, if u ar wel up in yor Lundon, u wil no dhat
the office ov the cumpany iz in Fresno Strete, which braanchez out ov
Upper
Swandam Lane, whare u found me too-nite. Mrs. St. Clare had her lunch,
started for the Citty, did sum shopping, proceded too the cumpanese office,
got
her packet, and found hercelf at exactly 4:35 wauking throo Swandam Lane
on
her wa bac too the staishon. Hav u follode me so far?"

"It iz verry clere."

"If u remember, Munda wauz an exedingly hot da, and Mrs. St. Clare
wauct
sloly, glaancing about in the hope ov ceying a cab, az she did not like the
naborhood in which she found hercelf. While she wauz wauking in this wa
doun Swandam Lane, she suddenly herd an ejaculaishon or cri, and wauz
struc
coald too ce her huzband loocking doun at her and, az it ceemd too her,
becconing
too her from a cecond-floer windo. The windo wauz open, and she
distinctly sau
hiz face, which she descriabz az beying terribly adgitated. He waivd hiz
handz
franticaly too her, and then vannisht from the windo so suddenly dhat it
ceemd too her dhat he had bene pluct bac bi sum iresistibel foers from
behiland. Wun cin'gular point which struc her qwic femminine i wauz dhat
auldho he woer sum darc cote, such az he had started too toun in, he had
on

niather collar nor necti.

“Convinst dhat sumthhing wauz amis withe him, she rusht doun the steps
—for the
hous wauz nun uther dhan the opeyum den in which u found me too-nite
—and
running throo the frunt roome she attempted too acend the staerz which led
too
the ferst floer. At the foot ov the staerz, houwevver, she met this Lascar
scoundrel ov whoome I hav spoken, whoo thrust her bac and, aded bi a
Dane, whoo
acts az acistant dhare, poosht her out intoo the strete. Fild withe the moast
maddening douts and feerz, she rusht doun the lane and, bi rare good-
forchune,
met in Fresno Strete a number ov cunstabelz withe an inspector, aul on
dhare wa
too dhare bete. The inspector and too men acumpanede her bac, and in
spite ov
the continnude resistans ov the propriyetor, dha made dhare wa too the
roome in
which Mr. St. Clare had laast bene cene. Dhare wauz no cine ov him dhare.
In
fact, in the whole ov dhat floer dhare wauz no wun too be found save a
crippeld
rech ov hidjous aspect, whoo, it ceemz, made hiz home dhare. Boath he and
the
Lascar stoutly swoer dhat no wun els had bene in the frunt roome juring
the
aafternoone. So determiand wauz dhare deniyal dhat the inspector wauz
staggherd, and
had aulmoast cum too beleve dhat Mrs. St. Clare had bene deluded when,
withe a
cri, she sprang at a smaul dele box which la uppon the tabel and toer the
lid

from it. Out dhare fel a cascade ov childrenz brix. It wauz the toi which he had prommiast too bring home.

“This discuvvery, and the evvident confuezhon which the crippel shode, made the inspector reyalise dhat the matter wauz cereyous. The ruimz wer caerfooly exammiand, and rezults aul pointed too an abomminabel crime. The frunt roome wauz plainly fernisht az a citting-roome and led intoo a smaul bedroome, which looct out uppon the bac ov wun ov the whorvz. Betwene the whorf and the bedroome windo iz a narro strip, which iz dri at lo tide but iz cuvverd at hi tide withe at leest foer and a haaf fete ov wauter. The bedroome windo wauz a braud wun and opend from belo. On examinaishon tracez ov blud wer too be cene uppon the windocil, and cevveral scatterd drops wer vizsibel uppon the wooden floer ov the bedroome. Thrust awa behiand a kertane in the frunt roome wer aul the cloadhz ov Mr. Nevvil St. Clare, withe the exepshon ov hiz cote. Hiz buits, hiz sox, hiz hat, and hiz wauch—aul wer dhare. Dhare wer no cianz ov viyolens uppon enny ov these garments, and dhare wer no uther tracez ov Mr. Nevvil St. Clare. Out ov the windo he must aparrently hav gon for no uther exit cood be discuvverd, and the omminous bludstainz uppon the cil gave littel prommice dhat he cood save himcelf bi swimming, for the tide wauz at its verry hiyest at the moment ov the tradgedy.

“And nou az too the villainz whoo ceemd too be imejaitly implicated in the matter. The Lascar wauz none too be a man ov the vilest antecedents, but az, bi

Mrs. St. Claerz stoery, he wauz none too hav bene at the foot ov the stare within a verry fu cecondz ov her huzbandz aperans at the windo, he cood hardly hav bene moer dhan an axessory too the crime. Hiz defens wauz wun ov absolute ignorans, and he protested dhat he had no nollej az too the doowingz ov Hu Boone, hiz lodger, and dhat he cood not acount in enny wa for the prezsens ov the miscing gentelmanz cloadhz.

“So much for the Lascar mannager. Nou for the cinnister crippel whoo livz uppon the cecond floer ov the opeyum den, and whoo wauz certainly the laast human beying whose ise rested uppon Nevvil St. Clare. Hiz name iz Hu Boone, and hiz hidjous face iz wun which iz familleyar too evvery man whoo gose much too the Citty. He iz a profeshonal beggar, dho in order too avoid the polece regulaishonz he pretendz too a smaul trade in wax vestaaz. Sum littel distans down Thrednedel Strete, uppon the left-hand cide, dhare iz, az u ma hav remarct, a smaul an’ghel in the waul. Here it iz dhat this crechure taix hiz daly cete, cros-legghed withe hiz tiny stoc ov matchez on hiz lap, and az he iz a pitchous spektakel a smaul rane ov charrity decendz intoo the greycy lether cap which lise uppon the paivment becide him. I hav waucht the fello moer dhan wuns befoer evver I thaut ov making hiz profeshonal aqwaintans, and I hav bene cerpriazd at the harvest which he haz reept in a short time. Hiz aperans, u ce, iz so remarcabel dhat no wun can paas him widhout observing him. A shoc ov oranj hare, a pale face disfiguerd bi a horibel scar, which, bi its contracshon, haz ternd up the outer ej ov hiz upper lip, a booldog chin, and

a pare ov verry pennetrating darc ise, which present a cin'gular contraast
too the
cullor ov hiz hare, aul marc him out from amid the common croud ov
mendicants
and so, too, duz hiz wit, for he iz evver reddy withe a repli too enny pece
ov
chaaf which ma be throne at him bi the paacerz-bi. This iz the man
whoome we nou
lern too hav bene the lodger at the opeyum den, and too hav bene the laast
man
too ce the gentelman ov whoome we ar in qwest."

"But a crippel!" ced I. "Whaut cood he hav dun cin'ghel-handed against a
man
in the prime ov life?"

"He iz a crippel in the cens dhat he waux withe a limp; but in uther
respects
he apeerz too be a pouwerfool and wel-nerchuerd man. Shuerly yor
meddical
expereyens wood tel u, Wautson, dhat weecnes in wun lim iz often
compensated for bi exepshonal strength in the utherz."

"Pra continnu yor narrative."

"Mrs. St. Clare had fainted at the cite ov the blud uppon the windo, and
she
wauz escorted home in a cab bi the polece, az her prezsens cood be ov no
help
too them in dhare investigaishonz. Inspector Barton, whoo had charj ov the
cace,
made a verry caerfool examinaishon ov the premmicez, but widhout
fianding ennithhing
which thru enny lite uppon the matter. Wun mistake had bene made in not

aresting Boone instantly, az he wauz aloud sum fu minnuets juring which he mite hav comunicated withe hiz frend the Lascar, but this fault wauz soone remmedede, and he wauz ceezd and cercht, widhout ennithhing beying found which cood incrimminate him. Dhare wer, it iz tru, sum blud-stainz uppon hiz rite shert-sleve, but he pointed too hiz ring-fin'gher, which had bene cut nere the nale, and explaind dhat the bleding came from dhare, adding dhat he had bene too the windo not long befoer, and dhat the stainz which had bene observd dhare came doutles from the same soers. He denide strennuwously havving evver cene Mr. Nevvil St. Clare and swoer dhat the prezsens ov the cloadhz in hiz roome wauz az much a mistery too him az too the polece. Az too Mrs. St. Claerz acershon dhat she had acchuwaly cene her huzband at the windo, he declaerd dhat she must hav bene iather mad or dreming. He wauz remuivd, loudly protesting, too the polece-staishon, while the inspector remaind uppon the premmicez in the hope dhat the ebbing tide mite afoerd sum fresh clu.

“And it did, dho dha hardly found uppon the mud-banc whaut dha had feerd too fiand. It wauz Nevvil St. Claerz cote, and not Nevvil St. Clare, which la uncuvverd az the tide receded. And whaut doo u thhinc dha found in the pockets?”

“I canot imadgine.”

“No, I doant thhinc u wood ghes. Evvery pocket stuff withe pennese and haaf-pennese—421 pennese and 270 haaf-pennese. It wauz no wunder dhat it had not

bene swept awa bi the tide. But a human boddy iz a different matter. Dhare iz a feers eddy betwene the whorf and the hous. It ceemd liacly enuf dhat the wated cote had remaind when the stript boddy had bene suct awa intoo the rivver."

"But I understand dhat aul the uther cloadhz wer found in the roome. Wood the boddy be drest in a cote alone?"

"No, cer, but the facts mite be met speeshously enuf. Suppose dhat this man Boone had thrust Nevvil St. Clare throo the windo, dhare iz no human i which cood hav cene the dede. Whaut wood he doo then? It wood ov coers instantly strike him dhat he must ghet rid ov the tel-tale garments. He wood cese the cote, then, and be in the act ov throwing it out, when it wood oker too him dhat it wood swim and not cinc. He haz littel time, for he haz herd the scuffel dounstaerz when the wife tride too foers her wa up, and perhaps he haz aulreddy herd from hiz Lascar confedderate dhat the polece ar hurreying up the strete. Dhare iz not an instant too be lost. He rushez too sum ceecret hoerd, whare he haz acumulated the fruets ov hiz beggary, and he stufs aul the coinz uppon which he can la hiz handz intoo the pockets too make shure ov the coats cinking. He throse it out, and wood hav dun the same withe the uther garments had not he herd the rush ov steps belo, and oonly just had time too close the windo when the polece apeerd."

"It certainly soundz fesibel."

“Wel, we wil take it az a werking hipothhesis for waunt ov a better. Boone,
az
I hav toald u, wauz arested and taken too the staishon, but it cood not be
shone dhat dhare had evver befoer bene ennithhing against him. He had
for yeerz
bene none az a profeshonal beggar, but hiz life apeerd too hav bene a verry
qwiyet and innocent wun. Dhare the matter standz at prezsent, and the
qweschonz
which hav too be solvd—whaut Nevvil St. Clare wauz doowing in the
opeyum den, whaut
happend too him when dhare, whare iz he nou, and whaut Hu Boone had
too doo withe
hiz disaperans—ar aul az far from a solueshon az evver. I confes dhat I
canot recaul enny cace within mi expereyens which looct at the ferst glaans
so
cimpel and yet which presented such difficultese.”

While Sherloc Hoamz had bene detaling this cin’gular cerese ov events, we
had
bene wherling throo the outskerts ov the grate toun until the laast stragling
housez had bene left behiand, and we ratteld along withe a cuntry hej
uppon
iather cide ov us. Just az he finnisht, houwevver, we drove throo too
scatterd
villagez, whare a fu liats stil glimmerd in the windose.

“We ar on the outskerts ov Le,” ced mi companyon. “We hav tucht on thre
In’glisch countese in our short drive, starting in Middelcex, paacing over an
an’ghel ov Surry, and ending in Kent. Ce dhat lite among the trese? Dhat iz
The Cedarz, and becide dhat lamp cits a woomman whose ancshous eerz
hav aulreddy,
I hav littel dout, caut the clinc ov our horcez fete.”

"But whi ar u not conducting the cace from Baker Strete?" I aasct.

"Becauz dhare ar menny inqwirese which must be made out here. Mrs. St. Clare

haz moast kiandly poot too ruimz at mi dispozal, and u ma rest ashuerd dhat she

wil hav nuthhing but a welcum for mi frend and colleghe. I hate too mete her, Wautson, when I hav no nuse ov her huzband. Here we ar. Who, dhare, who!"

We had poold up in frunt ov a larj villaa which stood within its one groundz.

A stabel-boi had run out too the horcez hed, and springing down, I follode Hoamz up the smaull, wianding gravvel-drive which led too the hous. Az we

aproacht, the doer flu open, and a littel blond woomman stood in the opening,

clad in sum sort ov lite mouceline de sowy, withe a tuch ov fluffy pinc shifon at her nec and rists. She stood withe her figgure outliand against the flud ov lite, wun hand uppon the doer, wun haaf-raizd in her eghernes, her boddy sliatly bent, her hed and face protruded, withe egher ise and parted lips, a standing qweschon.

"Wel?" she cride, "wel?" And then, ceying dhat dhare wer too ov us, she gave

a cri ov hope which sanc intoo a grone az she sau dhat mi companyon shooc hiz

hed and shrugd hiz shoalderz.

"No good nuse?"

"Nun."

"No bad?"

"No."

"Thanc God for dhat. But cum in. U must be wery, for u hav had a long da."

"This iz mi frend, Dr. Wautson. He haz bene ov moast vital uce too me in cevveral ov mi cacez, and a lucky chaans haz made it poscibel for me too bring him out and asoasheyate him withe this investigaishon."

"I am delited too ce u," ced she, prescing mi hand wormly. "U wil, I am shure, forghiv ennithhing dhat ma be waunting in our arainjments, when u concidder the blo which haz cum so suddenly uppon us."

"Mi dere maddam," ced I, "I am an oald campaner, and if I wer not I can verry wel ce dhat no apollogy iz neded. If I can be ov enny acistans, iather too u or too mi frend here, I shal be indede happy."

"Nou, Mr. Sherloc Hoamz," ced the lady az we enterd a wel-lit dining-roome, uppon the tabel ov which a coald supper had bene lade out, "I shood verry much like too aasc u wun or too plane qweschonz, too which I beg dhat u wil ghiv a plane aancer."

"Certainly, maddam."

"Doo not trubbel about mi felingz. I am not histerrical, nor ghivven too fainting. I cimply wish too here yor reyal, reyal opinyon."

“Uppon whaut point?”

“In yor hart ov harts, doo u thhinc dhat Nevvil iz alive?”

Sherloc Hoamz ceemd too be embarrast bi the qweschon. “Francly, nou!” she repeted, standing uppon the rug and loocking keenly doun at him az he leend bac in a baasket-chare.

“Francly, then, maddam, I doo not.”

“U thhinc dhat he iz ded?”

“I doo.”

“Merderd?”

“I doant sa dhat. Perhaps.”

“And on whaut da did he mete hiz deth?”

“On Munda.”

“Then perhaps, Mr. Hoamz, u wil be good enuf too explane hou it iz dhat I hav receevd a letter from him too-da.”

Sherloc Hoamz sprang out ov hiz chare az if he had bene galvaniazd.

“Whaut!” he roerd.

“Yes, too-da.” She stood smiling, hoalding up a littel slip ov paper in the are.

"Ma I ce it?"

"Certainly."

He snacht it from her in hiz eghernes, and smuithing it out uppon the tabel he dru over the lamp and exammiand it intently. I had left mi chare and wauz gasing at it over hiz shoalder. The envelope wauz a verry coers wun and wauz stampd withe the Graivsend poastmarc and withe the date ov dhat verry da, or raather ov the da befoer, for it wauz concidderably aafter midnite.

"Coers riting," mermerd Hoamz. "Shuerly this iz not yor huzbandz riting, maddam."

"No, but the encloazhure iz."

"I perceve aulso dhat whoowevver adrest the envelope had too go and inqwire az too the adres."

"Hou can u tel dhat?"

"The name, u ce, iz in perfectly blac inc, which haz dride itcelf. The rest iz ov the greyish cullor, which shose dhat blotting-paper haz bene uezd. If it had bene ritten strate of, and then blotted, nun wood be ov a depe blac shade. This man haz ritten the name, and dhare haz then bene a pauz befoer he rote the adres, which can oonly mene dhat he wauz not familleyar withe it. It iz, ov coers, a trifel, but dhare iz nuthhing so important az trifelz. Let us nou

ce the letter. Haa! dhare haz bene an encloazhure here!"

"Yes, dhare wauz a ring. Hiz cignet-ring."

"And u ar shure dhat this iz yor huzbandz hand?"

"Wun ov hiz handz."

"Wun?"

"Hiz hand when he rote hurreedly. It iz verry unlike hiz uezhuwal riting,
and yet

I no it wel."

" 'Derest doo not be fritend. Aul wil cum wel. Dhare iz a huge error
which it ma take sum littel time too rectifi. Wate in paishens.—NEVVIL.'
Ritten in pencil uppon the fli-lefe ov a booc, octavo cise, no wauter-marc.
Hum!

Poasted too-da in Graivsend bi a man withe a derty thum. Haa! And the
flap haz

bene gumd, if I am not verry much in error, bi a person whoo had bene
chuwing

tobacco. And u hav no dout dhat it iz yor huzbandz hand, maddam?"

"Nun. Nevvil rote dhose werdz."

"And dha wer poasted too-da at Graivsend. Wel, Mrs. St. Clare, the cloudz
liten, dho I shood not venchure too sa dhat the dain'ger iz over."

"But he must be alive, Mr. Hoamz."

"Unles this iz a clevver forgery too poot us on the rong cent. The ring,
aafter

aul, pruihvz nuthhing. It ma hav bene taken from him."

"No, no; it iz, it iz hiz verry one riting!"

"Verry wel. It ma, houwevver, hav bene ritten on Munda and oonly
poasted
too-da."

"Dhat iz poscibel."

"If so, much ma hav happend betwene."

"O, u must not discourrage me, Mr. Hoamz. I no dhat aul iz wel withe him.
Dhare iz so kene a cimpathhy betwene us dhat I shood no if evil came
uppon
him. On the verry da dhat I sau him laast he cut himcelf in the bedroome,
and yet
I in the dining-roome rusht upstaerz instantly withe the utmoast certainty
dhat
sumthhing had happend. Doo u thhinc dhat I wood respond too such a
trifel and
yet be ignorant ov hiz deth?"

"I hav cene too much not too no dhat the impreshon ov a woomman ma be
moer
vallubel dhan the concluezhon ov an analittical rezoner. And in this letter u
certainly hav a verry strong pece ov evvidens too corobborate yor vu. But if
yor huzband iz alive and abel too rite letterz, whi shood he remane awa
from
u?"

"I canot imadgine. It iz unthhincabel."

"And on Munda he made no remarx befoer leving u?"

"No."

"And u wer cerpriazd too ce him in Swandam Lane?"

"Verry much so."

"Wauz the windo open?"

"Yes."

"Then he mite hav cauld too u?"

"He mite."

"He oanly, az I understand, gave an inarticulate cri?"

"Yes."

"A caul for help, u thaut?"

"Yes. He waivd hiz handz."

"But it mite hav bene a cri ov cerprise. Astonnishment at the unexpected cite

ov u mite cauz him too thro up hiz handz?"

"It iz poscibel."

"And u thaut he wauz poold bac?"

"He disapeerd so suddenly."

"He mite hav leept bac. U did not ce enniwun els in the roome?"

“No, but this horibel man confest too havving bene dhare, and the Lascar wauz at the foot ov the staerz.”

“Qwite so. Yor huzband, az far az u cood ce, had hiz ordinary cloadhz on?”

“But widhout hiz collar or ti. I distinctly sau hiz bare throte.”

“Had he evver spoken ov Swandam Lane?”

“Nevver.”

“Had he evver shode enny cianz ov havving taken opeyum?”

“Nevver.”

“Thanc u, Mrs. St. Clare. Dhose ar the principal points about which I wisht too be absoluetly clere. We shal nou hav a littel supper and then retire, for we ma hav a verry bizsy da too-moro.”

A larj and cumfortabel dubbel-bedded roome had bene plaist at our dispozal, and

I wauz qwicly betwene the sheets, for I wauz wery aafter mi nite ov advenchure.

Sherloc Hoamz wauz a man, houwevver, whoo, when he had an unsolvd problem uppon

hiz miand, wood go for dase, and even for a weke, widhout rest, terning it over, reyarain'ging hiz facts, loocking at it from evvery point ov vu until he had iather fadhomd it or convinst himcelf dhat hiz dataa wer insufishent. It wauz soone evvident too me dhat he wauz nou preparing for an aul-nite citting. He

tooc of hiz cote and waistcote, poot on a larj blu drescing-goun, and then waunderd about the roome colecting pillose from hiz bed and cooshonz from the

sofaa and armchaerz. Withe these he constructed a sort ov Eestern divan,
uppon
which he percht himcelf cros-legghed, withe an ouns ov shag tobacco and a
box
ov matchez lade out in frunt ov him. In the dim lite ov the lamp I sau him
citting dhare, an oald briyar pipe betwene hiz lips, hiz ise fixt vacantly
uppon
the corner ov the celing, the blu smoke kerling up from him, cilent,
moashonles, withe the lite shining uppon hiz strong-cet aqwiline fechuerz.
So he
sat az I dropt of too slepe, and so he sat when a sudden ejaculaishon cauzd
me too wake up, and I found the summer sun shining intoo the apartment.
The pipe
wauz stil betwene hiz lips, the smoke stil kerld upword, and the roome
wauz
fool ov a dens tobacco hase, but nuthhing remaind ov the hepe ov shag
which I
had cene uppon the preveyous nite.

“Awake, Wautson?” he aasct.

“Yes.”

“Game for a morning drive?”

“Certainly.”

“Then dres. No wun iz stuuring yet, but I no whare the stabel-boi sleeps,
and we shal soone hav the trap out.” He chuckeld too himcelf az he spoke,
hiz
ise twinkeld, and he ceemd a different man too the somber thinker ov the
preveyous nite.

Az I drest I glaanst at mi wauch. It wauz no wunder dhat no wun wauz stuuring.

It wauz twenty-five minnuets paast foer. I had hardly finnisht when Hoamz reternd withe the nuse dhat the boi wauz pooting in the hors.

“I waunt too test a littel thheyory ov mine,” ced he, pooling on hiz buits. “I thhinc, Wautson, dhat u ar nou standing in the prezsens ov wun ov the moast absolute fuilz in Urope. I deserv too be kict from here too Charing Cros. But I thhinc I hav the ke ov the afare nou.”

“And whare iz it?” I aasct, smiling.

“In the baathroome,” he aancerd. “O, yes, I am not joking,” he continnude, ceying mi looc ov increjulty. “I hav just bene dhare, and I hav taken it out, and I hav got it in this Gladstone bag. Cum on, mi boi, and we shal ce whether it wil not fit the loc.”

We made our wa dounstaerz az qwiyetly az poscibel, and out intoo the brite morning sunshine. In the rode stood our hors and trap, withe the haaf-clad stabel-boi wating at the hed. We boath sprang in, and awa we dasht doun the Lundon Rode. A fu cuntry carts wer stuuring, baring in vedgetabelz too the metroppolis, but the lianz ov villaaz on iather cide wer az cilent and liafles az sum citty in a dreame.

“It haz bene in sum points a cin’gular cace,” ced Hoamz, flicking the hors on intoo a gallop. “I confes dhat I hav bene az bliand az a mole, but it iz better too lern wizdom late dhan nevver too lern it at aul.”

In toun the erleyest riserz wer just beghinning too looc slepily from dhare windose az we drove throo the streets ov the Surry cide. Paacing doun the

Wauterloo Brij Rode we crost over the rivver, and dashing up Wellington Strete wheeld sharply too the rite and found ourcelvz in Bo Strete. Sherloc Hoamz wauz wel none too the foers, and the too cunstabelz at the doer saluted him. Wun ov them held the horcez hed while the uther led us in.

“Whoo iz on juty?” aasct Hoamz.

“Inspector Bradstrete, cer.”

“Aa, Bradstrete, hou ar u?” A taul, stout ofishal had cum down the stone-flagd passage, in a peect cap and frogd jacket. “I wish too hav a qwiyet werd withe u, Bradstrete.” “Certainly, Mr. Hoamz. Step intoo mi roome here.” It wauz a smaul, office-like roome, withe a huge ledger uppon the tabel, and a tellefone progecting from the waul. The inspector sat down at hiz desc.

“Whaut can I doo for u, Mr. Hoamz?”

“I cauld about dhat beggarman, Boone—the wun whoo wauz charjd withe beying concernd in the disaperans ov Mr. Nevvil St. Clare, ov Le.”

“Yes. He wauz braut up and remaanded for ferther inqwirse.”

“So I herd. U hav him here?”

“In the celz.”

“Iz he qwiyet?”

“O, he ghivz no trubbel. But he iz a derty scoundrel.”

"Derty?"

"Yes, it iz aul we can doo too make him waush hiz handz, and hiz face iz az
blac
az a tinkerz. Wel, when wuns hiz cace haz bene cetteld, he wil hav a
reggular prizzon baath; and I thhinc, if u sau him, u wood agry withe me
dhat
he neded it."

"I shood like too ce him verry much."

"Wood u? Dhat iz esily dun. Cum this wa. U can leve yor bag."

"No, I thhinc dhat Ile take it."

"Verry good. Cum this wa, if u plese." He led us doun a passage, opend a
bard doer, paast doun a wianding stare, and braut us too a whiatwausht
coridor withe a line ov doerz on eche cide.

"The thherd on the rite iz hiz," ced the inspector. "Here it iz!" He qwiyetly
shot bac a pannel in the upper part ov the doer and glaanst throo.

"He iz aslepe," ced he. "U can ce him verry wel."

We boath poot our ise too the grating. The prizzoner la withe hiz face
toowordz us,
in a verry depe slepe, breathing sloly and hevvely. He wauz a middel-ciazd
man,
coersly clad az became hiz caulng, withe a cullord shert protruding throo
the rent in hiz tatterd cote. He wauz, az the inspector had ced, extreemly
derty, but the grime which cuvverd hiz face cood not concele its repulcive
uglines. A braud whele from an oald scar ran rite acros it from i too chin,
and bi its contracshon had ternd up wun cide ov the upper lip, so dhat thre

teeth wer expoazd in a perpetchuwal snarl. A shoc ov verry brite red hare
gru
lo over hiz ise and foerhed.

“Hese a buty, iznt he?” ced the inspector.

“He certainly needz a waush,” remarct Hoamz. “I had an ideyaa dhat he
mite, and
I tooc the libberty ov bringing the tuilz withe me.” He opend the Gladstone
bag
az he spoke, and tooc out, too mi astonishment, a verry larj baath-spunj.

“He! he! U ar a funny wun,” chuckeld the inspector.

“Nou, if u wil hav the grate goodnes too open dhat doer verry qwiyetly, we
wil soone make him cut a much moer respectabel figgure.”

“Wel, I doant no whi not,” ced the inspector. “He duznt looc a credit too
the Bo Strete celz, duz he?” He slipt hiz ke intoo the loc, and we aul
verry qwiyetly enterd the cel. The sleper haaf ternd, and then cetteld doun
wuns moer intoo a depe slumber. Hoamz stuipt too the wauter-jug,
moicend hiz
spunj, and then rubd it twice viggorously acros and doun the prizzonerz
face.

“Let me introjuce u,” he shouted, “too Mr. Nevvil St. Clare, ov Le, in the
county ov Kent.”

Nevver in mi life hav I cene such a cite. The manz face peeld of under the
spunj like the barc from a tre. Gon wauz the coers broun tint! Gon, too,
wauz the horid scar which had ceemd it acros, and the twisted lip which
had
ghivven the repulcive snere too the face! A twich braut awa the tan’gheld
red

hare, and dhare, citting up in hiz bed, wauz a pale, sad-faist, refiand-
loocking
man, blac-haerd and smuithe-skind, rubbing hiz ise and staring about him
withe slepy bewilderment. Then suddenly reyalising the expoazhure, he
broke into a
screme and thru himcelf doun withe hiz face too the pillo.

“Grate hevvenz!” cride the inspector, “it iz, indede, the miscing man. I no
him from the fotograaf.”

The prizzoner ternd withe the recles are ov a man whoo abandonz himcelf
too hiz
destiny. “Be it so,” ced he. “And pra whaut am I charjd withe?”

“Withe making awa withe Mr. Nevvil St.— O, cum, u caant be charjd withe
dhat unles dha make a cace ov attempted suwicide ov it,” ced the inspector
withe a grin. “Wel, I hav bene twenty-cevven yeez in the foers, but this
reyaly taix the cake.”

“If I am Mr. Nevvil St. Clare, then it iz obveyous dhat no crime haz bene
comitted, and dhat, dhaerfoer, I am ilegaly detaind.”

“No crime, but a verry grate error haz bene comitted,” ced Hoamz. “U
wood
hav dun better too hav trusted yor wife.”

“It wauz not the wife; it wauz the children,” groand the prizzoner. “God
help me,
I wood not hav them ashaimd ov dhare faather. Mi God! Whaut an
expoazhure! Whaut
can I doo?”

Sherloc Hoamz sat doun becide him on the couch and patted him kiandly
on the

shoalder.

“If u leve it too a coert ov lau too clere the matter up,” ced he, “ov coers u can hardly avoid publiscity. On the uthher hand, if u convins the polece authoritese dhat dhare iz no poscibel cace against u, I doo not no dhat dhare iz enny rezon dhat the detailz shood fiand dhare wa intoo the paperz.

Inspector Bradstrete wood, I am shure, make noats uppon ennithhing which u mite tel us and submit it too the propper authoritese. The cace wood then nevver go intoo coert at aul.”

“God bles u!” cride the prizzoner pashonaitly. “I wood hav enjuerd imprizzonment, i, even execueshon, raather dhan hav left mi mizserabel ceecret az a fammily blot too mi children.

“U ar the ferst whoo hav evver herd mi stoery. Mi faather wauz a scuilmaaster in Chesterfeeld, whare I receevd an exelent ejucaishon. I travveld in mi ueth, tooc too the stage, and finaly became a repoerter on an evening paper in Lundon. Wun da mi edditor wisht too hav a cerese ov artikelz uppon begghing in the metroppolis, and I vollunteerd too supli them. Dhare wauz the point from which aul mi advenchuerz started. It wauz oanly bi tryying begghing az an ammater dhat I cood ghet the facts uppon which too bace mi artikelz. When an actor I had, ov coers, lernd aul the ceecrets ov making up, and had bene famous in the grene-roome for mi skil. I tooc advaantage nou ov mi atainments. I painted mi

face, and too make micelf az pitteyabel az poscibel I made a good scar and
fixt

wun cide ov mi lip in a twist bi the ade ov a smaul slip ov flesh-cullord
plaaster. Then withe a red hed ov hare, and an aproapreyate dres, I tooc mi
staishon in the biznes part ov the citty, ostencibly az a mach-celler but
reyaly az a beggar. For cevven ourz I plide mi trade, and when I reternd
home

in the evening I found too mi cerprise dhat I had receevd no les dhan 26s.
4d.

“I rote mi artikelz and thaut littel moer ov the matter until, sum time
later, I bact a bil for a frend and had a rit cervd uppon me for £25. I
wauz at mi wits end whare too ghet the munny, but a sudden ideyaa came
too me. I

begd a fortniats grace from the credditor, aasct for a hollida from mi
employierz, and spent the time in begghing in the Citty under mi disghise.

In ten

dase I had the munny and had pade the det.

“Wel, u can imadgine hou hard it wauz too cettel doun too arjuwous werc
at £2 a

weke when I nu dhat I cood ern az much in a da bi smering mi face withe a
littel paint, laying mi cap on the ground, and citting stil. It wauz a long
fite betwene mi pride and the munny, but the dollarz wun at laast, and I
thru

up repoerting and sat da aafter da in the corner which I had ferst chosen,
inspiring pittty bi mi gaastly face and filling mi pockets withe copperz.

Oonly wun

man nu mi ceecret. He wauz the keper ov a lo den in which I uest too loj in
Swandam Lane, whare I cood evvery morning emerj az a sqwaulid beggar
and in the

eveningz traansform micelf intoo a wel-drest man about toun. This fello, a
Lascar, wauz wel pade bi me for hiz ruimz, so dhat I nu dhat mi ceecret
wauz

safe in hiz poseshon.

“Wel, verry soone I found dhat I wauz saving concidderabel sumz ov munny. I doo not mene dhat enny beggar in the streets ov Lundon cood ern £700 a yere—which iz les dhan mi avverage takingz—but I had exepshonal advaantagez in mi pouwer ov making up, and aulso in a facillity ov reparty, which impruivd bi practice and made me qwite a reccogniazd carracter in the Citty. Aul da a streme ov pennese, varede bi silver, poerd in uppon me, and it wauz a verry bad da in which I faild too take £2.

“Az I gru ritcher I gru moer ambishous, tooc a hous in the cuntry, and evenchuwaly marrede, widhout enniwun havving a suspishon az too mi reyal ocupaishon. Mi dere wife nu dhat I had biznes in the Citty. She littel nu whaut.

“Laast Munda I had finnisht for the da and wauz drescing in mi roome abuv the opeyum den when I looct out ov mi windo and sau, too mi horror and astonishment, dhat mi wife wauz standing in the strete, withe her ise fixt fool uppon me. I gave a cri ov cerprise, thru up mi armz too cuvver mi face, and, rushing too mi confidant, the Lascar, entreted him too prevent enniwun from cumming up too me. I herd her vois dounstaerz, but I nu dhat she cood not acend. Swiftly I thru of mi cloadhz, poold on dhose ov a beggar, and poot on mi pigments and wig. Even a wiafs ise cood not peers so complete a disghise. But then it okerd too me dhat dhare mite be a cerch in the roome,

and dhat the cloadhz mite betra me. I thru open the windo, reyopening bi mi viyolens a smaual cut which I had inflicted uppon micelf in the bedroome dhat morning. Then I ceezd mi cote, which wauz wated bi the copperz which I had just traansferd too it from the lether bag in which I carrede mi takingz. I herld it out ov the windo, and it disapeerd intoo the Temz. The uther cloadhz wood hav follode, but at dhat moment dhare wauz a rush ov cunstabelz up the stare, and a fu minnuets aafter I found, raather, I confes, too mi relefe, dhat insted ov beying identifide az Mr. Nevvil St. Clare, I wauz arested az hiz merderer.

“I doo not no dhat dhare iz ennithhing els for me too explane. I wauz determiand too preserv mi disghise az long az poscibel, and hens mi prefferens for a derty face. Nowing dhat mi wife wood be terribly ancshous, I slipt of mi ring and confided it too the Lascar at a moment when no cunstabel wauz wauching me, tooghether withe a hurrede scraul, telling her dhat she had no cauz too fere.”

“Dhat note oanly reecht her yesterda,” ced Hoamz.

“Good God! Whaut a weke she must hav spent!”

“The polece hav waucht this Lascar,” ced Inspector Bradstrete, “and I can qwite understand dhat he mite fiand it difficult too poast a letter unnobservd.

Probbably he handed it too sum salor customer ov hiz, whoo forgot aul about it for sum dase.”

“Dhat wauz it,” ced Hoamz, nodding aproovingly; “I hav no dout ov it. But hav u nevver bene proscecuted for begghing?”

“Menny tiamz; but whaut wauz a fine too me?”

“It must stop here, houwevver,” ced Bradstrete. “If the polece ar too hush this thhing up, dhare must be no moer ov Hu Boone.”

“I hav swoern it bi the moast sollem oaths which a man can take.”

“In dhat cace I thhinc dhat it iz probbabel dhat no ferther steps ma be taken. But if u ar found agane, then aul must cum out. I am shure, Mr. Hoamz, dhat we ar verry much indetted too u for havving cleerd the matter up. I wish I nu hou u reche yor rezults.”

“I reecht this wun,” ced mi frend, “bi citting uppon five pillose and conshuming an ouns ov shag. I thhinc, Wautson, dhat if we drive too Baker Strete we shal just be in time for breccfast.”

The Advenchure ov the Blu Carbunkel

I had cauld uppon mi frend Sherloc Hoamz uppon the cecond morning aafter
Cristmas, withe the intenshon ov wishing him the compliments ov the cezon. He wauz loun'ging uppon the sofaa in a perpel drescing-goun, a pipe-rac within hiz reche uppon the rite, and a pile ov crumpeld morning paperz, evvidently nuly studdede, nere at hand. Becide the couch wauz a wooden chare, and on the an'ghel ov the bac hung a verry cedy and disrepputabel hard-felt hat, much the wers for ware, and cract in cevveral placez. A lenz and a forceps liying uppon the cete ov the chare sugested dhat the hat had bene suspended in this manner for the perpoce ov examinaishon.

"U ar en'gaijd," ced I; "perhaps I interupt u."

"Not at aul. I am glad too hav a frend withe whoome I can discus mi rezults. The matter iz a perfectly trivveyal wun"—he gerct hiz thum in the direcshon ov the oald hat—"but dhare ar points in conecshon withe it which ar not entiarly devoid ov interest and even ov instrucshon."

I ceted micelf in hiz armchare and wormd mi handz befoer hiz cracling fire, for a sharp frost had cet in, and the windose wer thhic withe the ice cristalz. "I supose," I remarct, "dhat, hoamly az it loox, this thhing haz sum dedly

stoery linct on too it—dhat it iz the clu which wil ghide u in the solueshon ov sum mistery and the punnishment ov sum crime.”

“No, no. No crime,” ced Sherlock Hoamz, laafing. “Oanly wun ov dhose whimsical littel incidents which wil happen when u hav foer milleyon human beyingz aul josling eche uther within the space ov a fu sqware mialz. Amid the acshon and reyacshon ov so dens a swarm ov humannity, evvery poscibel combinaishon ov events ma be expected too take place, and menny a littel problem wil be presented which ma be striking and bizar widhout beying crimminal. We hav aulreddy had expereyens ov such.”

“So much so,” I remarct, “dhat ov the laast cix cacez which I hav added too mi noats, thre hav bene entiarly fre ov enny legal crime.”

“Preciasly. U alude too mi atempt too recuver the Irene Adler paperz, too the cin’gular cace ov Mis Mary Sutherland, and too the advenchure ov the man withe the twisted lip. Wel, I hav no dout dhat this smaul matter wil faul intoo the same innocent cattegoery. U no Peterson, the comishonare?”

“Yes.”

“It iz too him dhat this trofy belongz.”

“It iz hiz hat.”

“No, no, he found it. Its oner iz un’none. I beg dhat u wil looc uppon it not az a batterd billicoc but az an intelecchuwal problem. And, ferst, az too

hou it came here. It ariavd uppon Cristmas morning, in cumpany withe a good fat

gooce, which iz, I hav no dout, roasting at this moment in frunt ov Petersonz fire. The facts ar these: about foer oacloc on Cristmas morning, Peterson, whoo, az u no, iz a verry onnest fello, wauz reterning from sum smaul jolificaishon and wauz making hiz wa hoamword doun Tottenam Coert Rode.

In frunt ov him he sau, in the gaslite, a taulish man, wauking withe a slite staggher, and carreying a white gooce slung over hiz shoalder. Az he reecht the

corner ov Gooj Strete, a rou broke out betwene this strain'ger and a littel not ov rufs. Wun ov the latter noct of the manz hat, on which he raizd hiz stic too defend himcelf and, swinging it over hiz hed, smasht the shop windo behiand him. Peterson had rusht forword too protect the strain'ger from hiz

asalants; but the man, shoct at havving broken the windo, and ceying an ofishal-loocking person in uniform rushing toowordz him, dropt hiz gooce, tooc

too hiz heelz, and vannisht amid the labbirinth ov smaul streets which li at the

bac ov Tottenam Coert Rode. The rufs had aulso fled at the aperans ov Peterson, so dhat he wauz left in poseshon ov the feeld ov battel, and aulso ov

the spoilz ov victory in the shape ov this batterd hat and a moast unnimpechabel Cristmas gooce."

"Which shuerly he restoerd too dhare oner?"

"Mi dere fello, dhare lise the problem. It iz tru dhat 'For Mrs. Henry Baker' wauz printed uppon a smaul card which wauz tide too the berdz left leg, and it iz

aulso tru dhat the inishalz 'H. B.' ar ledgibel uppon the lining ov this hat, but az dhare ar sum thousanz ov Bakerz, and sum hundredz ov Henry Bakerz in

this citty ov ourz, it iz not esy too restoer lost propperty too enny wun ov them."

"Whaut, then, did Peterson doo?"

"He braut round boath hat and gooce too me on Cristmas morning, nowing dhat even the smaulest problemz ar ov interest too me. The gooce we retaind until this morning, when dhare wer cianz dhat, in spite ov the slite frost, it wood be wel dhat it shood be eten widhout un'necesary dela. Its fiander haz carrede it of, dhaerfoer, too foolfil the ultimate destiny ov a gooce, while I continnu too retane the hat ov the un'none gentelman whoo lost hiz Cristmas dinner."

"Did he not advertise?"

"No."

"Then, whaut clu cood u hav az too hiz identity?"

"Oanly az much az we can dejuce."

"From hiz hat?"

"Preciasly."

"But u ar joking. Whaut can u gather from this oald batterd felt?"

"Here iz mi lenz. U no mi methodz. Whaut can u gather yorcelf az too the indivijuwallity ov the man whoo haz woern this artikel?"

I tooc the tatterd obgett in mi handz and ternd it over raather rufooly. It wauz a verry ordinary blac hat ov the uezhuwal round shape, hard and much the wers for ware. The lining had bene ov red cilc, but wauz a good dele discullord. Dhare wauz no makerz name; but, az Hoamz had remarct, the inishalz "H. B." wer scauld uppon wun cide. It wauz peerst in the brim for a hat-securer, but the elaastic wauz miscing. For the rest, it wauz cract, exedingly dusty, and spotted in cevveral placez, auldho dhare ceemd too hav bene sum atempt too hide the discullord patchez bi smering them withe inc.

"I can ce nuthhing," ced I, handing it bac too mi frend.

"On the contrary, Wautson, u can ce evverithhing. U fale, houwevver, too rezon from whaut u ce. U ar too timmid in drauwing yor inferencez."

"Then, pra tel me whaut it iz dhat u can infer from this hat?"

He pict it up and gaizd at it in the peculeyar introspective fashon which wauz characteristic ov him. "It iz perhaps les sugestive dhan it mite hav bene," he remarct, "and yet dhare ar a fu inferencez which ar verry distinct, and a fu utherz which represent at leest a strong ballans ov probabillity. Dhat the man wauz hily intelecchuwal iz ov coers obveyous uppon the face ov it, and aulso dhat he wauz faerly wel-too-doo within the laast thre yeerz, auldho he haz nou faulen uppon evil dase. He had foercite, but haz les nou dhan formerly, pointing too a moral retrogreshon, which, when taken withe the decline ov hiz

forchuenz, ceemz too indicate sum evil influwens, probbably drinc, at werc
uppon
him. This ma acount aulso for the obveyous fact dhat hiz wife haz ceest too
luv him."

"Mi dere Hoamz!"

"He haz, houwevver, retaind sum degry ov celf-respect," he continnude,
disregarding mi remonstrans. "He iz a man whoo leedz a ceddentary life,
gose out
littel, iz out ov traning entiarly, iz middel-aijd, haz grizseld hare which he
haz had cut within the laast fu dase, and which he anoints withe lime-
creme.

These ar the moer patent facts which ar too be dejuest from hiz hat. Aulso,
bi
the wa, dhat it iz extreemly improbbabel dhat he haz gas lade on in hiz
hous."

"U ar certainly joking, Hoamz."

"Not in the leest. Iz it poscibel dhat even nou, when I ghiv u these rezults,
u ar unnabel too ce hou dha ar ataind?"

"I hav no dout dhat I am verry schupid, but I must confes dhat I am
unnabel too
follo u. For exaampel, hou did u dejuce dhat this man wauz
intelecchuwal?"

For aancer Hoamz clapt the hat uppon hiz hed. It came rite over the
foerhed and cetteld uppon the brij ov hiz nose. "It iz a qweschon ov cubic
capascity," ced he; "a man withe so larj a brane must hav sumthhing in it."

"The decline ov hiz forchuenz, then?"

“This hat iz thre yeerz oald. These flat brimz kerld at the ej came in then. It iz a hat ov the verry best qwaulity. Looc at the band ov ribd cilc and the exelent lining. If this man cood afoerd too bi so expencive a hat thre yeerz ago, and haz had no hat cins, then he haz ashuerdly gon down in the werld.”

“Wel, dhat iz clere enuf, certainly. But hou about the foercite and the moral retrofreshon?”

Sherloc Hoamz laaft. “Here iz the foercite,” ced he pootting hiz fin’gher uppon the littel disc and loope ov the hat-cecurer. “Dha ar nevver soald uppon hats. If this man orderd wun, it iz a cine ov a certane amount ov foercite, cins he went out ov hiz wa too take this precaushon against the wind. But cins we ce dhat he haz broken the elaastic and haz not trubbelde too replace it, it iz obveyous dhat he haz les foercite nou dhan formerly, which iz a distinct prooffe ov a wekening nachure. On the uther hand, he haz endevvord too concele sum ov these stainz uppon the felt bi daubing them withe inc, which iz a cine dhat he haz not entiarly lost hiz celf-respect.”

“Yor rezoning iz certainly plausibel.”

“The ferther points, dhat he iz middel-aijd, dhat hiz hare iz grizseld, dhat it haz bene recently cut, and dhat he usez lime-creme, ar aul too be gatherd from a cloce examinaishon ov the lower part ov the lining. The lenz disclosez a larj number ov hare-endz, clene cut bi the cizzorz ov the barber. Dha aul apere too be ad’hesive, and dhare iz a distinct odor ov lime-creme. This dust, u wil observ, iz not the gritty, gra dust ov the strete but the fluffy broun

dust ov the hous, showing dhat it haz bene hung up indoerz moast ov the
time,
while the marx ov moischure uppon the incide ar prooffe pozsitive dhat the
warer
perspiard verry frely, and cood dhaerfoer, hardly be in the best ov traning.”

“But hiz wife—u ced dhat she had ceest too luv him.”

“This hat haz not bene brusht for weex. When I ce u, mi dere Wautson,
withe
a weex acumulaishon ov dust uppon yor hat, and when yor wife alouz u
too
go out in such a state, I shal fere dhat u aulso hav bene unforchunate enuf
too loose yor wiafs afecshon.”

“But he mite be a batchelor.”

“Na, he wauz bringing home the gooce az a pece-offering too hiz wife.
Remember
the card uppon the berdz leg.”

“U hav an aancer too evverithhing. But hou on erth doo u dejuce dhat the
gas
iz not lade on in hiz hous?”

“Wun tallo stane, or even too, mite cum bi chaans; but when I ce no les
dhan five, I thhinc dhat dhare can be littel dout dhat the individjuwal must
be
braut intoo freeqwent contact withe barning tallo—wauz upstaerz at nite
probbably withe hiz hat in wun hand and a guttering candel in the uther.
Ennihou,
he nevver got tallo-stainz from a gas-get. Ar u sattisfide?”

“Wel, it iz verry in’geenyous,” ced I, laafing; “but cins, az u ced just

nou, dhare haz bene no crime comitted, and no harm dun save the los ov a gooce, aul this ceemz too be raather a waist ov ennergy."

Sherloc Hoamz had opend hiz mouth too repli, when the doer flu open, and
Peterson, the comishonare, rusht intoo the apartment withe flusht cheex and
the face ov a man whoo iz daizd withe astonishment.

"The gooce, Mr. Hoamz! The gooce, cer!" he gaaspt.

"A? Whaut ov it, then? Haz it reternd too life and flapt of throo the kitchen windo?" Hoamz twisted himcelf round uppon the sofaa too ghet a farer
vu ov the manz exited face.

"Ce here, cer! Ce whaut mi wife found in its crop!" He held out hiz hand and
displade uppon the center ov the paalm a brilleyantly cintilating blu stone, raather smauler dhan a bene in cise, but ov such purity and rajans dhat it twinkeld like an electric point in the darc hollo ov hiz hand.

Sherloc Hoamz sat up withe a whiscel. "Bi Jove, Peterson!" ced he, "this iz trezhure trove indede. I supose u no whaut u hav got?"

"A dimond, cer? A preshous stone. It cuts intoo glaas az dho it wer putty."

"Its moer dhan a preshous stone. It iz the preshous stone."

"Not the Countes ov Morcarz blu carbunkel!" I ejacculated.

"Preciasly so. I aut too no its cise and shape, ceying dhat I hav red the advertiazment about it in The Tiamz evvery da laity. It iz absolutly uneke, and its vallu can oonly be con'gechuerd, but the reword offerd ov £1000 iz

certainly not within a twenteyeth part ov the market price.”

“A thousand poundz! Grate Lord ov mercy!” The comishonare plumpt doun intoo a chare and staerd from wun too the uther ov us.

“Dhat iz the reword, and I hav rezon too no dhat dhare ar centimental concideraishonz in the bacground which wood injuce the Countes too part withe haaf her forchune if she cood but recuvver the gem.”

“It wauz lost, if I remember arite, at the Hotel Cozmopollitan,” I remarct.

“Preciasly so, on December 22nd, just five dase ago. Jon Horner, a plumber, wauz acuezd ov havving abstracted it from the ladese juwel-cace. The evvidens against him wauz so strong dhat the cace haz bene referd too the Acisez. I hav sum acount ov the matter here, I beleve.” He rummaid amid hiz nuespaperz, glaancing over the daits, until at laast he smuidhd wun out, dubbeld it over, and red the following parragraaf:

“Hotel Cozmopollitan Juwel Robbery. Jon Horner, 26, plumber, wauz braut up uppon the charj ov havving uppon the 22nd inst., abstracted from the juwel-cace ov the Countes ov Morcar the vallubel gem none az the blu carbunkel. Jaimz

Rider, upper-atendant at the hotel, gave hiz evvidens too the efect dhat he had shone Horner up too the drescing-roome ov the Countes ov Morcar uppon the da ov the robbery in order dhat he mite soalder the cecond bar ov the grate, which

wauz looce. He had remaind withe Horner sum littel time, but had finally bene
cauld awa. On reterning, he found dhat Horner had disapeerd, dhat the buro had bene foerst open, and dhat the smaul morocco caasket in which, az it
aafterwordz traanspiard, the Countes wauz acustomd too kepe her juwel, wauz liying
empty uppon the drescing-tabel. Rider instantly gave the alarm, and Horner wauz
arested the same evening; but the stone cood not be found iather uppon hiz person or in hiz ruimz. Cathherine Cusac, made too the Countes, depoazd too
havving herd Riderz cri ov disma on discuvvering the robbery, and too havving
rusht intoo the roome, whare she found matterz az descriabd bi the laast witnes.
Inspector Bradstrete, B divizhon, gave evvidens az too the arest ov Horner, whoo
struggheld frantically, and protested hiz innocens in the stron' ghest termz. Evvidens ov a preveyous convicshon for robbery havving bene ghivven
against the prizzoner, the madgistrate refuezd too dele sumarily withe the ofens, but referd it too the Acisez. Horner, whoo had shone cianz ov intens emoashon juring the procedingz, fainted awa at the concluezhon and wauz carrede
out ov coert."

"Hum! So much for the polece-coert," ced Hoamz thautfooly, toscing acide the paper. "The qweschon for us nou too solv iz the ceeqwens ov events leding
from a rifeld juwel-cace at wun end too the crop ov a gooce in Tottenam Coert
Rode at the uther. U ce, Wautson, our littel deducshonz hav suddenly ashuemd

a much moer important and les innocent aspect. Here iz the stone; the stone came from the gooce, and the gooce came from Mr. Henry Baker, the gentelman withe the bad hat and aul the uther characteristix withe which I hav boerd u. So nou we must cet ourcelvz verry cereyously too fianding this gentelman and ascertaining whaut part he haz plade in this littel mistery. Too doo this, we must tri the cimpest meenz ferst, and these li undoutedly in an advertiazment in aul the evening paperz. If this fale, I shal hav recors too uther methodz.”

“Whaut wil u sa?”

“Ghiv me a pencil and dhat slip ov paper. Nou, then: ‘Found at the corner ov Gooj Strete, a gooce and a blac felt hat. Mr. Henry Baker can hav the same bi apliyng at 6:30 this evening at 221B, Baker Strete.’ Dhat iz clere and concice.”

“Verry. But wil he ce it?”

“Wel, he iz shure too kepe an i on the paperz, cins, too a poor man, the los wauz a hevvy wun. He wauz cleerly so scaerd bi hiz mischaans in braking the windo and bi the aproche ov Peterson dhat he thaut ov nuthhing but flite, but cins then he must hav bitterly regretted the impuls which cauzd him too drop hiz berd. Then, agane, the introducshon ov hiz name wil cauz him too ce it, for evveriwun whoo nose him wil direct hiz atenshon too it. Here u ar, Peterson, run doun too the advertising agency and hav this poot in the evening paperz.”

"In which, cer?"

"O, in the Globe, Star, Pal Mal, St. Jaimsez, Evening Nuse, Standard, Ecco, and enny utherz dhat oker too u."

"Verry wel, cer. And this stone?"

"Aa, yes, I shal kepe the stone. Thanc u. And, I sa, Peterson, just bi a gooce on yor wa bac and leve it here withe me, for we must hav wun too ghiv too this gentelman in place ov the wun which yor fammily iz nou devouring."

When the comishonare had gon, Hoamz tooc up the stone and held it against the lite. "Its a bonny thhing," ced he. "Just ce hou it glints and sparkelz. Ov coers it iz a nuecleyus and focus ov crime. Evvery good stone iz. Dha ar the devvilz pet baits. In the larger and oalder juwelz evvery fascet ma stand for a bluddy dede. This stone iz not yet twenty yeerz oald. It wauz found in the banx ov the Amoi Rivver in suthern Chinaa and iz remarcabel in havving evvery characteristic ov the carbunkel, save dhat it iz blu in shade insted ov ruby red. In spite ov its ueth, it haz aulreddy a cinnister history. Dhare hav bene too merderz, a vitreyol-throwing, a suwicide, and cevveral robberese braut about for the sake ov this forty-grane wate ov cristaliazd charcole. Whoo wood thhinc dhat so pritty a toi wood be a pervayor too the gallose and the prizzon? Ile loc it up in mi strong box nou and drop a line too the Countes too sa dhat we hav it."

"Doo u thhinc dhat this man Horner iz innocent?"

"I canot tel."

"Wel, then, doo u imadgine dhat this uther wun, Henry Baker, had ennithhing too doo withe the matter?"

"It iz, I thhinc, much moer liacly dhat Henry Baker iz an absolutly innocent man, whoo had no ideyaa dhat the berd which he wauz carreying wauz ov concidderably moer vallu dhan if it wer made ov sollid goald. Dhat, houwevver, I shal determine bi a verry cimpel test if we hav an aancer too our advertiazment."

"And u can doo nuthhing until then?"

"Nuthhing."

"In dhat cace I shal continnu mi profeshonal round. But I shal cum bac in the evening at the our u hav menshond, for I shood like too ce the solueshon ov so tan'gheld a biznes."

"Verry glad too ce u. I dine at cevven. Dhare iz a woodcoc, I beleve. Bi the wa, in vu ov recent ocurrencez, perhaps I aut too aasc Mrs. Hudson too exammine its crop."

I had bene delade at a cace, and it wauz a littel aafter haaf-paast cix when I found micelf in Baker Strete wuns moer. Az I aproacht the hous I sau a taul man in a Scoch bonnet withe a cote which wauz buttond up too hiz chin wating outside in the brite cemmicerkel which wauz throne from the fanlite. Just az I

ariavd the doer wauz opend, and we wer shone up toogheter too Hoamz' roome.

"Mr. Henry Baker, I beleve," ced he, rising from hiz armchare and greting hiz vizsitor withe the esy are ov geenyallity which he cood so reddily ashume.

"Pra take this chare bi the fire, Mr. Baker. It iz a coald nite, and I observ dhat yor cerculaishon iz moer adapted for summer dhan for winter. Aa, Wautson, u hav just cum at the rite time. Iz dhat yor hat, Mr. Baker?"

"Yes, cer, dhat iz undoutedly mi hat."

He wauz a larj man withe rounded shoalderz, a mascive hed, and a braud, intelligent face, sloping doun too a pointed beard ov grizseld broun. A tuch ov red in nose and cheex, withe a slite tremmor ov hiz extended hand, recauld Hoamz' cermise az too hiz habbits. Hiz rusty blac froc-cote wauz buttond up in frunt, withe the collar ternd up, and hiz lanc rists protruded from hiz sleevz widhout a cine ov cuf or shert. He spoke in a slo stacaato fashon, chusing hiz werdz withe care, and gave the impreshon genneraly ov a man ov lerning and letterz whoo had had il-usage at the handz ov forchune.

"We hav retaind these thhingz for sum dase," ced Hoamz, "becauz we expected too ce an advertiazment from u ghivving yor adres. I am at a los too no nou whi u did not advertise."

Our vizsitor gave a raather shaimfaist laaf. "Shillingz hav not bene so plentifool withe me az dha wuns wer," he remarct. "I had no dout dhat the gang ov rufs whoo assaulted me had carrede of boath mi hat and the berd. I did not care too spend moer munny in a hoaples atempt at recuvvering them."

“Verry natchuraly. Bi the wa, about the berd, we wer compeld too ete it.”

“Too ete it!” Our vizsitor haaf rose from hiz chare in hiz exiatment.

“Yes, it wood hav bene ov no uce too enniwun had we not dun so. But I prezhume dhat this uther gooce uppon the ciadboerd, which iz about the same wate and perfectly fresh, wil aancer yor perpoce eeqwaly wel?”

“O, certainly, certainly,” aancerd Mr. Baker withe a ci ov relefe.

“Ov coers, we stil hav the fetherz, legz, crop, and so on ov yor one berd, so if u wish—”

The man berst intoo a harty laaf. “Dha mite be uesfool too me az rellix ov mi advenchure,” ced he, “but beyond dhat I can hardly ce whaut uce the disgectaa membraa ov mi late aqwaintans ar gowing too be too me. No, cer, I thhinc dhat, withe yor permishon, I wil confine mi atenshonz too the exelent berd which I perceve uppon the ciadboerd.”

Sherloc Hoamz glaanst sharply acros at me withe a slite shrug ov hiz shoalderz.

“Dhare iz yor hat, then, and dhare yor berd,” ced he. “Bi the wa, wood it boer u too tel me whare u got the uther wun from? I am sumwhaut ov a foul fanceyer, and I hav celdom cene a better grone gooce.”

“Certainly, cer,” ced Baker, whoo had rizens and tuct hiz nuly gaind propperty under hiz arm. “Dhare ar a fu ov us whoo freqwent the Alfaa In, nere the Museyum—we ar too be found in the Museyum itcelf juring the da, u understand. This yere our good hoast, Windigate bi name, instichuted a gooce club, bi which, on concideraishon ov sum fu pens evvery weke, we wer eche too receive a berd at Cristmas. Mi pens wer july pade, and the rest iz familleyar too u. I am much indetted too u, cer, for a Scoch bonnet iz fitted niather too mi yeez nor mi gravvity.” Withe a commical pompocity ov manner he boud sollemly too boath ov us and strode of uppon hiz wa.

“So much for Mr. Henry Baker,” ced Hoamz when he had cloazd the doer behiand him. “It iz qwite certane dhat he nose nuthhing whautevver about the matter. Ar u hun’gry, Wautson?”

“Not particcularly.”

“Then I sugest dhat we tern our dinner intoo a supper and follo up this clu while it iz stil hot.”

“Bi aul meenz.”

It wauz a bitter nite, so we dru on our ulsterz and rapt cravats about our throats. Outcide, the starz wer shining coaldly in a cloudles ski, and the breth ov the paacerz-bi blu out intoo smoke like so menny pistol shots. Our footfaulz rang out crisply and loudly az we swung throo the doctorz’ qworter, Wimpole Strete, Harly Strete, and so throo Wigmor Strete intoo Oxford Strete. In a qworter ov an our we wer in Bloomzbury at the Alfaa In, which

iz a smaul public-hous at the corner ov wun ov the streets which runz doun intoo Hoborn. Hoamz poosht open the doer ov the private bar and orderd too glaacez ov bere from the ruddy-faist, white-aiprond landlord.

“Yor bere shood be exelent if it iz az good az yor ghece,” ced he.

“Mi ghece!” The man ceemd cerpriazd.

“Yes. I wauz speking oonly haaf an our ago too Mr. Henry Baker, whoo wauz a member ov yor gooce club.”

“Aa! yes, I ce. But u ce, cer, themz not our ghece.”

“Indede! Whoose, then?”

“Wel, I got the too duzsen from a sailzman in Covvent Garden.”

“Indede? I no sum ov them. Which wauz it?”

“Breckinrij iz hiz name.”

“Aa! I doant no him. Wel, heerz yor good helth landlord, and prosperrity too yor hous. Good-nite.”

“Nou for Mr. Breckinrij,” he continnude, buttoning up hiz cote az we came out intoo the frosty are. “Remember, Wautson dhat dho we hav so hoamly a thhing az a gooce at wun end ov this chane, we hav at the uther a man whoo wil certainly ghet cevven yeerz’ penal cervichude unles we can establish hiz innocens. It iz

poscibel dhat our inqwiry ma but conferm hiz ghilt; but, in enny cace, we hav a line ov investigaishon which haz bene mist bi the polece, and which a cin'gular chaans haz plaist in our handz. Let us follo it out too the bitter end. Facez too the south, then, and qwic march!"

We paast acros Hoborn, doun Endel Strete, and so throo a sigzag ov slumz too Covvent Garden Market. Wun ov the largest staulz boer the name ov Brekinrij uppon it, and the propriyetor a horcy-loocking man, withe a sharp face and trim cide-whiskerz wauz helping a boi too poot up the shutterz.

"Good-evening. Its a coald nite," ced Hoamz.

The sailzman nodded and shot a qweschoning glaans at mi companyon.

"Soald out ov ghece, I ce," continnude Hoamz, pointing at the bare slabz ov marbel.

"Let u hav five hundred too-moro morning."

"Dhats no good."

"Wel, dhare ar sum on the staul withe the gas-flare."

"Aa, but I wauz recomended too u."

"Whoo bi?"

"The landlord ov the Alfaa."

"O, yes; I cent him a cuppel ov duzsen."

"Fine berdz dha wer, too. Nou whare did u ghet them from?"

Too mi cerprise the qweschon provoact a berst ov an'gher from the sailzman.

"Nou, then, mister," ced he, withe hiz hed coct and hiz armz akimbo, "whaut ar u driving at? Lets hav it strate, nou."

"It iz strate enuf. I shood like too no whoo soald u the ghece which u suplide too the Alfaa."

"Wel then, I shaant tel u. So nou!"

"O, it iz a matter ov no importans; but I doant no whi u shood be so worm over such a trifel."

"Worm! Ude be az worm, maby, if u wer az pesterd az I am. When I pa good munny for a good artikel dhare shood be an end ov the biznes; but its 'Whare ar the ghece?' and 'Whoo did u cel the ghece too?' and 'Whaut wil u take for the ghece?' Wun wood thhinc dha wer the oonly ghece in the werld, too here the fus dhat iz made over them."

"Wel, I hav no conecshon withe enny uther pepel whoo hav bene making inqwirese," ced Hoamz caerlesly. "If u woant tel us the bet iz of, dhat iz aul. But Ime aulwase reddy too bac mi opinyon on a matter ov foulz, and I hav a fiver on it dhat the berd I ate iz cuntry bred."

"Wel, then, uve lost yor fiver, for its toun bred," snapt the sailzman.

"Its nuthhing ov the kiand."

"I sa it iz."

"I doant beleve it."

"Du thhinc u no moer about foulz dhan I, whoo hav handeld them ever cins

I wauz a nipper? I tel u, aul dhose berdz dhat went too the Alfaa wer toun bred."

"Ule nevver perswade me too beleve dhat."

"Wil u bet, then?"

"Its meerly taking yor munny, for I no dhat I am rite. But Ile hav a sovverane on withe u, just too teche u not too be obstinate."

The sailzman chuckeld grimly. "Bring me the boox, Bil," ced he.

The smaul boi braut round a smaul thhin vollume and a grate greycy-bact wun, laying them out tooghether beneeth the hanging lamp.

"Nou then, Mr. Cocshure," ced the sailzman, "I thaut dhat I wauz out ov ghece, but befoer I finnish ule fiand dhat dhare iz stil wun left in mi shop. U ce this littel booc?"

"Wel?"

"Dhats the list ov the foke from whoome I bi. Du ce? Wel, then, here on this page ar the cuntry foke, and the numberz aafter dhare naimz ar whare dhare acounts ar in the big ledger. Nou, then! U ce this uther page in red inc? Wel, dhat iz a list ov mi toun supliyerz. Nou, looc at dhat thherd name. Just rede it out too me."

“Mrs. Oacshot, 117, Brixton Rode—249,” red Hoamz.

“Qwite so. Nou tern dhat up in the ledger.”

Hoamz ternd too the page indicated. “Here u ar, ‘Mrs. Oacshot, 117, Brixton Rode, eg and poaltry supliyer.’ ”

“Nou, then, whauts the laast entry?”

“ ‘December 22nd. Twenty-foer ghece at 7s. 6d.’ ”

“Qwite so. Dhare u ar. And underneeth?”

“ ‘Soald too Mr. Windigate ov the Alfaa, at 12s.’ ”

“Whaut hav u too sa nou?”

Sherloc Hoamz looct deeply shagrind. He dru a sovverane from hiz pocket and thru it doun upon the slab, terning awa withe the are ov a man whose disgust iz too depe for werdz. A fu yardz of he stopt under a lamp-poast and laaft in the harty, noizles fashon which wauz peculeyar too him.

“When u ce a man withe whiskerz ov dhat cut and the ‘Pinc un’ protruding out ov hiz pocket, u can aulwase drau him bi a bet,” ced he. “I daersa dhat if I had poot 100 doun in frunt ov him, dhat man wood not hav ghivven me such complete informaishon az wauz draun from him bi the ideyaa dhat he wauz doowing me on a wager. Wel, Wautson, we ar, I fancy, nering the end ov our qwest, and the

oanly point which remainz too be determiand iz whether we shood go on too this

Mrs. Oacshot too-nite, or whether we shood reserv it for too-moro. It iz clere from whaut dhat cerly fello ced dhat dhare ar uthertz beciadz ourcelvz whoo ar ancshous about the matter, and I shood—”

Hiz remarx wer suddenly cut short bi a loud hubbub which broke out from the

staul which we had just left. Terning round we sau a littel rat-faist fello standing in the center ov the cerkel ov yello lite which wauz throne bi the swinging lamp, while Breckinrij, the sailzman, fraimd in the doer ov hiz staul, wauz shaking hiz fists feersly at the crin'ging figgure.

“Ive had enuf ov u and yor ghece,” he shouted. “I wish u wer aul at the devvil tooghether. If u cum pestering me enny moer withe yor cilly tauc Ile

cet the dog at u. U bring Mrs. Oacshot here and Ile aancer her, but whaut hav u too doo withe it? Did I bi the ghece of u?”

“No; but wun ov them wauz mine aul the same,” whiand the littel man.

“Wel, then, aasc Mrs. Oacshot for it.”

“She toald me too aasc u.”

“Wel, u can aasc the King ov Pruizhaa, for aul I care. Ive had enuf ov it. Ghet out ov this!” He rusht feersly forword, and the inqwirer flitted awa intoo the darcnes.

“Haa! this ma save us a vizsit too Brixton Rode,” whisperd Hoamz. “Cum withe me, and we wil ce whaut iz too be made ov this fello.” Striding throo the scatterd nots ov pepel whoo lounjd round the flaring staulz, mi companyon

spedily overtook the little man and touched him upon the shoulder. He sprang round, and I could see in the gas-light that every vestige of colour had been driven from his face.

"Who are you, then? What do you want?" he asked in a quivering voice.

"I will excuse me," said Holmes blandly, "but I could not help overhearing the conversation which you had with the sailor just now. I think that I could be of assistance to you."

"U? Who are you? How could you know anything of the matter?"

"My name is Sherlock Holmes. It is my business to know what other people do not know."

"But you can know nothing of this?"

"Excuse me, I know everything of it. You are endeavoring to trace some game which was sold by Mrs. O'Connell, of Brixton Road, to a sailor named Breckinridge, by him in turn to Mr. Windigate, of the Alfaa, and by him to his club, of which Mr. Henry Baker is a member."

"O, certainly, you are the very man whom I have longed to meet," cried the little fellow with outstretched hands and quivering fingers. "I can hardly explain to you how interested I am in this matter."

Sherlock Holmes hailed a four-wheeler which was passing. "In that case we had

better discus it in a cosy roome raather dhan in this wind-swept market-
place,”
ced he. “But pra tel me, befoer we go farther, whoo it iz dhat I hav the
plezhure ov acisting.”

The man hezsitated for an instant. “Mi name iz Jon Robbinson,” he aancerd
withe
a ciadlong glaans.

“No, no; the reyal name,” ced Hoamz sweetly. “It iz aulwase auqword
doowing
biznes withe an aleyas.”

A flush sprang too the white cheex ov the strain’ger. “Wel then,” ced he,
“mi
reyal name iz Jaimz Rider.”

“Preciasly so. Hed atendant at the Hotel Cozmopollitan. Pra step intoo the
cab, and I shal soone be abel too tel u evverithing which u wood wish too
no.”

The littel man stood glaancing from wun too the uther ov us withe haaf-
fritend,
haaf-hoapfool ise, az wun whoo iz not shure whether he iz on the verj ov a
windfaul or ov a catastrofy. Then he stept intoo the cab, and in haaf an our
we wer bac in the citting-roome at Baker Strete. Nuthhing had bene ced
juring
our drive, but the hi, thhin breething ov our nu companyon, and the
claaspingz
and unclaaspingz ov hiz handz, spoke ov the nervous tenshon within him.

“Here we ar!” ced Hoamz cherily az we fiald intoo the roome. “The fire
loox
verry cezonabel in this wether. U looc coald, Mr. Rider. Pra take the

baasket-chare. I wil just poot on mi slipperz befoer we cettel this littel matter ov yorz. Nou, then! U waunt too no whaut became ov dhose ghece?"

"Yes, cer."

"Or raather, I fancy, ov dhat gooce. It wauz wun berd, I imadgine in which u wer interested—white, withe a blac bar across the tale."

Rider qwivverd withe emoashon. "O, cer," he cride, "can u tel me whare it went too?"

"It came here."

"Here?"

"Yes, and a moast remarcabel berd it pruivd. I doant wunder dhat u shood take an interest in it. It lade an eg aafter it wauz ded—the bonneyest, britest littel blu eg dhat evver wauz cene. I hav it here in mi museyum."

Our vizsitor staggherd too hiz fete and clucht the mantelpece withe hiz rite hand. Hoamz unloct hiz strong-box and held up the blu carbunkel, which shon out like a star, withe a coald, brilleyant, menny-pointed rajans. Rider stood glaring withe a draun face, uncertane whether too clame or too disone it.

"The gaimz up, Rider," ced Hoamz qwiyetly. "Hoald up, man, or ule be intoo the fire! Ghiv him an arm bac intoo hiz chare, Wautson. Hese not got blud enuf too go in for felony withe impunity. Ghiv him a dash ov brandy. So! Nou he loox a littel moer human. Whaut a shrimp it iz, too be shure!"

For a moment he had staggherd and neerly faulen, but the brandy braut a tinj
ov cullor intoo hiz cheex, and he sat staring withe fritend ise at hiz
acuser.

“I hav aulmoast evvery linc in mi handz, and aul the pruifs which I cood
poscibly nede, so dhare iz littel which u nede tel me. Stil, dhat littel
ma az wel be cleerd up too make the cace complete. U had herd, Rider, ov
this blu stone ov the Countes ov Morcarz?”

“It wauz Cathherine Cusac whoo toald me ov it,” ced he in a cracling vois.

“I ce—her ladships wating-made. Wel, the temptaishon ov sudden welth
so
esily aqwiard wauz too much for u, az it haz bene for better men befoer u;
but u wer not verry scrupulous in the meenz u uezd. It ceemz too me,
Rider,
dhat dhare iz the making ov a verry pritty villane in u. U nu dhat this
man Horner, the plumber, had bene concernd in sum such matter befoer,
and
dhat suspishon wood rest the moer reddily uppon him. Whaut did u doo,
then? U
made sum smaul job in mi ladese roome—u and yor confedderate Cusac—
and u
mannaijd dhat he shood be the man cent for. Then, when he had left, u
rifeld
the juwel-cace, raizd the alarm, and had this unforchunate man arested. U
then—”

Rider thru himcelf doun suddenly uppon the rug and clucht at mi
companyonz
nese. “For Godz sake, hav mercy!” he shreect. “Thhinc ov mi faather! Ov
mi

muther! It wood brake dhare harts. I nevvver went rong befoer! I nevvver wil agane. I sware it. Ile sware it on a Bibel. O, doant bring it intoo coert! For Criasts sake, doant!”

“Ghet bac intoo yor chare!” ced Hoamz sternly. “It iz verry wel too crinj and
craul nou, but u thaut littel enuf ov this poor Horner in the doc for a
crime ov which he nu nuthhing.”

“I wil fli, Mr. Hoamz. I wil leve the cuntry, cer. Then the charj against
him wil brake doun.”

“Hum! We wil tauc about dhat. And nou let us here a tru acount ov the
next
act. Hou came the stone intoo the gooce, and hou came the gooce intoo the
open
market? Tel us the trueth, for dhare lise yor oonly hope ov saifty.”

Rider paast hiz tung over hiz parcht lips. “I wil tel u it just az it
happend, cer,” ced he. “When Horner had bene arested, it ceemd too me
dhat
it wood be best for me too ghet awa withe the stone at wuns, for I did not
no
at whaut moment the polece mite not take it intoo dhare hedz too cerch me
and
mi roome. Dhare wauz no place about the hotel whare it wood be safe. I
went out,
az if on sum comishon, and I made for mi cisterz hous. She had marrede a
man naimd Oacshot, and livd in Brixton Rode, whare she fattend foulz for
the
market. Aul the wa dhare evvery man I met ceemd too me too be a
poleesman or a
detective; and, for aul dhat it wauz a coald nite, the swet wauz poering
doun mi

face befoer I came too the Brixton Rode. Mi cister aasct me whaut wauz the matter,
and whi I wauz so pale; but I toald her dhat I had bene upcet bi the juwel robbery at the hotel. Then I went intoo the bac yard and smoact a pipe and wunderd whaut it wood be best too doo.

“I had a frend wuns cauld Maudsly, whoo went too the bad, and haz just bene
cerving hiz time in Pentonvil. Wun da he had met me, and fel intoo tauc about the wase ov thheevz, and hou dha cood ghet rid ov whaut dha stole. I
nu dhat he wood be tru too me, for I nu wun or too thhingz about him; so I made up mi miand too go rite on too Kilbern, where he livd, and take him intoo mi
confidens. He wood sho me hou too tern the stone intoo munny. But hou too ghet
too him in saifty? I thaut ov the aggonese I had gon throo in cumming from the hotel. I mite at enny moment be ceezd and cercht, and dhare wood be the
stone in mi waistcote pocket. I wauz lening against the waul at the time and
loocking at the ghece which wer waudling about round mi fete, and suddenly an
ideyaa came intoo mi hed which shode me hou I cood bete the best detective dhat
evver livd.

“Mi cister had toald me sum weex befoer dhat I mite hav the pic ov her ghece for a Cristmas prezsent, and I nu dhat she wauz aulwase az good az her
werd. I wood take mi gooce nou, and in it I wood carry mi stone too Kilbern.
Dhare wauz a littel shed in the yard, and behiand this I drove wun ov the berdz—a

fine big wun, white, withe a bard tale. I caut it, and prying its bil open, I thrust the stone doun its throte az far az mi fin'gher cood reche. The berd gave a gulp, and I felt the stone paas along its gullet and doun intoo its crop.

But the crechure flapt and struggheld, and out came mi cister too no whaut wauz

the matter. Az I ternd too speke too her the brute broke looce and flutterd of

among the utherz.

“ ‘Whautevver wer u doowing withe dhat berd, Gem?’ cez she.

“ ‘Wel,’ ced I, ‘u ced ude ghiv me wun for Cristmas, and I wauz feling which wauz the fattest.’

“ ‘O,’ cez she, ‘weve cet yorz acide for u—Gemz berd, we caul it. Its the big white wun over yonder. Dhaerz twenty-cix ov them, which maix wun for u, and wun for us, and too duzsen for the market.’

“ ‘Thanc u, Magghy,’ cez I; ‘but if it iz aul the same too u, Ide raather hav dhat wun I wauz handling just nou.’

“ ‘The uther iz a good thre pound hevveyer,’ ced she, ‘and we fattend it expresly for u.’

“ ‘Nevver miand. Ile hav the uther, and Ile take it nou,’ ced I.

“ ‘O, just az u like,’ ced she, a littel huft. ‘Which iz it u waunt, then?’

“ ‘Dhat white wun withe the bard tale, rite in the middel ov the floc.’

“ ‘O, verry wel. Kil it and take it withe u.’

“Wel, I did whaut she ced, Mr. Hoamz, and I carrede the berd aul the wa
too
Kilbern. I toald mi pal whaut I had dun, for he wauz a man dhat it wauz
esy too
tel a thhing like dhat too. He laaft until he choact, and we got a nife and
opend the gooce. Mi hart ternd too wauter, for dhare wauz no cine ov the
stone,
and I nu dhat sum terribel mistake had okerd. I left the berd, rusht
bac too mi cisterz, and hurrede intoo the bac yard. Dhare wauz not a berd
too be
cene dhare.

“ ‘Whare ar dha aul, Magghy?’ I cride.

“ ‘Gon too the delerz, Gem.’

“ ‘Which delerz?’

“ ‘Breckinrij, ov Covvent Garden.’

“ ‘But wauz dhare anuther withe a bard tale?’ I aasct, ‘the same az the wun
I
chose?’

“ ‘Yes, Gem; dhare wer too bard-taild wunz, and I cood nevver tel them
apart.’

“Wel, then, ov coers I sau it aul, and I ran of az hard az mi fete wood
carry me too this man Breckinrij; but he had soald the lot at wuns, and not
wun
werd wood he tel me az too whare dha had gon. U herd him yorcelvz
too-nite. Wel, he haz aulwase aancerd me like dhat. Mi cister thhinx dhat I
am

gowing mad. Sumtiamz I thhinc dhat I am micelf. And nou—and nou I am micelf a branded thhefe, widhout evver havving tucht the welth for which I soald mi carracter. God help me! God help me!” He berst intoo convulcive sobbing, withe hiz face berrede in hiz handz.

Dhare wauz a long cilens, broken oonly bi hiz hevvy breething and bi the mezhuerd tapping ov Sherloc Hoamz’ fin’gher-tips uppon the ej ov the tabel.

Then mi frend rose and thru open the doer.

“Ghet out!” ced he.

“Whaut, cer! O, Hevven bles u!”

“No moer werdz. Ghet out!”

And no moer werdz wer neded. Dhare wauz a rush, a clatter uppon the staerz, the bang ov a doer, and the crisp rattel ov running footfaulz from the strete.

“Aafter aul, Wautson,” ced Hoamz, reching up hiz hand for hiz cla pipe, “I am not retaind bi the polece too supli dhare defishencese. If Horner wer in dain’ger it wood be anuther thhing; but this fello wil not apere against him, and the cace must colaps. I supose dhat I am comuting a fellony, but it iz just poscibel dhat I am saving a sole. This fello wil not go rong agane; he iz too terribly fritend. Cend him too jale nou, and u make him a jale-berd for life. Beciadz, it iz the cezon ov forghivnes. Chaans haz poot in our wa a moast cin’gular and whimsical problem, and its solueshon iz its one reword. If u wil hav the goodnes too tuch the bel, Doctor, we wil beghin anuther

investigaishon, in which, aulso a berd wil be the chefe fechure.”

8

The Advenchure ov the Speckeld Band

On glaancing over mi noats ov the cevventy od cacez in which I hav juring the laast ate yeerz studdede the methodz ov mi frend Sherloc Hoamz, I fiand menny tradgic, sum commic, a larj number meerly strainj, but nun commonplace; for, werking az he did raather for the luv ov hiz art dhan for the aqwiarment ov welth, he refuezd too asoasheyate himself withe enny investigaishon which did not tend toowordz the unnuezhuwal, and even the fantastic. Ov aul these varede cacez, houwevver, I canot recaul enny which presented moer cin'gular fechuerz dhan dhat which wauz asoasheyated withe the wel-none Surry fammily ov the Roilots ov Stoke Moran. The events in qweschon okerd in the erly dase ov mi asoasheyaishon withe Hoamz, when we wer sharing ruimz az batchelorz in Baker Strete. It iz poscibel

dhat I mite hav plaist them uppon reccord befoer, but a prommice ov
ceecrecy wauz
made at the time, from which I hav oanly bene frede juring the laast munth
bi
the untiamly deth ov the lady too whoome the plej wauz ghivven. It iz
perhaps az
wel dhat the facts shood nou cum too lite, for I hav rezonz too no dhat
dhare ar wiadspred rumorz az too the deth ov Dr. Griamzby Roilot which
tend
too make the matter even moer terribel dhan the trueth.

It wauz erly in Aipril in the yere '83 dhat I woke wun morning too fiand
Sherloc
Hoamz standing, foolly drest, bi the cide ov mi bed. He wauz a late riser, az
a rule, and az the cloc on the mantelpece shode me dhat it wauz oanly a
qworter-paast cevven, I blinct up at him in sum cerprise, and perhaps just a
littel resentment, for I wauz micelf reggular in mi habbits.

“Verry sory too noc u up, Wautson,” ced he, “but its the common lot this
morning. Mrs. Hudson haz bene noct up, she retorted uppon me, and I on
u.”

“Whaut iz it, then—a fire?”

“No; a cliyent. It ceemz dhat a yung lady haz ariavd in a concidderabel
state
ov exiatment, whoo incists uppon ceying me. She iz wating nou in the
citting-roome. Nou, when yung ladese waunder about the metroppolis at
this our
ov the morning, and noc slepy pepel up out ov dhare bedz, I prezhume
dhat it
iz sumthhing verry prescing which dha hav too comunicate. Shood it
proove too
be an interesting cace, u wood, I am shure, wish too follo it from the

outcet. I thaut, at enny rate, dhat I shood caul u and ghiv u the chaans."

"Mi dere fello, I wood not mis it for ennithhing."

I had no kener plezhure dhan in following Hoamz in hiz profeshonal investigaishonz, and in admiring the rappid deducshonz, az swift az inchuwishonz, and yet aulwase founded on a lodgical baxis withe which he unravveld the problemz which wer submitted too him. I rappidly thru on mi cloadhz and wauz reddy in a fu minnuets too acumpany mi frend down too the citting-roome. A lady drest in blac and hevvely vaild, whoo had bene citting in the windo, rose az we enterd.

"Good-morning, maddam," ced Hoamz cherily. "Mi name iz Sherloc Hoamz. This iz mi intimate frend and asoasheyate, Dr. Wautson, befoer whoome u can speke az frely az befoer micelf. Haa! I am glad too ce dhat Mrs. Hudson haz had the good cens too lite the fire. Pra drau up too it, and I shal order u a cup ov hot coffy, for I observ dhat u ar shivvering."

"It iz not coald which maix me shivver," ced the woomman in a lo vois, chain'ging her cete az reqwested.

"Whaut, then?"

"It iz fere, Mr. Hoamz. It iz terror." She raizd her vale az she spoke, and

we cood ce dhat she wauz indede in a pitteyabel state ov agitaishon, her face aul draun and gra, withe restles fritend ise, like dhose ov sum hunted annimal. Her fechuerz and figgure wer dhose ov a woomman ov thherty, but her hare wauz shot withe premachure gra, and her expreshon wauz wery and haggard. Sherloc Hoamz ran her over withe wun ov hiz qwic, aul-comprehencive glaancez.

“U must not fere,” ced he suithingly, bending forward and patting her foerarm. “We shal soone cet matterz rite, I hav no dout. U hav cum in bi trane this morning, I ce.”

“U no me, then?”

“No, but I observ the cecond haaf ov a retern ticket in the paalm ov yor left gluv. U must hav started erly, and yet u had a good drive in a dog-cart, along hevvy roadz, befoer u reecht the staishon.”

The lady gave a viyolent start and staerd in bewilderment at mi companyon.

“Dhare iz no mistery, mi dere maddam,” ced he, smiling. “The left arm ov yor jacket iz spatterd withe mud in no les dhan cevven placez. The marx ar perfectly fresh. Dhare iz no veyikel save a dog-cart which throse up mud in dhat wa, and then oanly when u cit on the left-hand cide ov the driver.”

“Whautevver yor rezonz ma be, u ar perfectly corect,” ced she. “I started from home befoer cix, reecht Letherhed at twenty paast, and came in bi the ferst trane too Wauterloo. Cer, I can stand this strane no lon’gher; I shal go mad

if it continnuse. I hav no wun too tern too—nun, save oonly wun, whoo
caerz for
me, and he, poor fello, can be ov littel ade. I hav herd ov u, Mr. Hoamz;
I hav herd ov u from Mrs. Farintosh, whoome u helpt in the our ov her
soer nede. It wauz from her dhat I had yor adres. O, cer, doo u not thhinc
dhat u cood help me, too, and at leest thro a littel lite throo the
dens darcnes which surroundz me? At prezsent it iz out ov mi pouwer too
reword
u for yor cervicez, but in a munth or cix weex I shal be marrede, withe the
controle ov mi one incum, and then at leest u shal not fiand me
un'graitfool."

Hoamz ternd too hiz desc and, unlocking it, dru out a smaull cace-booc,
which
he consulted.

"Farintosh," ced he. "Aa yes, I recaul the cace; it wauz concernd withe an
opal
teyaaraa. I thhinc it wauz befoer yor time, Wautson. I can oonly sa,
maddam, dhat I
shal be happy too devote the same care too yor cace az I did too dhat ov
yor
frend. Az too reword, mi profeshon iz its one reword; but u ar at libberty
too defra whautevver expencez I ma be poot too, at the time which suets u
best.
And nou I beg dhat u wil la befoer us evverithhing dhat ma help us in
forming an opinyon uppon the matter."

"Alaas!" replide our vizsitor, "the verry horror ov mi cichuwaishon lise in
the fact
dhat mi feerz ar so vaghe, and mi suspishonz depend so entiarly uppon
smaull
points, which mite ceme trivveyal too anuther, dhat even he too whoome
ov aul utherz

I hav a rite too looc for help and advice loox uppon aul dhat I tel him about it az the fancese ov a nervous woomman. He duz not sa so, but I can rede it from hiz suithing aancerz and averted ise. But I hav herd, Mr. Hoamz, dhat u can ce deeply intoo the mannifoald wickednes ov the human hart. U ma advise me hou too wauc amid the dain'gerz which encumpas me."

"I am aul atenshon, maddam."

"Mi name iz Hellen Stoner, and I am livving withe mi stepfaather, whoo iz the laast cervivor ov wun ov the oaldest Saxon fammilese in In'gland, the Roilots ov Stoke Moran, on the western border ov Surry."

Hoamz nodded hiz hed. "The name iz familleyar too me," ced he.

"The fammily wauz at wun time amung the ritchest in In'gland, and the estaits extended over the borderz intoo Barcshire in the north, and Hampshire in the west. In the laast cenchury, houwevver, foer suxescive aerz wer ov a disolute and waistfool disposishon, and the fammily ruwin wauz evenchuwaly completed bi a gambler in the dase ov the Regency. Nuthhing wauz left save a fu akerz ov ground, and the too-hundred-yere-oald hous, which iz itcelf crusht under a hevvy morgage. The laast sqwire dragd out hiz existens dhare, livving the horibel life ov an aristocrattic pauper; but hiz oanly sun, mi stepfaather, ceying dhat he must adapt himcelf too the nu condishonz, obtaind an advaans from a rellative, which enabeld him too take a meddical degry and went out too Calcuttaa, whare, bi hiz profeshonal skil and hiz foers ov carracter, he establisht a larj practice. In a fit ov an'gher, houwevver, cauzd bi sum

robberese which had bene perpetrated in the hous, he bete hiz native butler too
deth and narroly escaipt a cappital centens. Az it wauz, he sufferd a long
term ov imprizzonment and aafterwordz reternd too In'gland a moroce
and
disapointed man.

“When Dr. Roilot wauz in Injaa he marrede mi muther, Mrs. Stoner, the
yung
widdo ov Major-Genneral Stoner, ov the Ben'gaul Artillery. Mi cister
Juleyaa and I
wer twinz, and we wer oonly too yeez oald at the time ov mi mutherz
re-marrage. She had a concidderabel sum ov munny—not les dhan £1000 a
yere—and
this she beqweedhd too Dr. Roilot entiarly while we resided withe him,
withe a
provizhon dhat a certane annuwal sum shood be aloud too eche ov us in
the
event ov our marrage. Shortly aafter our retern too In'gland mi muther
dide—she
wauz kild ate yeez ago in a railwa axident nere Cru. Dr. Roilot then
abandonnd hiz atempts too establish himcelf in practice in Lundon and too
us
too liv withe him in the oald ancestral hous at Stoke Moran. The munny
which mi
muther had left wauz enuf for aul our waunts, and dhare ceemd too be no
obstakel too our happines.

“But a terribel chainj came over our stepfaather about this time. Insted ov
making frendz and exchain'ging vizsits withe our naborz, whoo had at
ferst bene
overjoid too ce a Roilot ov Stoke Moran bac in the oald fammily cete, he
shut
himcelf up in hiz hous and celdom came out save too indulj in feroashous

qworelz withe whoowevver mite cros hiz paath. Viyolens ov temper
aproching too
mainyaa haz bene hereditary in the men ov the fammily, and in mi
stepfaatherz cace
it had, I beleve, bene intencifide bi hiz long rezsidens in the troppix. A
cerese ov disgraisfool braulz tooc place, too ov which ended in the
polece-coert, until at laast he became the terror ov the village, and the foax
wood fli at hiz aproche, for he iz a man ov imens strength, and absoluetly
uncontrolabel in hiz an'gher.

“Laast weke he herld the local blaxmith over a parrapet intoo a streme, and
it
wauz oanly bi paying over aul the munny which I cood gather toogheter
dhat I wauz
abel too avert anuther public expoazhure. He had no frendz at aul save the
waundering gipcese, and he wood ghiv these vagabondz leve too encamp
uppon the
fu akerz ov brambel-cuvverd land which represent the fammily estate, and
wood
axept in retern the hospitallity ov dhare tents, waundering awa withe them
sumtiamz for weex on end. He haz a pashon aulso for Injan annimalz,
which ar
cent over too him bi a corespondent, and he haz at this moment a chetaa
and a
baboone, which waunder frely over hiz groundz and ar feerd bi the
villagerz
aulmoast az much az dhare maaster.

“U can imadgine from whaut I sa dhat mi poor cister Juleyaa and I had no
grate
plezhure in our liavz. No cervant wood sta withe us, and for a long time
we
did aul the werc ov the hous. She wauz but thherty at the time ov her deth,
and

yet her hare had aulreddy begun too whiten, even az mine haz."

"Yor cister iz ded, then?"

"She dide just too yeerz ago, and it iz ov her deth dhat I wish too speke too u. U can understand dhat, livving the life which I hav descriabd, we wer littel liacly too ce enniwun ov our one age and posishon. We had, houwevver, an aant, mi mutherz maden cister, Mis Honoreyaa Westfale, whoo livz nere Harro, and we wer ocaizhonaly aloud too pa short vizsits at this ladese hous. Juleyaa went dhare at Cristmas too yeerz ago, and met dhare a haaf-pa major ov mareenz, too whoome she became en'gaijd. Mi stepfaather lernd ov the en'gaijment when mi cister reternd and offerd no obgecshon too the marrage; but within a fortnite ov the da which had bene fixt for the wedding, the terribel event okerd which haz depriavd me ov mi oanly companyon."

Sherloc Hoamz had bene lening bac in hiz chare withe hiz ise cloazd and hiz hed sunc in a cooshon, but he haaf opend hiz lidz nou and glaanst acros at hiz vizsitor.

"Pra be precice az too detailz," ced he.

"It iz esy for me too be so, for evvery event ov dhat dredfool time iz ceerd intoo mi memmory. The mannor-hous iz, az I hav aulreddy ced, verry oald, and oanly wun wing iz nou inhabbited. The bedruimz in this wing ar on the ground floer, the citting-ruimz beying in the central bloc ov the bildingz. Ov these bedruimz the ferst iz Dr. Roilots, the cecond mi cisterz, and the thherd mi

one. Dhare iz no comunicaihon betwene them, but dha aul open out intoo the same coridor. Doo I make micelf plane?"

"Perfectly so."

"The windose ov the thre ruimz open out uppon the laun. Dhat fatal nite Dr.

Roilot had gon too hiz roome erly, dho we nu dhat he had not retiard too rest, for mi cister wauz trubbed bi the smel ov the strong Injan cigarz which

it wauz hiz custom too smoke. She left her roome, dhaerfoer, and came intoo mine,

whare she sat for sum time, chatting about her aproching wedding. At elevven

oacloc she rose too leve me, but she pauzd at the doer and looct bac.

" 'Tel me, Hellen,' ced she, 'hav u evver herd enniwun whiscel in the ded ov the nite?"

" 'Nevver,' ced I.

" 'I supose dhat u cood not poscibly whiscel, yorcelf, in yor slepe?"

" 'Certainly not. But whi?"

" 'Becauz juring the laast fu niats I hav aulwase, about thre in the morning, herd a lo, clere whiscel. I am a lite sleper, and it haz awakend me. I canot tel whare it came from—perhaps from the next roome, perhaps from

the laun. I thaut dhat I wood just aasc u whether u had herd it.'

" 'No, I hav not. It must be dhose retched gipcese in the plaantaishon.'

“ ‘Verry liacly. And yet if it wer on the laun, I wunder dhat u did not here it aulso.’

“ ‘Aa, but I slepe moer hevvily dhan u.’

“ ‘Wel, it iz ov no grate conceqwens, at enny rate.’ She smiald bac at me, cloazd mi doer, and a fu moments later I herd her ke tern in the loc.”

“Indede,” ced Hoamz. “Wauz it yor custom aulwase too loc yorcelvz in at nite?”

“Aulwase.”

“And whi?”

“I thhinc dhat I menshond too u dhat the doctor kept a chetaa and a baboone.

We had no feling ov cecurity unles our doerz wer loct.”

“Qwite so. Pra procede withe yor staitment.”

“I cood not slepe dhat nite. A vaghe feling ov impending misforchune imprest me. Mi cister and I, u wil recolect, wer twinz, and u no hou suttel ar the linx which biand too soalz which ar so cloasly allide. It wauz a wiald nite. The wind wauz houling outcide, and the rane wauz beting and splashing against the windose. Suddenly, amid aul the hubbub ov the gale, dhare

berst foerth the wiald screme ov a terrifide woomman. I nu dhat it wauz mi cisterz vois. I sprang from mi bed, rapt a shaul round me, and rusht intoo the coridor. Az I opend mi doer I ceemd too here a lo whiscel, such az mi cister descriabd, and a fu moments later a clanging sound, az if a mas ov mettal had faulen. Az I ran doun the passage, mi cisterz doer wauz unloct, and

revolvd sloly uppon its hin’gez. I staerd at it horror-stricken, not nowing

whaut wauz about too ishu from it. Bi the lite ov the coridor-lamp I sau mi
cister apere at the opening, her face blaansht withe terror, her handz
groping
for help, her whole figgure swaying too and fro like dhat ov a druncard. I
ran too
her and thru mi armz round her, but at dhat moment her nese ceemd too
ghiv
wa and she fel too the ground. She riadhd az wun whoo iz in terribel pane,
and
her limz wer dredfooly convulst. At ferst I thaut dhat she had not
reccogniazd me, but az I bent over her she suddenly shreect out in a vois
which I shal nevver forghet, 'O, mi God! Hellen! It wauz the band! The
speckeld
band!' Dhare wauz sumthhing els which she wood fane hav ced, and she
stabd
withe her fin'gher intoo the are in the direcshon ov the doctorz roome, but
a fresh
convulshon ceezd her and choact her werdz. I rusht out, caulng loudly for
mi
stepfaather, and I met him hacening from hiz roome in hiz drescing-goun.
When he
reecht mi cisterz cide she wauz unconshous, and dho he poerd brandy
doun
her throte and cent for meddical ade from the village, aul efforts wer in
vane,
for she sloly sanc and dide widhout havving recuverd her conshousnes.
Such
wauz the dredfool end ov mi beluvved cister."

"Wun moment," ced Hoamz, "ar u shure about this whiscel and metallic
sound?
Cood u sware too it?"

“Dhat wauz whaut the county coroner aasct me at the inqwiry. It iz mi strong
impreshon dhat I herd it, and yet, amung the crash ov the gale and the
creking ov an oald hous, I ma poscibly hav bene deceevd.”

“Wauz yor cister drest?”

“No, she wauz in her nite-dres. In her rite hand wauz found the chard
stump
ov a mach, and in her left a mach-box.”

“Showing dhat she had struc a lite and looct about her when the alarm tooc
place. Dhat iz important. And whaut concluezhonz did the coroner cum
too?”

“He investigated the cace withe grate care, for Dr. Roilots conduct had long
bene notoereyous in the county, but he wauz unnabel too fiand enny
satisfactory cauz
ov deth. Mi evvidens shode dhat the doer had bene faacend uppon the
inner
cide, and the windose wer bloct bi oald-fashond shutterz withe braud iarn
barz, which wer cecuerd evvery nite. The waulz wer caerfooly sounded,
and
wer shone too be qwite sollid aul round, and the floering wauz aulso
thurroly
exammiand, withe the same rezult. The chimney iz wide, but iz bard up bi
foer
larj stapelz. It iz certane, dhaerfoer, dhat mi cister wauz qwite alone when
she met her end. Beciadz, dhare wer no marx ov enny viyolens uppon her.”

“Hou about poizon?”

“The doctorz exammiand her for it, but widhout suxes.”

“Whaut doo u thhinc dhat this unforchunate lady dide ov, then?”

“It iz mi belefe dhat she dide ov pure fere and nervous shoc, dho whaut it wauz dhat fritend her I canot imadgine.”

“Wer dhare gipcese in the plaantaishon at the time?”

“Yes, dhare ar neerly aulwase sum dhare.”

“Aa, and whaut did u gather from this aluezhon too a band—a speckeld band?”

“Sumtiamz I hav thaut dhat it wauz meerly the wiald tauc ov delereyum, sumtiamz dhat it ma hav referd too sum band ov pepel, perhaps too these verry gipcese in the plaantaishon. I doo not no whether the spotted hankercheefs which so menny ov them ware over dhare hedz mite hav sugested the strainj adjective which she uezd.”

Hoamz shooc hiz hed like a man whoo iz far from beying sattisfide.

“These ar verry depe wauterz,” ced he; “pra go on withe yor narrative.”

“Too yeerz hav paast cins then, and mi life haz bene until laitly loanleyer dhan evver. A munth ago, houwevver, a dere frend, whoome I hav none for menny yeerz, haz dun me the onnor too aasc mi hand in marrage. Hiz name iz Armitage—Percy Armitage—the cecond sun ov Mr. Armitage, ov Crane Wauter, nere Redding. Mi stepfaather haz offerd no oposishon too the mach, and we ar too be marrede in the coers ov the spring. Too dase ago sum repaerz wer started in

the west wing ov the bilding, and mi bedroome waul haz bene peerst, so dhat I hav had too moove intoo the chaimber in which mi cister dide, and too slepe in the verry bed in which she slept. Imadgine, then, mi thril ov terror when laast nite, az I la awake, thhinking over her terribel fate, I suddenly herd in the cilens ov the nite the lo whiscel which had bene the herrald ov her one deth. I sprang up and lit the lamp, but nuthhing wauz too be cene in the roome. I wauz too shaken too go too bed agane, houwevver, so I drest, and az soone az it wauz dalite I slipt down, got a dog-cart at the Croun In, which iz opposite, and drove too Letherhed, from whens I hav cum on this morning withe the wun obgect ov ceying u and aasking yor advice."

"U hav dun wiazly," ced mi frend. "But hav u toald me aul?"

"Yes, aul."

"Mis Roilot, u hav not. U ar screning yor stepfaather."

"Whi, whaut doo u mene?"

For aancer Hoamz poosht bac the fril ov blac lace which frinjd the hand dhat la uppon our vizsitorz ne. Five littel livvid spots, the marx ov foer fin'gherz and a thum, wer printed uppon the white rist.

"U hav bene cruwely uezd," ced Hoamz.

The lady cullord deeply and cuvverd over her injuerd rist. "He iz a hard man," she ced, "and perhaps he hardly nose hiz one strength."

Dhare wauz a long cilens, juring which Hoamz leend hiz chin uppon hiz handz
and staerd intoo the cracling fire.

“This iz a verry depe biznes,” he ced at laast. “Dhare ar a thousand detailz which I shood desire too no befoer I decide uppon our coers ov acshon. Yet we
hav not a moment too loose. If we wer too cum too Stoke Moran too-da, wood it
be poscibel for us too ce over these ruimz widhout the nollej ov yor stepfaather?”

“Az it happenz, he spoke ov cumming intoo toun too-da uppon sum moast important
biznes. It iz probbabel dhat he wil be awa aul da, and dhat dhare wood be nuthhing too disterb u. We hav a houskeper nou, but she iz oald and foolish,
and I cood esily ghet her out ov the wa.”

“Exelent. U ar not avers too this trip, Wautson?”

“Bi no meenz.”

“Then we shal boath cum. Whaut ar u gowing too doo yorcelf?”

“I hav wun or too thhingz which I wood wish too doo nou dhat I am in toun. But I
shal retern bi the twelv oacloc trane, so az too be dhare in time for yor cumming.”

“And u ma expect us erly in the aafternoone. I hav micelf sum smaul biznes matterz too atend too. Wil u not wate and brecfast?”

“No, I must go. Mi hart iz litend aulreddy cins I hav confided mi trubbel

too u. I shal looc forword too ceying u agane this aafternoone." She dropt her thhic blac vale over her face and glided from the roome.

"And whaut doo u thhinc ov it aul, Wautson?" aasct Sherloc Hoamz, lening bac in hiz chare.

"It ceemz too me too be a moast darc and cinnister biznes."

"Darc enuf and cinnister enuf."

"Yet if the lady iz corect in saying dhat the floering and waulz ar sound, and dhat the doer, windo, and chimney ar impaasabel, then her cister must hav bene undoutedly alone when she met her mistereyous end."

"Whaut becumz, then, ov these nocternal whiscelz, and whaut ov the verry peculeyar werdz ov the diying woomman?"

"I canot thhinc."

"When u combine the ideyaaz ov whiscelz at nite, the prezsens ov a band ov gipcese whoo ar on intimate termz withe this oald doctor, the fact dhat we hav evvery rezon too beleve dhat the doctor haz an interest in preventing hiz stepdauterz marrage, the diying aluezhon too a band, and, finaly, the fact dhat Mis Hellen Stoner herd a metallic clang, which mite hav bene cauzd bi wun ov dhose mettal barz dhat ce cuerd the shutterz fauling bac intoo its place, I thhinc dhat dhare iz good ground too thhinc dhat the mistery ma be cleerd along dhose lianz."

“But whaut, then, did the gipcese doo?”

“I canot imadgine.”

“I ce menny obgecshonz too enny such ththeyory.”

“And so doo I. It iz preciasly for dhat rezon dhat we ar gowing too Stoke Moran

this da. I waunt too ce whether the obgecshonz ar fatal, or if dha ma be explaind awa. But whaut in the name ov the devvil!”

The ejaculaishon had bene draun from mi companyon bi the fact dhat our doer had

bene suddenly dasht open, and dhat a huge man had fraimnd himcelf in the aperchure. Hiz coschume wauz a peculeyar mixchure ov the profeshonal and ov the

agriculchural, havving a blac top-hat, a long froc-cote, and a pare ov hi gaterz, withe a hunting-crop swinging in hiz hand. So taul wauz he dhat hiz hat

acchuwaly brusht the cros bar ov the doerwa, and hiz bredth ceemd too span

it acros from cide too cide. A larj face, ceerd withe a thousand rinkelz, bernd yello withe the sun, and marct withe evvery evil pashon, wauz ternd from

wun too the uther ov us, while hiz depe-cet, bile-shot ise, and hiz hi, thhin, fleshles nose, gave him sumwhaut the resemblans too a feers oald berd ov pra.

“Which ov u iz Hoamz?” aasct this aparishon.

“Mi name, cer; but u hav the advaantage ov me,” ced mi companyon qwiyetly.

“I am Dr. Griamzby Roilot, ov Stoke Moran.”

“Indede, Doctor,” ced Hoamz blandly. “Pra take a cete.”

“I wil doo nuthhing ov the kiand. Mi stepdauter haz bene here. I hav traist her. Whaut haz she bene saying too u?”

“It iz a littel coald for the time ov the yere,” ced Hoamz.

“Whaut haz she bene saying too u?” screemd the oald man fureyously.

“But I hav herd dhat the croucez prommice wel,” continnude mi companyon imperterbably.

“Haa! U poot me of, doo u?” ced our nu vizsitor, taking a step forward and shaking hiz hunting-crop. “I no u, u scoundrel! I hav herd ov u befoer. U ar Hoamz, the medler.”

Mi frend smiald.

“Hoamz, the bizsibody!”

Hiz smile braudend.

“Hoamz, the Scotland Yard Jac-in-office!”

Hoamz chuckeld hartily. “Yor conversaishon iz moast entertaning,” ced he. “When u go out close the doer, for dhare iz a decided draaft.”

“I wil go when I hav ced mi sa. Doant u dare too meddel withe mi afaerz. I no dhat Mis Stoner haz bene here. I traist her! I am a dain’gerous man too faul
foul ov! Ce here.” He stept swiftly forward, ceezd the poker, and bent it intoo a kerv withe hiz huge broun handz.

“Ce dhat u kepe yorcelf out ov mi grip,” he snarld, and herling the twisted poker into the fiarplace he strode out ov the roome.

“He ceemz a verry ameyabel person,” ced Hoamz, laafing. “I am not qwite so bulky, but if he had remaind I mite hav shone him dhat mi grip wauz not much moer febel dhan hiz one.” Az he spoke he pict up the stele poker and, withe a sudden effort, stratend it out agane.

“Fancy hiz havving the insolens too confound me withe the ofishal detective foers! This incident ghivz sest too our investigaishon, houwevver, and I oonly trust dhat our littel frend wil not suffer from her imprudens in alouwing this brute too trace her. And nou, Wautson, we shal order breccfast, and aafterwordz I shal wauc doun too Doctorz’ Commonz, whare I hope too ghet sum dataa which ma help us in this matter.”

It wauz neerly wun oacloc when Sherloc Hoamz reternd from hiz exkerzhon. He held in hiz hand a shete ov blu paper, scrauld over withe noats and figguerz.

“I hav cene the wil ov the deceest wife,” ced he. “Too determine its exact

mening I hav bene obliajd too werc out the prezsent pricez ov the investments
withe which it iz concernd. The total incum, which at the time ov the wiafs deth wauz littel short ov 1100, iz nou, throo the faul in agriculchural pricez, not moer dhan 750. Eche dauter can clame an incum ov 250, in cace ov
marrage. It iz evvident, dhaerfoer, dhat if boath gherlz had marrede, this buty
wood hav had a mere pittans, while even wun ov them wood crippel him too a
verry cereyous extent. Mi morningz werc haz not bene waisted, cins it haz pruid
dhat he haz the verry stron'ghest motiavz for standing in the wa ov ennithhing ov
the sort. And nou, Wautson, this iz too cereyous for daudling, espeshaly az the
oald man iz aware dhat we ar interesting ourcelvz in hiz afaerz; so if u ar reddy, we shal caul a cab and drive too Wauterloo. I shood be verry much
obliajd if u wood slip yor revolver intoo yor pocket. An Else No. 2 iz an exelent argument withe gentlemen whoo can twist stele pokerz intoo nots. Dhat
and a tuith-brush ar, I thhinc, aul dhat we nede."

At Wauterloo we wer forchunate in catching a trane for Letherhed, where we
hiard a trap at the staishon in and drove for foer or five mialz throo the luvly Surry lainz. It wauz a perfect da, withe a brite sun and a fu flecy cloudz in the hevvenz. The trese and wacide hedgez wer just throwing out dhare ferst grene shuits, and the are wauz fool ov the plezzant smel ov the moist erth. Too me at leest dhare wauz a strainj contraast betwene the swete
prommice ov the spring and this cinnister qwest uppon which we wer en'gaijd. Mi

companion sat in the frunt ov the trap, hiz armz foalded, hiz hat poold
doun
over hiz ise, and hiz chin sunc uppon hiz brest, berrede in the depest
thaut. Suddenly, houwevver, he started, tapt me on the shoalder, and
pointed
over the meddose.

“Looc dhare!” ced he.

A hevvely timberd parc strecht up in a gentel slope, ththickening intoo a
grove
at the hiyest point. From amid the braanchez dhare juttet out the gra
gabelz
and hi roofe-tre ov a verry oald manshon.

“Stoke Moran?” ced he.

“Yes, cer, dhat be the hous ov Dr. Griamzby Roilot,” remarct the driver.

“Dhare iz sum bilding gowing on dhare,” ced Hoamz; “dhat iz whare we
ar
gowing.”

“Dhaerz the village,” ced the driver, pointing too a cluster ov ruifs sum
distanstoo the left; “but if u waunt too ghet too the hous, ule fiand it
shorter too ghet over this stile, and so bi the foot-paath over the feeldz.
Dhare
it iz, whare the lady iz wauking.”

“And the lady, I fancy, iz Mis Stoner,” observd Hoamz, shading hiz ise.
“Yes, I thhinc we had better doo az u sugest.”

We got of, pade our fare, and the trap ratteld bac on its wa too Letherhed.

"I thaut it az wel," ced Hoamz az we cliamd the stile, "dhat this fello shood thhinc we had cum here az arkitects, or on sum deffinite biznes. It ma stop hiz goscip. Good-aafternoone, Mis Stoner. U ce dhat we hav bene az good az our werd."

Our cliyent ov the morning had hurrede forword too mete us withe a face which spoke her joi. "I hav bene wating so egherly for u," she cride, shaking handz withe us wormly. "Aul haz ternd out splendidly. Dr. Roilot haz gon too toun, and it iz unliacly dhat he wil be bac befoer evening."

"We hav had the plezhure ov making the doctorz aqwaintans," ced Hoamz, and in a fu werdz he skecht out whaut had okerd. Mis Stoner ternd white too the lips az she liscend.

"Good hevvenz!" she cride, "he haz follode me, then."

"So it apeerz."

"He iz so cunning dhat I nevver no when I am safe from him. Whaut wil he sa when he reternz?"

"He must gard himcelf, for he ma fiand dhat dhare iz sumwun moer cunning dhan himcelf uppon hiz trac. U must loc yorcelf up from him too-nite. If he iz viyolent, we shal take u awa too yor aants at Harro. Nou, we must make the best uce ov our time, so kiandly take us at wuns too the ruimz which we ar too exammine."

The bilding wauz ov gra, litchen-blocht stone, withe a hi central porshon and too kerving wingz, like the clauz ov a crab, throne out on eche side. In wun ov these wingz the windose wer broken and blocht withe wooden boerdz, while the roofe wauz partly caivd in, a picchure ov ruwin. The central porshon wauz in littel better repara, but the rite-hand bloc wauz comparratiavly moddern, and the bliandz in the windose, withe the blu smoke kerling up from the chimnese, shode dhat this wauz whare the fammily resided. Sum scaffolding had bene erected against the end waul, and the stone-werc had bene broken intoo, but dhare wer no cianz ov enny wercmen at the moment ov our vizsit. Hoamz wauct sloly up and doun the il-trimd laun and exammiand withe depe atenshon the outciadz ov the windose.

“This, I take it, belongz too the roome in which u uest too slepe, the center wun too yor cisterz, and the wun next too the mane bilding too Dr. Roilots chaimber?”

“Exactly so. But I am nou sleping in the middel wun.”

“Pending the aulteraishonz, az I understand. Bi the wa, dhare duz not ceme too be enny verry prescing nede for repaerz at dhat end waul.”

“Dhare wer nun. I beleve dhat it wauz an excuce too moove me from mi roome.”

“Aa! dhat iz sugestive. Nou, on the uther side ov this narro wing runz the

coridor from which these thre ruimz open. Dhare ar windose in it, ov coers?"

"Yes, but verry smaul wunz. Too narro for enniwun too paas throo."

"Az u boath loct yor doerz at nite, yor ruimz wer unaprochabel from dhat cide. Nou, wood u hav the kiandnes too go intoo yor roome and bar yor shutterz?"

Mis Stoner did so, and Hoamz, aafter a caerfool examinaishon throo the open windo, endevvord in evvery wa too foers the shutter open, but widhout suxes. Dhare wauz no slit throo which a nife cood be paast too rase the bar. Then withe hiz lenz he tested the hin'gez, but dha wer ov sollid iarn, bilt fermly intoo the mascive masonry. "Hum!" ced he, scratching hiz chin in sum perplexity, "mi ththeyory certainly presents sum difficultese. No wun cood paas these shutterz if dha wer bolted. Wel, we shal ce if the incide throse enny lite uppon the matter."

A smaul cide doer led intoo the whiatwausht coridor from which the thre bedruimz opend. Hoamz refuezd too exammine the thherd chaimber, so we paast at wuns too the cecond, dhat in which Mis Stoner wauz nou sleping, and in which her cister had met withe her fate. It wauz a hoamly littel roome, withe a lo celing and a gaping fiarplace, aafter the fashon ov oald cuntry-housez. A broun chest ov drauwerz stood in wun corner, a narro white-counterpaind bed in anuther, and a drescing-tabel on the left-hand cide ov the windo. These artikelz, withe too smaul wicker-werc chaerz, made up aul the fernichure in the

roome save for a square ov Wilton carpet in the center. The boerdz round and the panneling ov the waulz wer ov broun, werm-eten oke, so oald and discullord dhat it ma hav dated from the oridginal bilding ov the hous. Hoamz dru wun ov the chaerz intoo a corner and sat cilent, while hiz ise travveld round and round and up and doun, taking in evvery detale ov the apartment.

“Whare duz dhat bel comuncate withe?” he aasct at laast pointing too a thhic bel-rope which hung doun becide the bed, the tascel acchuwaly lying uppon the pillo.

“It gose too the houskeperz roome.”

“It loox nuwer dhan the uther thhingz?”

“Yes, it wauz oonly poot dhare a cuppel ov yeerz ago.”

“Yor cister aasct for it, I supose?”

“No, I nevver herd ov her using it. We uezd aulwase too ghet whaut we waunted for ourcelvz.”

“Indede, it ceemd un‘nescesary too poot so nice a bel-pool dhare. U wil excuse me for a fu minnuets while I sattisfi micelf az too this floer.” He thru himcelf doun uppon hiz face withe hiz lenz in hiz hand and crauld swiftly baqword and forword, exammining minuety the crax betwene the boerdz. Then he did the same withe the wood-werc withe which the chaimber wauz panneld. Finaly he

waukt over too the bed and spent sum time in staring at it and in running
hiz
i up and doun the waul. Finaly he tooc the bel-rope in hiz hand and gave it
a brisc tug.

“Whi, its a dummy,” ced he.

“Woant it ring?”

“No, it iz not even atacht too a wire. This iz verry interesting. U can ce
nou dhat it iz faacend too a hooch just abuv whare the littel opening for the
ventilator iz.”

“Hou verry abcerd! I nevver notiast dhat befoer.”

“Verry strainj!” mutterd Hoamz, pooling at the rope. “Dhare ar wun or too
verry cin’gular points about this roome. For exaampel, whaut a foole a
bilder must
be too open a ventilator intoo anuther roome, when, withe the same
trubbel, he
mite hav comunicated withe the outside are!”

“Dhat iz aulso qwite moddern,” ced the lady.

“Dun about the same time az the bel-rope?” remarct Hoamz.

“Yes, dhare wer cevveral littel chain’gez carrede out about dhat time.”

“Dha ceme too hav bene ov a moast interesting carracter—dummy bel-
roaps, and
ventilatorz which doo not ventilate. Withe yor permishon, Mis Stoner, we
shal
nou carry our recerchez intoo the inner apartment.”

Dr. Griamzby Roilots chaimber wauz larger dhan dhat ov hiz step-dauter, but wauz az plainly fernisht. A camp-bed, a smaul wooden shelf fool ov boox, moastly ov a tecnical carracter, an armchare beside the bed, a plane wooden chare against the waul, a round tabel, and a larj iarn safe wer the principal thhingz which met the i. Hoamz wauct sloly round and exammiand eche and aul ov them withe the kenest interest.

“Whauts in here?” he aasct, tapping the safe.

“Mi stepfaatherz biznes paperz.”

“O! u hav cene incide, then?”

“Oanly wuns, sum yeerz ago. I remember dhat it wauz fool ov paperz.”

“Dhare iznt a cat in it, for exaampel?”

“No. Whaut a strainj ideyaa!”

“Wel, looc at this!” He tooc up a smaul saucer ov milc which stood on the top ov it.

“No; we doant kepe a cat. But dhare iz a chetaa and a baboone.”

“Aa, yes, ov coers! Wel, a chetaa iz just a big cat, and yet a saucer ov milc duz not go verry far in sattisfying its waunts, I daersa. Dhare iz wun point which I shood wish too determine.” He sqwauted down in frunt ov the wooden chare and exammiand the cete ov it withe the gratest atenshon.

"Thanc u. Dhat iz qwite cetteld," ced he, rising and pootting hiz lenz in hiz pocket. "Hullo! Here iz sumthhing interesting!"

The obgett which had caut hiz i wauz a smaull dog lash hung on wun corner ov the bed. The lash, houwevver, wauz kerld uppon itcelf and tide so az too make a loope ov whipcord.

"Whaut doo u make ov dhat, Wautson?"

"Its a common enuf lash. But I doant no whi it shood be tide."

"Dhat iz not qwite so common, iz it? Aa, me! its a wicked werld, and when a clevver man ternz hiz brainz too crime it iz the werst ov aul. I thhinc dhat I hav cene enuf nou, Mis Stoner, and withe yor permishon we shal wauc out uppon the laun."

I had nevver cene mi frendz face so grim or hiz brou so darc az it wauz when we ternd from the cene ov this investigaishon. We had wauct cevveral tiamz up and doun the laun, niather Mis Stoner nor micelf liking too brake in uppon hiz thauts befoer he rouzd himcelf from hiz revvery.

"It iz verry ecenshal, Mis Stoner," ced he, "dhat u shood absolutly follo mi advice in evvery respect."

"I shal moast certainly doo so."

"The matter iz too cereyous for enny hesitaishon. Yor life ma depend uppon yor compliyans."

"I ashure u dhat I am in yor handz."

"In the ferst place, boath mi frend and I must spend the nite in yor roome."

Boath Mis Stoner and I gaizd at him in astonishment.

"Yes, it must be so. Let me explane. I beleve dhat dhat iz the village in over dhare?"

"Yes, dhat iz the Croun."

"Verry good. Yor windose wood be vizsibel from dhare?"

"Certainly."

"U must confine yorcelf too yor roome, on pretens ov a heddake, when yor stepfaather cumz bac. Then when u here him retire for the nite, u must open the shutterz ov yor windo, undoo the haasp, poot yor lamp dhare az a cignal too us, and then widhdrau qwiyetly withe evverithhing which u ar liacly too waunt intoo the roome which u uest too occupi. I hav no dout dhat, in spite ov the repaerz, u cood mannage dhare for wun nite."

"O, yes, esily."

"The rest u wil leve in our handz."

"But whaut wil u doo?"

"We shal spend the nite in yor roome, and we shal investigate the cauz ov this noiz which haz disterbd u."

"I beleve, Mr. Hoamz, dhat u hav aulreddy made up yor miand," ced Mis Stoner, laying her hand uppon mi companyonz sleve.

"Perhaps I hav."

"Then, for pittese sake, tel me whaut wauz the cauz ov mi cisterz deth."

"I shood prefer too hav clerer pruifs befoer I speke."

"U can at leest tel me whether mi one thaut iz corect, and if she dide from sum sudden frite."

"No, I doo not thhinc so. I thhinc dhat dhare wauz probbably sum moer tan'gibel
cauz. And nou, Mis Stoner, we must leve u for if Dr. Roilot reternd and sau us our gerny wood be in vane. Good-bi, and be brave, for if u wil doo whaut I hav toald u, u ma rest ashuerd dhat we shal soone drive awa the dain'gerz dhat thretten u."

Sherloc Hoamz and I had no difficulty in en'gaging a bedroome and
citting-roome
at the Croun In. Dha wer on the upper floer, and from our windo we cood
comaand a vu ov the avvenu gate, and ov the inhabbited wing ov Stoke
Moran
Mannor Hous. At dusc we sau Dr. Griamzby Roilot drive paast, hiz huge
form
looming up beside the littel figure ov the lad whoo drove him. The boi
had sum
slite difficulty in undoowing the hevvy iarn gaits, and we herd the hoers
roer
ov the doctorz vois and sau the fury withe which he shooc hiz clincht fists
at him. The trap drove on, and a fu minnuets later we sau a sudden lite
spring
up among the trese az the lamp wauz lit in wun ov the citting-ruimz.

"Doo u no, Wautson," ced Hoamz az we sat tooghetther in the gathering darcnes, "I hav reyaly sum scrupelz az too taking u too-nite. Dhare iz a distinct ellement ov dain'ger."

"Can I be ov acistans?"

"Yor prezsens mite be invallubel."

"Then I shal certainly cum."

"It iz verry kiand ov u."

"U speke ov dain'ger. U hav evvidently cene moer in these ruimz dhan wauz vizsibel too me."

"No, but I fancy dhat I ma hav dejuest a littel moer. I imadgine dhat u sau aul dhat I did."

"I sau nuthhing remarcabel save the bel-rope, and whaut perpoce dhat cood aancer I confes iz moer dhan I can imadgine."

"U sau the ventilator, too?"

"Yes, but I doo not thhinc dhat it iz such a verry unnuezhual thhing too hav a smaull opening betwene too ruimz. It wauz so smaull dhat a rat cood hardly paas throo."

"I nu dhat we shood fiand a ventilator befoer evver we came too Stoke Moran."

“Mi dere Hoamz!”

“O, yes, I did. U remember in her staitment she ced dhat her cister cood smel Dr. Roilots cigar. Nou, ov coers dhat sugested at wuns dhat dhare must be a comunicaishon betwene the too ruimz. It cood oonly be a smaull wun, or
it wood hav bene remarct uppon at the coronerz inqwiry. I dejuest a ventilator.”

“But whaut harm can dhare be in dhat?”

“Wel, dhare iz at leest a cureyous cowincidens ov daits. A ventilator iz made,
a cord iz hung, and a lady whoo sleeps in the bed dise. Duz not dhat strike u?”

“I canot az yet ce enny conecshon.”

“Did u observ ennithing verry peculeyar about dhat bed?”

“No.”

“It wauz clampt too the floer. Did u evver ce a bed faacend like dhat befoer?”

“I canot sa dhat I hav.”

“The lady cood not moove her bed. It must aulwase be in the same rellative posishon too the ventilator and too the rope—or so we ma caul it, cins it wauz
clearly nevver ment for a bel-pool.”

“Hoamz,” I cride, “I ceme too ce dimly whaut u ar hinting at. We ar oonly just in time too prevent sum suttel and horibel crime.”

“Suttel enuf and horibel enuf. When a doctor duz go rong he iz the ferst ov crimminalz. He haz nerv and he haz nollej. Paalmer and Pritchard wer amung the hedz ov dhare profeshon. This man striax even deper, but I thhinc, Wautson, dhat we shal be abel too strike deper stil. But we shal hav hororz enuf befoer the nite iz over; for goodnes’ sake let us hav a qwiyet pipe and tern our miandz for a fu ourz too sumthhing moer cheerfool.”

About nine oacloc the lite amung the trese wauz extin’gwisht, and aul wauz darc in the direcshon ov the Mannor Hous. Too ourz paast sloly awa, and then, suddenly, just at the stroke ov elevven, a cin’ghel brite lite shon out rite in frunt ov us.

“Dhat iz our cignal,” ced Hoamz, springing too hiz fete; “it cumz from the middel windo.”

Az we paast out he exchainjd a fu werdz withe the landlord, explaining dhat we wer gowing on a late vizsit too an aqwaintans, and dhat it wauz poscibel dhat we mite spend the nite dhare. A moment later we wer out on the darc rode, a chil wind blowing in our facez, and wun yello lite twincling in frunt ov us throo the gloome too ghide us on our somber errand.

Dhare wauz littel difficulty in entering the groundz, for unrepaerd brechez gaupt in the oald parc waul. Making our wa amung the trese, we reecht the laun, crost it, and wer about too enter throo the windo when out from a

clump ov lorel booshez dhare darted whaut ceemd too be a hidjous and distorted
chiald, whoo thru itcelf uppon the graas withe riathing limz and then ran
swiftly
acros the laun intoo the darcnes.

“Mi God!” I whisperd; “did u ce it?”

Hoamz wauz for the moment az starteld az I. Hiz hand cloazd like a vice
uppon mi
rist in hiz agitaishon. Then he broke intoo a lo laaf and poot hiz lips too mi
ere.

“It iz a nice hous’hoald,” he mermerd. “Dhat iz the baboone.”

I had forgotten the strainj pets which the doctor afected. Dhare wauz a
chetaa, too; perhaps we mite fiand it uppon our shoalderz at enny moment.
I
confes dhat I felt eseyer in mi miand when, aafter following Hoamz’
exaampel and
slipping of mi shoose, I found micelf incide the bedroome. Mi companyon
noizlesly cloazd the shutterz, muivd the lamp ontoo the tabel, and caast hiz
ise round the roome. Aul wauz az we had cene it in the datime. Then
creping up
too me and making a trumpet ov hiz hand, he whisperd intoo mi ere agane
so
gently dhat it wauz aul dhat I cood doo too distin’gwish the werdz:

“The leest sound wood be fatal too our planz.”

I nodded too sho dhat I had herd.

“We must cit widhout lite. He wood ce it throo the ventilator.”

I nodded agane.

“Doo not go aslepe; yor verry life ma depend uppon it. Hav yor pistol reddy in cace we shoold nede it. I wil cit on the cide ov the bed, and u in dhat chare.”

I tooc out mi revolver and lade it on the corner ov the tabel.

Hoamz had braut up a long thhin cane, and this he plaist uppon the bed beside him. Bi it he lade the box ov matchez and the stump ov a candel. Then he ternd doun the lamp, and we wer left in darcnes.

Hou shal I evver forghet dhat dredfool vidgil? I cood not here a sound, not even the drauwing ov a breth, and yet I nu dhat mi companyon sat open-ide, within a fu fete ov me, in the same state ov nervous tenshon in which I wauz micelf. The shutterz cut of the leest ra ov lite, and we wated in absolute darcnes.

From outside came the ocaizhonal cri ov a nite-berd, and wuns at our verry windo a long draun catlike whine, which toald us dhat the chetaa wauz indede at libberty. Far awa we cood here the depe toanz ov the parrish cloc, which buimd out evvery qworter ov an our. Hou long dha ceemd, dhose qworterz! Twelv struc, and wun and too and thre, and stil we sat wating cilently for whautevver mite befaul.

Suddenly dhare wauz the momentary gleme ov a lite up in the direcshon ov the ventilator, which vannisht imejaitly, but wauz suxeded bi a strong smel ov barning oil and heted mettal. Sumwun in the next roome had lit a darc-lantern.

I herd a gentel sound ov muivment, and then aul wauz cilent wuns moer, dho

the smel gru stron'gher. For haaf an our I sat withe straning eerz. Then suddenly anuther sound became audibel—a verry gentel, suithing sound, like dhat

ov a smaul get ov steme escaping continnuwaly from a kettel. The instant dhat we

herd it, Hoamz sprang from the bed, struc a mach, and lasht fureyously withe

hiz cane at the bel-pool.

“U ce it, Wautson?” he yeld. “U ce it?”

But I sau nuthhing. At the moment when Hoamz struc the lite I herd a lo, clere whiscel, but the sudden glare flashing intoo mi wery ise made it imposcibel for me too tel whaut it wauz at which mi frend lasht so savvaijly. I

cood, houwevver, ce dhat hiz face wauz dedly pale and fild withe horror and

loathing. He had ceest too strike and wauz gasing up at the ventilator when

suddenly dhare broke from the cilens ov the nite the moast horibel cri too which I hav evver liscend. It sweld up louder and louder, a hoers yel ov pane and fere and an'gher aul min'gheld in the wun dredfool shreke. Dha sa dhat

awa down in the village, and even in the distant parsonage, dhat cri raizd the sleperz from dhare bedz. It struc coald too our harts, and I stood gasing at Hoamz, and he at me, until the laast eccose ov it had dide awa intoo the cilens from which it rose.

“Whaut can it mene?” I gaaspt.

“It meenz dhat it iz aul over;” Hoamz aancerd. “And perhaps, aafter aul, it iz
for the best. Take yor pistol, and we wil enter Dr. Roilots roome.”

Withe a grave face he lit the lamp and led the wa doun the coridor. Twice
he
struc at the chaimber doer widhout enny repli from within. Then he ternd
the
handel and enterd, I at hiz heelz, withe the coct pistol in mi hand.

It wauz a cin’gular cite which met our ise. On the tabel stood a darc-lantern
withe the shutter haaf open, throwing a brilleyant beme ov lite uppon the
iarn
safe, the doer ov which wauz ajar. Becide this tabel, on the wooden chare,
sat
Dr. Griamzby Roilot clad in a long gra drescing-goun, hiz bare ankelz
protruding beneeth, and hiz fete thrust intoo red heel’les Turkish slipperz.
Acros hiz lap la the short stoc withe the long lash which we had notiast
juring the da. Hiz chin wauz coct upword and hiz ise wer fixt in a
dredfool, ridgid stare at the corner ov the celing. Round hiz brou he had a
peculeyar yello band, withe brounish speckelz, which ceemd too be bound
tiatly
round hiz hed. Az we enterd he made niather sound nor moashon.

“The band! the speckeld band!” whisperd Hoamz.

I tooc a step forward. In an instant hiz strainj hedghere began too moove,
and
dhare reerd itcelf from amung hiz hare the sqwaut dimond-shaipt hed and
puft nec ov a loadhsome serpent.

“It iz a swaump adder!” cride Hoamz; “the dedleyest snake in Injaa. He haz dide within ten cecondz ov beying bitten. Viyolens duz, in trueth, recoil uppon the viyolent, and the skemer faulz intoo the pit which he digz for anuther. Let us thrust this crechure bac intoo its den, and we can then remoove Mis Stoner too sum place ov shelter and let the county polece no whaut haz happend.”

Az he spoke he dru the dog-whip swiftly from the ded manz lap, and throwing the nooce round the reptialz nec he dru it from its horid perch and, carreying it at armz length, thru it intoo the iarn safe, which he cloazd uppon it.

Such ar the tru facts ov the deth ov Dr. Griamzby Roilot, ov Stoke Moran. It iz not nescesary dhat I shood prolong a narrative which haz aulreddy run too too grate a length bi telling hou we broke the sad nuse too the terrifide gherl, hou we convade her bi the morning trane too the care ov her good aant at Harro, ov hou the slo proces ov ofishal inqwiry came too the concluezhon dhat the doctor met hiz fate while indiscreetly playing withe a dain’gerous pet. The littel which I had yet too lern ov the cace wauz toald me bi Sherloc Hoamz az we travveld bac next da.

“I had,” ced he, “cum too an entiarily eroanyous concluezhon which shose, mi dere Wautson, hou dain’gerous it aulwase iz too rezon from insufishent dataa. The prezsens ov the gipcese, and the uce ov the werd ‘band,’ which wauz uezd bi the poor gherl, no dout, too explane the aperans which she had caut a hurrede glimps ov bi the lite ov her mach, wer sufishent too poot me uppon an entiarily rong cent. I can oanly clame the merrit dhat I instantly reconciderd mi posishon when, houwevver, it became clere too me dhat whautevver dain’ger threttend an occupant ov the roome cood not cum iather from the windo or the doer. Mi atenshon wauz spedily draun, az I hav aulreddy remarct too u, too this ventilator, and too the bel-rope which hung doun too the bed. The discuvvery dhat this wauz a dummy, and dhat the bed wauz clampt too the floer, instantly gave rise too the suspishon dhat the rope wauz dhare az a brij for sumthhing paacing throo the hole and cumming too the bed. The ideyaa ov a snake okerd too me, and when I cuppeld it withe mi nollej dhat the doctor wauz fernisht withe a supli ov crechuerz from Injaa, I felt dhat I wauz probbably on the rite trac. The ideyaa ov using a form ov poizon which cood not poscibly be discuverd bi enny kemmical test wauz just such a wun az wood oker too a clevver and ruethles man whoo had had an Eestern traning. The rapiddity withe which such

a poison wood take effect wood aulso, from hiz point ov vu, be an advaantage.

It wood be a sharp-ide coroner, indede, whoo cood distin'gwish the too littel

darc puncchuerz which wood sho whare the poison fangz had dun dhare werc.

Then I thaut ov the whiscel. Ov coers he must recaul the snake befoer the morning lite reveeld it too the victim. He had traind it, probbably bi the uce ov the milc which we sau, too retern too him when summond. He wood poot it

throo this ventilator at the our dhat he thaut best, withe the certainty dhat it wood crawl down the rope and land on the bed. It mite or mite not bite the occupant, perhaps she mite escape evvery nite for a weke, but sooner

or later she must faul a victim.

"I had cum too these concluezhonz befoer evver I had enterd hiz roome. An

inspecshon ov hiz chare shode me dhat he had bene in the habbit ov standing on

it, which ov coers wood be nescenary in order dhat he shood reche the ventilator. The cite ov the safe, the saucer ov milc, and the loope ov whipcord

wer enuf too finaly dispel enny douts which ma hav remaind. The metallic clang herd bi Mis Stoner wauz obveyously cauzd bi her stepfaather haistily closing the doer ov hiz safe uppon its terribel occupant. Havving wuns made up mi

miand, u no the steps which I tooc in order too poot the matter too the prooffe.

I herd the crechure his az I hav no dout dhat u did aulso, and I instantly lit the lite and atact it."

"Withe the rezult ov driving it throo the ventilator."

“And aulso withe the rezult ov causing it too tern uppon its maaster at the uther side. Sum ov the blose ov mi cane came home and rouzd its snakish temper, so dhat it flu uppon the ferst person it sau. In this wa I am no dout indirectly responcibel for Dr. Griamzby Roilots deth, and I canot sa dhat it iz liacly too wa verry hevvely uppon mi conspens.”

9

The Advenchure ov the En'gineerz Thum

Ov aul the problemz which hav bene submitted too mi frend, Mr. Sherloc Hoamz, for solueshon juring the yeerz ov our intimacy, dhare wer oonly too which I wauz the meenz ov introjucing too hiz notice—dhat ov Mr. Hathherlese thum, and dhat ov Cuunel Worbertonz madnes. Ov these the latter ma hav afoerded a finer feeld for an acute and oridginal observer, but the uther wauz so strainj in its incepshon and so dramattic in its detailz dhat it ma be the moer werthy ov beying plaist uppon reccord, even if it gave mi frend fuwer openingz

for those deductive methodz ov rezoning bi which he acheevd such
remarcabel
rezults. The stoery haz, I beleve, bene toald moer dhan wuns in the
nuespaperz,
but, like aul such narratiavz, its efect iz much les striking when cet foerth
en bloc in a cin'ghel haaf-collum ov print dhan when the facts sloly evolv
befoer yor one ise, and the mistery cleerz gradjuwaly awa az eche nu
discuvvery fernishez a step which leedz on too the complete trueth. At the
time
the cercumstaancez made a depe impreshon uppon me, and the laps ov too
yeerz
haz hardly cervd too weken the efect.

It wauz in the summer ov '89, not long aafter mi marrage, dhat the events
okerd which I am nou about too summarise. I had reternd too civvil
practice
and had finaly abandond Hoamz in hiz Baker Strete ruimz, auldho I
continnuwaly vizsited him and ocaizhonaly even perswaded him too forgo
hiz
Bohemeyan habbits so far az too cum and vizsit us. Mi practice had
steddily
increest, and az I happend too liv at no verry grate distans from
Paddington
Staishon, I got a fu paishents from amung the ofishalz. Wun ov these,
whoome I
had cuerd ov a painfool and lin'ghering disese, wauz nevver wery ov
advertising mi
verchuse and ov endevvoring too cend me on evvery sufferer over
whoome he mite
hav enny influwens.

Wun morning, at a littel befoer cevven oacloc, I wauz awakend bi the made
tapping at the doer too anouns dhat too men had cum from Paddington
and wer

wating in the consulting-roome. I drest hurriedly, for I nu bi expereyens dhat railwa cacez wer celdom trivveyal, and hacend dounstaerz. Az I decended, mi oald alli, the gard, came out ov the roome and cloazd the doer
tiatly behiand him.

“Ive got him here,” he whisperd, gerking hiz thum over hiz shoalder; “hese aul rite.”

“Whaut iz it, then?” I aasct, for hiz manner sugested dhat it wauz sum strainj
crechure which he had caijd up in mi roome.

“Its a nu paishent,” he whisperd. “I thaut Ide bring him round micelf; then he coodnt slip awa. Dhare he iz, aul safe and sound. I must go nou, Doctor; I hav mi dootese, just the same az u.” And of he went, this trusty tout, widhout even ghivving me time too thanc him.

I enterd mi consulting-roome and found a gentelman ceted bi the tabel. He wauz
qwiyetly drest in a sute ov hether twede withe a soft cloth cap which he had
lade doun uppon mi boox. Round wun ov hiz handz he had a hankerchefe rapt,
which wauz motteld aul over withe bludstainz. He wauz yung, not moer dhan
five-and-twenty, I shood sa, withe a strong, masculine face; but he wauz exedingly pale and gave me the impreshon ov a man whoo wauz suffering
from
sum strong agitaishon, which it tooc aul hiz strength ov miand too controle.

“I am sory too noc u up so erly, Doctor,” ced he, “but I hav had a verry cereyous axident juring the nite. I came in bi trane this morning, and on

inqwiring at Paddington az too whare I mite fiand a doctor, a werthy fello
verry
kiandly escorted me here. I gave the made a card, but I ce dhat she haz left
it
uppon the cide-tabel."

I tooc it up and glaanst at it. "Mr. Victor Hathherly, hiadraulic en'ginere,
16A,
Victoereyaa Strete (3rd floer)." Dhat wauz the name, stile, and abode ov mi
morning
vizsitor. "I regret dhat I hav kept u wating," ced I, citting down in mi
liabrary-chare. "U ar fresh from a nite gerny, I understand, which iz in
itself a monottonous ocupaishon."

"O, mi nite cood not be cauld monottonous," ced he, and laaft. He laaft
verry hartily, withe a hi, ringing note, lening bac in hiz chare and shaking
hiz ciadz. Aul mi meddical instincts rose up against dhat laaf.

"Stop it!" I cride; "pool yorcelf tooghether!" and I poerd out sum wauter
from
a caraf.

It wauz uesles, houwevver. He wauz of in wun ov dhose histerical
outbersts which
cum uppon a strong nachure when sum grate cricis iz over and gon.
Prezsently he
came too himcelf wuns moer, verry wery and pale-loocking.

"I hav bene making a foole ov micelf," he gaaspt.

"Not at aul. Drinc this." I dasht sum brandy intoo the wauter, and the
cullor
began too cum bac too hiz bludles cheex.

“Dhats better!” ced he. “And nou, Doctor, perhaps u wood kiandly atend too mi thum, or raather too the place whare mi thum uest too be.”

He unwuind the hankerchefe and held out hiz hand. It gave even mi hardend nervz a shudder too looc at it. Dhare wer foer protruding fin’gherz and a horid red, spun’gy cerface whare the thum shood hav bene. It had bene hact or toern rite out from the ruits.

“Good hevvenz!” I cride, “this iz a terribel injury. It must hav bled concidderably.”

“Yes, it did. I fainted when it wauz dun, and I thhinc dhat I must hav bene censles for a long time. When I came too I found dhat it wauz stil bleding, so I tide wun end ov mi hankerchefe verry tiatly round the rist and braist it up withe a twig.”

“Exelent! U shood hav bene a cerjon.”

“It iz a qweschon ov hiadraulix, u ce, and came within mi one provvins.”

“This haz bene dun,” ced I, exammining the wuind, “bi a verry hevvy and sharp instrument.”

“A thhing like a clever,” ced he.

“An axident, I prezhume?”

“Bi no meenz.”

“Whaut! a merderous atac?”

“Verry merderous indede.”

“U horifi me.”

I spunjd the wuind, cleend it, drest it, and finaly cuvverd it over withe cotton wauding and carboliazd bandagez. He la bac widhout wincing, dho he bit hiz lip from time too time.

“Hou iz dhat?” I aasct when I had finnisht.

“Cappital! Betwene yor brandy and yor bandage, I fele a nu man. I wauz verry weke, but I hav had a good dele too go throo.”

“Perhaps u had better not speke ov the matter. It iz evvidently trying too yor nervz.”

“O, no, not nou. I shal hav too tel mi tale too the polece; but, betwene ourcelvz, if it wer not for the convincing evvidens ov this wuind ov mine, I shood be cerpriazd if dha beleevd mi staitment, for it iz a verry extrordinary wun, and I hav not much in the wa ov proofe withe which too bac it up; and, even if dha beleve me, the cluse which I can ghiv them ar so vaghe dhat it iz a qweschon whether justice wil be dun.”

“Haa!” cride I, “if it iz ennithing in the nachure ov a problem which u desire too ce solvd, I shood strongly recomend u too cum too mi frend, Mr. Sherloc Hoamz, befoer u go too the ofishal polece.”

“O, I hav herd ov dhat fello,” aancerd mi vizsitor, “and I shood be verry

glad if he wood take the matter up, dho ov coers I must use the ofishal polece az wel. Wood u ghiv me an introducshon too him?"

"Ile doo better. Ile take u round too him micelf."

"I shood be imensly obliajd too u."

"Wele caul a cab and go tooghether. We shal just be in time too hav a littel brecfast withe him. Doo u fele eeqwal too it?"

"Yes; I shal not fele esy until I hav toald mi stoery."

"Then mi cervant wil caul a cab, and I shal be withe u in an instant." I rusht upstaerz, explaind the matter shortly too mi wife, and in five minnuets

wauz incide a hansom, driving withe mi nu aqwaintans too Baker Strete.

Sherloc Hoamz wauz, az I expected, loun'ging about hiz citting-roome in hiz

drescing-goun, reding the aggony collum ov The Tiamz and smoking hiz befoer-brefast pipe, which wauz compoazd ov aul the plugz and dottelz left

from hiz smoax ov the da befoer, aul caerfooly dride and colected on the corner ov the mantelpece. He receevd us in hiz qwiyetly geenyal fashon, orderd fresh rasherz and egz, and joind us in a harty mele. When it wauz concluded he cetteld our nu aqwaintans uppon the sofaa, plaist a pillo beneeth hiz hed, and lade a glaas ov brandy and wauter within hiz reche.

"It iz esy too ce dhat yor expereyens haz bene no common wun, Mr. Hathherly,"

ced he. "Pra, li doun dhare and make yorcelf absoluetly at home. Tel us whaut u can, but stop when u ar tiard and kepe up yor strength withe a littel stimmulant."

“Thanc u,” ced mi paishent, “but I hav felt anuther man cins the doctor bandaijd me, and I thhinc dhat yor brecfast haz completed the cure. I shal take up az littel ov yor vallubel time az poscibel, so I shal start at wuns uppon mi peculeyar expereyencez.”

Hoamz sat in hiz big armchare withe the wery, hevvy-lidded expreshon which vaild hiz kene and egher nachure, while I sat opposite too him, and we liscend in cilens too the strainj stoery which our vizsitor detaild too us.

“U must no,” ced he, “dhat I am an orfan and a batchelor, residing alone in lodgingz in Lunden. Bi profeshon I am a hiadraulic en’ ginere, and I hav had concidderabel expereyens ov mi werc juring the cevven yeerz dhat I wauz aprentiast too Venner & Mathheson, the wel-none ferm, ov Grennich. Too yeerz ago, havving cervd mi time, and havving aulso cum intoo a fare sum ov munny throo mi poor faatherz deth, I determiand too start in biznes for micelf and tooc profeshonal chaimberz in Victoereyaa Strete.

“I supose dhat evveriwun fiandz hiz ferst independent start in biznes a drery expereyens. Too me it haz bene exepshonaly so. Juring too yeerz I hav had thre consultaishonz and wun smaul job, and dhat iz absolutly aul dhat mi profeshon haz braut me. Mi groce takingz amount too £27 10s. Evvery da, from nine in the morning until foer in the aafternoone, I wated in mi littel den, until at laast mi hart began too cinc, and I came too beleve dhat I shood nevver hav enny practice at aul.

“Yesterda, houwevver, just az I wauz thhinking ov leving the office, mi clarc enterd too sa dhare wauz a gentelman wating whoo wisht too ce me uppon biznes. He braut up a card, too, withe the name ov ‘Cuunel Lisander Starc’ en‘graivd uppon it. Cloce at hiz heelz came the cuunel himcelf, a man raather over the middel cise, but ov an exeding thhin‘nes. I doo not thhinc dhat I hav evver cene so thhin a man. Hiz whole face sharpend awa intoo nose and chin, and the skin ov hiz cheex wauz draun qwite tens over hiz outstanding boanz. Yet this emaisaishon ceemd too be hiz natchural habbit, and ju too no disese, for hiz i wauz brite, hiz step brisc, and hiz baring ashuerd. He wauz plainly but neetly drest, and hiz age, I shood juj, wood be nerer forty dhan thherty.

“ ‘Mr. Hathherly?’ ced he, withe sumthhing ov a German axent. ‘U hav bene recomended too me, Mr. Hathherly, az beying a man whoo iz not oanly profishent in hiz profeshon but iz aulso discrete and capabel ov preserving a ceecret.’

“I boud, feling az flatterd az enny yung man wood at such an adres. ‘Ma I aasc whoo it wauz whoo gave me so good a carracter?’

“ ‘Wel, perhaps it iz better dhat I shood not tel u dhat just at this moment. I hav it from the same soers dhat u ar boath an orfan and a batchelor and ar residing alone in Lundon.’

“ ‘Dhat iz qwite corect,’ I aancerd; ‘but u wil excuse me if I sa dhat I canot ce hou aul this baerz uppon mi profeshonal qwaulificaishonz. I understand dhat it wauz on a profeshonal matter dhat u wisht too speke too me?’

“ ‘Undoubtedly so. But u wil fiand dhat aul I sa iz reyaly too the point. I hav a profeshonal comishon for u, but absolute ceecrency iz qwite ecenshal—absolute ceecrency, u understand, and ov coers we ma expect dhat moer from a man whoo iz alone dhan from wun whoo livz in the boozzom ov hiz fammily.’

“ ‘If I prommice too kepe a ceecret,’ ced I, ‘u ma absolutly depend uppon mi doowing so.’

“He looct verry hard at me az I spoke, and it ceemd too me dhat I had nevver cene so suspishous and qweschoning an i.

“ ‘Doo u prommice, then?’ ced he at laast.

“ ‘Yes, I prommice.’

“ ‘Absolute and complete cilens befoer, juring, and aafter? No refferens too the matter at aul, iather in werd or riting?’

“ ‘I hav aulreddy ghivven u mi werd.’

“ ‘Verry good.’ He suddenly sprang up, and darting like liatning acros the roome he flung open the doer. The passage outside wauz empty.

“ ‘Dhats aul rite,’ ced he, cumming bac. ‘I no dhat clarx ar sumtiamz cureyous az too dhare maasterz afaerz. Nou we can tauc in saifty.’ He dru up

hiz chare verry cloce too mine and began too stare at me agane withe the same qweschoning and thautfool looc.

“A feling ov repulshon, and ov sumthhing akin too fere had begun too rise within me at the strainj antix ov this fleshles man. Even mi dred ov loosing a cliyent cood not restrane me from showing mi impaishens.

“ ‘I beg dhat u wil state yor biznes, cer,’ ced I; ‘mi time iz ov vallu.’ Hevven forghiv me for dhat laast centens, but the werdz came too mi lips.

“ ‘Hou wood fifty ghinnese for a niats werc sute u?’ he aasct.

“ ‘Moast admirably.’

“ ‘I sa a niats werc, but an ourz wood be nerer the marc. I cimply waunt yor opinyon about a hiadraulic stamping mashene which haz got out ov ghere. If u sho us whaut iz rong we shal soone cet it rite ourcelvz. Whaut doo u thhinc ov such a comishon az dhat?’

“ ‘The werc apeerz too be lite and the pa munificent.’

“ ‘Preciasly so. We shal waunt u too cum too-nite bi the laast trane.’

“ ‘Whare too?’

“ ‘Too Eford, in Barcshire. It iz a littel place nere the borderz ov Oxfordshire, and within cevven mialz ov Redding. Dhare iz a trane from Paddington which wood bring u dhare at about 11:15.’

“ ‘Verry good.’

“ ‘I shal cum doun in a carrage too mete u.’

“ ‘Dhare iz a drive, then?’

“ ‘Yes, our littel place iz qwite out in the cuntry. It iz a good cevven mialz from Eford Staishon.’

“ ‘Then we can hardly ghet dhare befoer midnite. I supose dhare wood be no chaans ov a trane bac. I shood be compeld too stop the nite.’

“ ‘Yes, we cood esily ghiv u a shake-doun.’

“ ‘Dhat iz verry auqword. Cood I not cum at sum moer conveyent our?’

“ ‘We hav jujd it best dhat u shood cum late. It iz too recompens u for enny inconveenyens dhat we ar paying too u, a yung and un’none man, a fe which wood bi an opinyon from the verry hedz ov yor profeshon. Stil, ov coers, if u wood like too drau out ov the biznes, dhare iz plenty ov time too doo so.’

“ ‘I thaut ov the fifty ghinnese, and ov hou verry uesfool dha wood be too me.

‘Not at aul,’ ced I, ‘I shal be verry happy too acommodate micelf too yor wishez. I shood like, houwevver, too understand a littel moer cleerly whaut it iz dhat u wish me too doo.’

“ ‘Qwite so. It iz verry natchural dhat the plej ov ceecrecy which we hav exacted from u shood hav arouzd yor cureyosity. I hav no wish too comit

u too ennithhing widhout yor havving it aul lade befoer u. I supose dhat we ar absolutly safe from eevzdropperz?’

“ ‘Entiarly.’

“ ‘Then the matter standz dhus. U ar probbably aware dhat foollerz-erth iz a vallubel product, and dhat it iz oonly found in wun or too placez in In’gland?’

“ ‘I hav herd so.’

“ ‘Sum littel time ago I baut a smaull place—a verry smaull place—within ten mialz ov Redding. I wauz forchunate enuf too discuvver dhat dhare wauz a depozsit ov foollerz-erth in wun ov mi feeldz. On exammining it, houwevver, I found dhat this depozsit wauz a comparratiavly smaull wun, and dhat it formd a linc betwene too verry much larger wunz uppon the rite and left—boath ov them, houwevver, in the groundz ov mi naborz. These good pepel wer absolutly ignorant dhat dhare land containd dhat which wauz qwite az vallubel az a goald-mine. Natchuraly, it wauz too mi interest too bi dhare land befoer dha discuvverd its tru vallu, but unforchunaitly I had no cappital bi which I cood doo this. I tooc a fu ov mi frendz intoo the ceecret, houwevver, and dha sugested dhat we shood qwiyetly and ceecretly werc our one littel depozsit and dhat in this wa we shood ern the munny which wood enabel us too bi the naboring feeldz. This we hav nou

bene doowing for sum time, and in order too help us in our operaishonz
we erected
a hiadraulic pres. This pres, az I hav aulreddy explaind, haz got out ov
order, and we wish yor advice uppon the subject. We gard our ceecret
verry
gellously, houwevver, and if it wuns became none dhat we had hiadraulic
en'gineerz
cumming too our littel hous, it wood soone rouz inqwiry, and then, if the
facts
came out, it wood be good-bi too enny chaans ov ghetting these feeldz and
carreying out our planz. Dhat iz whi I hav made u prommice me dhat u wil
not tel a human beying dhat u ar gowing too Eford too-nite. I hope dhat I
make it aul plane?'

" 'I qwite follo u,' ced I. 'The oanly point which I cood not qwite
understand wauz whaut uce u cood make ov a hiadraulic pres in
excavating
foollerz-erth, which, az I understand, iz dug out like gravvel from a pit.'

" 'Aa!' ced he caerlesly, 'we hav our one proces. We compres the erth
intoo brix, so az too remoove them widhout reveling whaut dha ar. But
dhat iz
a mere detale. I hav taken u foolly intoo mi confidens nou, Mr. Hathherly,
and I hav shone u hou I trust u.' He rose az he spoke. 'I shal expect
u, then, at Eford at 11:15.'

" 'I shal certainly be dhare.'

" 'And not a werd too a sole.' He looct at me withe a laast long,
qweschoning
gase, and then, prescing mi hand in a coald, danc graasp, he hurrede from
the
roome.

“Wel, when I came too thhinc it aul over in coole blud I wauz verry much astonnisht, az u ma boath thhinc, at this sudden comishon which had bene intrusted too me. On the wun hand, ov coers, I wauz glad, for the fe wauz at leest tenfoald whaut I shood hav aasct had I cet a price uppon mi one cervicez, and it wauz poscibel dhat this order mite lede too uther wunz. On the uther hand, the face and manner ov mi paitron had made an unplezzant impreshon uppon me, and I cood not thhinc dhat hiz explanaishon ov the foollerz-erth wauz sufishent too explane the necescity for mi cumming at midnite, and hiz extreme anxiety lest I shood tel enniwun ov mi errand. Houwevver, I thru aul feerz too the windz, ate a harty supper, drove too Paddington, and started of, havving obade too the letter the injuncshon az too hoalding mi tung.

“At Redding I had too chainj not oonly mi carrage but mi staishon. Houwevver, I wauz in time for the laast trane too Eford, and I reecht the littel dim-lit staishon aafter elevven oacloc. I wauz the oonly pascen’ger whoo got out dhare, and dhare wauz no wun uppon the platform save a cin’ghel slepy poerter withe a lantern. Az I paast out throo the wicket gate, houwevver, I found mi aqwaintans ov the morning wating in the shaddo uppon the uther cide. Widhout a werd he graaspt mi arm and hurrede me intoo a carrage, the doer ov which wauz standing open. He dru up the windose on iather cide, tapt on the wood-werc, and awa we went az faast az the hors cood go.”

"Wun hors?" interjected Hoamz.

"Yes, oonly wun."

"Did u observ the cullor?"

"Yes, I sau it bi the cide-liats when I wauz stepping intoo the carrage. It wauz a chesnut."

"Tiard-loocking or fresh?"

"O, fresh and gloscy."

"Thanc u. I am sorry too hav interupted u. Pra continnu yor moast interesting staitment."

"Awa we went then, and we drove for at leest an our. Cuunel Lisander Starc had ced dhat it wauz oonly cevven mialz, but I shood thhinc, from the rate dhat we ceemd too go, and from the time dhat we tooc, dhat it must hav bene nerer twelv. He sat at mi cide in cilens aul the time, and I wauz aware, moer dhan wuns when I glaanst in hiz direcshon, dhat he wauz loocking at me withe grate intency. The cuntry roadz ceme too be not verry good in dhat part ov the werld, for we lercht and jolted terribly. I tride too looc out ov the windose too ce sumthhing ov whare we wer, but dha wer made ov frosted glaas, and I cood make out nuthhing save the ocaizhonal brite bler ov a paacing lite. Nou

and then I hazzarded sum remarc too brake the monottony ov the gerny,
but the
cuunel aancerd oonly in monnocilabelz, and the conversaishon soone flagd.
At
laast, houwevver, the bumping ov the rode wauz exchainjd for the crisp
smuidhnes
ov a gravvel-drive, and the carrage came too a stand. Cuunel Lisander
Starc
sprang out, and, az I follode aafter him, poold me swiftly intoo a poerch
which
gaupt in frunt ov us. We stept, az it wer, rite out ov the carrage and
intoo the haul, so dhat I faild too cach the moast fleting glaans ov the frunt
ov the hous. The instant dhat I had crost the threshoald the doer slamd
hevvily behiand us, and I herd faintly the rattel ov the wheelz az the
carrage
drove awa.

“It wauz pich darc incide the hous, and the cuunel fumbeld about loocking
for
matchez and muttering under hiz breth. Suddenly a doer opend at the
uther end
ov the passage, and a long, goalden bar ov lite shot out in our direcshon. It
gru brauder, and a woomman apeerd withe a lamp in her hand, which she
held
abuv her hed, pooshing her face forword and pering at us. I cood ce dhat
she wauz pritty, and from the glos withe which the lite shon uppon her
darc
dres I nu dhat it wauz a rich matereyal. She spoke a fu werdz in a forane
tung in a tone az dho aasking a qweschon, and when mi companyon
aancerd in
a gruf monnocilabel she gave such a start dhat the lamp neerly fel from her
hand. Cuunel Starc went up too her, whisperd sumthhing in her ere, and
then,

pooshing her bac intoo the roome from whens she had cum, he wauct
toowordz me
agane withe the lamp in hiz hand.

“ ‘Perhaps u wil hav the kiandnes too wate in this roome for a fu
minnuets,’
ced he, throwing open anuther doer. It wauz a qwiyet, littel, plainly
fernisht
roome, withe a round tabel in the center, on which cevveral German boox
wer
scatterd. Cuunel Starc lade doun the lamp on the top ov a harmoanyum
becide
the doer. ‘I shal not kepe u wating an instant,’ ced he, and vannisht intoo
the darcnes.

“I glaanst at the boox uppon the tabel, and in spite ov mi ignorans ov
German
I cood ce dhat too ov them wer tretesez on ciyens, the utherz beying
volluemz ov powetry. Then I wauct acros too the windo, hoping dhat I mite
cach sum glimps ov the cuntry-cide, but an oke shutter, hevvily bard, wauz
foalded acros it. It wauz a wunderfooly cilent hous. Dhare wauz an oald
cloc
ticking loudly sumwhare in the passage, but urtherwise evverithhing wauz
dedly
stil. A vaghe feling ov unnesines began too stele over me. Whoo wer these
German pepel, and whaut wer dha doowing livving in this strainj, out-ov-
the-wa
place? And whare wauz the place? I wauz ten mialz or so from Eford, dhat
wauz aul
I nu, but whether north, south, eest, or west I had no ideyaa. For dhat
matter,
Redding, and poscibly uther larj tounz, wer within dhat rajus, so the place
mite not be so cecluded, aafter aul. Yet it wauz qwite certane, from the
absolute stilnes, dhat we wer in the cuntry. I paist up and doun the roome,

humming a chune under mi breth too kepe up mi spirrits and feling dhat I
wauz
thurroly urning mi fifty-ghinny fe.

“Suddenly, widhout enny prelimminary sound in the midst ov the utter
stilnes,
the doer ov mi roome swung sloly open. The woomman wauz standing in
the aperchure,
the darcnes ov the haul behiand her, the yello lite from mi lamp beting
uppon
her egher and butifool face. I cood ce at a glaans dhat she wauz cic withe
fere, and the cite cent a chil too mi one hart. She held up wun shaking
fin’gher too worn me too be cilent, and she shot a fu whisperd werdz ov
broken
In’glish at me, her ise glaancing bac, like dhose ov a fritend hors, intoo
the gloome behiand her.

“ ‘I wood go,’ ced she, tryying hard, az it ceemd too me, too speke caalmly;
‘I
wood go. I shood not sta here. Dhare iz no good for u too doo.’

“ ‘But, maddam,’ ced I, ‘I hav not yet dun whaut I came for. I canot
poscibly
leve until I hav cene the mashene.’

“ ‘It iz not werth yor while too wate,’ she went on. ‘U can paas throo the
doer; no wun hinderz.’ And then, ceying dhat I smiald and shooc mi hed,
she
suddenly thru acide her constraint and made a step forword, withe her
handz
rung tooghether. ‘For the luv ov Hevven!’ she whisperd, ‘ghet awa from
here
befoer it iz too late!’

“But I am sumwhaut hedstrong bi nachure, and the moer reddy too en’gage in an afare when dhare iz sum obstakel in the wa. I thaut ov mi fifty-ghinny fe, ov mi werisum gerny, and ov the unplezzant nite which ceemd too be befoer me. Wauz it aul too go for nuthhing? Whi shood I slinc awa widhout havving carrede out mi comishon, and widhout the pament which wauz mi ju? This woomman mite, for aul I nu, be a monomainyac. Withe a stout baring, dhaerfoer, dho her manner had shaken me moer dhan I caerd too confes, I stil shooc mi hed and declaerd mi intenshon ov remaning whare I wauz. She wauz about too renu her entretese when a doer slamd overhed, and the sound ov cevveral footsteps wauz herd uppon the staerz. She liscend for an instant, thru up her handz withe a desparing geschure, and vannisht az suddenly and az noizlesly az she had cum.

“The nucummerz wer Cuunel Lisander Starc and a short thhic man withe a chinchillaa beard growing out ov the crecez ov hiz dubbel chin, whoo wauz introjuest too me az Mr. Ferguson.

“ ‘This iz mi cecretary and mannager,’ ced the cuunel. ‘Bi the wa, I wauz under the impreshon dhat I left this doer shut just nou. I fere dhat u hav felt the draaft.’

“ ‘On the contrary,’ ced I, ‘I opend the doer micelf becauz I felt the roome too be a littel cloce.’

“He shot wun ov hiz suspishous loox at me. ‘Perhaps we had better procede too biznes, then,’ ced he. ‘Mr. Ferguson and I wil take u up too ce the

mashene.'

" 'I had better poot mi hat on, I suppose.'

" 'O, no, it iz in the hous.'

" 'Whaut, u dig foollerz-erth in the hous?'

" 'No, no. This iz oonly whare we compres it. But nevver miand dhat. Aul we wish u too doo iz too exammine the mashene and too let us no whaut iz rong withe it.'

"We went upstaerz toogheter, the cuunel ferst withe the lamp, the fat mannager and I behiand him. It wauz a labbirinth ov an oald hous, withe coridorz, passagez, narro wianding staercacez, and littel lo doerz, the threshoaldz ov which wer hollode out bi the generaishonz whoo had crost them. Dhare wer no carpets and no cianz ov enny fernichure abuv the ground floer, while the plaaster wauz peling of the waulz, and the damp wauz braking throo in grene, unhelthhy blotchez. I tride too poot on az unconcernd an are az poscibel, but I had not forgotten the worningz ov the lady, even dho I disregarded them, and I kept a kene i uppon mi too companyonz. Ferguson apeerd too be a moroce and cilent man, but I cood ce from the littel dhat he ced dhat he wauz at leest a fello-cuntriman.

"Cuunel Lisander Starc stopt at laast befoer a lo doer, which he unloct.

Within wauz a smaul, sqware roome, in which the thre ov us cood hardly ghet at wun time. Ferguson remaind outcide, and the cuunel usherd me in.

“ ‘We ar nou,’ ced he, ‘acchuwaly within the hiadraulic pres, and it wood be a particularly unplezzant thhing for us if enniwun wer too tern it on. The celing ov this smaul chaimber iz reyaly the end ov the decending piston, and it cumz doun withe the foers ov menny tunz uppon this mettal floer. Dhare ar smaul latteral collumz ov wauter outcide which receive the foers, and which traanzmit and multipli it in the manner which iz familleyar too u. The mashene gose reddily enuf, but dhare iz sum stifnes in the werking ov it, and it haz lost a littel ov its foers. Perhaps u wil hav the goodnes too looc it over and too sho us hou we can cet it rite.’

“I tooc the lamp from him, and I exammiand the mashene verry thurroly. It wauz indede a gigantic wun, and capabel ov exercising enormous preshure. When I paast outcide, houwevver, and prest doun the leverz which controald it, I nu at wuns bi the whishing sound dhat dhare wauz a slite lecage, which aloud a reghergitaishon ov wauter throo wun ov the cide cillinderz. An examinaishon shode dhat wun ov the injaa-rubber bandz which wauz round the hed ov a driving-rod had shrunc so az not qwite too fil the socket along which it werct. This wauz cleerly the cauz ov the los ov pouwer, and I pointed it out too mi companyonz, whoo follode mi remarx verry caerfooly and aasct cevveral

practical qweschonz az too hou dha shood procede too cet it rite. When I had made it clere too them, I reternd too the mane chaimber ov the mashene and tooc a good looc at it too sattisfi mi one cureyoscity. It wauz obveyous at a glaans dhat the stoery ov the foollerz-erth wauz the merest fabricaishon, for it wood be abcerd too suppose dhat so pouwerfool an en'gine cood be desiand for so inaddeqwate a perpoce. The waulz wer ov wood, but the floer concisted ov a larj iarn trof, and when I came too exammine it I cood ce a crust ov metallic depozsit aul over it. I had stuipt and wauz scraping at this too ce exactly whaut it wauz when I herd a mutterd exclamaishon in German and sau the cadavverous face ov the cuunel loocking doun at me.

“ ‘Whaut ar u doowing dhare?’ he aasct.

“I felt an'gry at havving bene trict bi so elabborate a stoery az dhat which he had toald me. ‘I wauz admiring yor foollerz-erth,’ ced I; ‘I thhinc dhat I shood be better abel too advise u az too yor mashene if I nu whaut the exact perpoce wauz for which it wauz uezd.’

“The instant dhat I utterd the werdz I regretted the rashnes ov mi speche. Hiz face cet hard, and a bailfool lite sprang up in hiz gra ise.

“ ‘Verry wel,’ ced he, ‘u shal no aul about the mashene.’ He tooc a step baqword, slamd the littel doer, and ternd the ke in the loc. I rusht toowordz it and poold at the handel, but it wauz qwite ceure, and did not ghiv in the leest too mi kix and shuvz. ‘Hullo!’ I yeld. ‘Hullo! Cuunel! Let me out!’

“And then suddenly in the cilens I herd a sound which cent mi hart intoo
mi
mouth. It wauz the clanc ov the leverz and the swish ov the leking cillinder.
He
had cet the en’gine at werc. The lamp stil stood uppon the floer whare I had
plaist it when exammining the trof. Bi its lite I sau dhat the blac celing
wauz cumming doun uppon me, sloly, gerkily, but, az nun nu better dhan
micelf,
withe a foers which must within a minnute griand me too a shaiples pulp. I
thru
micelf, screaming, against the doer, and dragd withe mi nailz at the loc. I
imploerd the cuunel too let me out, but the remorsles clanking ov the
leverz
dround mi crise. The celing wauz oonly a foot or too abuv mi hed, and
withe mi
hand upraizd I cood fele its hard, ruf cerface. Then it flasht throo mi
miand dhat the pane ov mi deth wood depend verry much uppon the
posishon in
which I met it. If I la on mi face the wate wood cum uppon mi spine, and I
shudderd too thhinc ov dhat dredfool snap. Eseyer the uther wa, perhaps;
and
yet, had I the nerv too li and looc up at dhat dedly blac shaddo wavering
doun uppon me? Aulreddy I wauz unnabel too stand erect, when mi i caut
sumthhing
which braut a gush ov hope bac too mi hart.

“I hav ced dhat dho the floer and celing wer ov iarn, the waulz wer ov
wood. Az I gave a laast hurrede glaans around, I sau a thhin line ov yello
lite
betwene too ov the boerdz, which braudend and braudend az a smaull
pannel wauz
poosht baqword. For an instant I cood hardly beleve dhat here wauz
indede a

doer which led awa from deth. The next instant I thru micelf throo, and la haaf-fainting uppon the uther side. The pannel had cloazd agane behiand me, but the crash ov the lamp, and a fu moments aafterwordz the clang ov the too slabz ov mettal, toald me hou narro had bene mi escape.

“I wauz recauld too micelf bi a frantic plucking at mi rist, and I found micelf liying uppon the stone floer ov a narro coridor, while a woomman bent over me and tugd at me withe her left hand, while she held a candel in her rite. It wauz the same good frend whose warning I had so foolishly reected.

“ ‘Cum! cum!’ she cride brethlesly. ‘Dha wil be here in a moment. Dha wil ce dhat u ar not dhare. O, doo not waist the so-preshous time, but cum!’

“This time, at leest, I did not scorn her advice. I staggherd too mi fete and ran withe her along the coridor and doun a wianding stare. The latter led too anuther braud passage, and just az we reecht it we herd the sound ov running fete and the shouting ov too voicez, wun aancering the uther from the floer on which we wer and from the wun beneeth. Mi ghide stopt and looct about her like wun whoo iz at her wits end. Then she thru open a doer which led intoo a bedroome, throo the windo ov which the moone wauz shining briatly.

“ ‘It iz yor oonly chaans,’ ced she. ‘It iz hi, but it ma be dhat u can jump it.’

“Az she spoke a lite sprang intoo vu at the ferther end ov the passage, and I sau the lene figgure ov Cuunel Lisander Starc rushing forword withe a lantern in wun hand and a weppon like a bootcherz clever in the uther. I rusht across the bedroome, flung open the windo, and looct out. Hou qwiyet and swete and whoalsum the garden looct in the muinlite, and it cood not be moer dhan thherty fete doun. I clamberd out uppon the cil, but I hezsitated too jump until I shood hav herd whaut paast betwene mi saveyor and the ruffeyan whoo pershude me. If she wer il-uezd, then at enny risx I wauz determiand too go bac too her acistans. The thaut had hardly flasht throo mi miand befoer he wauz at the doer, pooshing hiz wa paast her; but she thru her armz round him and tride too hoald him bac.

“ ‘Frits! Frits!’ she cride in In’glish, ‘remember yor prommice aafter the laast time. U ced it shood not be agane. He wil be cilent! O, he wil be cilent!’

“ ‘U ar mad, Elise!’ he shouted, struggling too brake awa from her. ‘U wil be the ruwin ov us. He haz cene too much. Let me paas, I sa!’ He dasht her too wun cide, and, rushing too the windo, cut at me withe hiz hevvy weppon. I had let micelf go, and wauz hanging bi the handz too the cil, when hiz blo fel. I wauz conshous ov a dul pane, mi grip loocend, and I fel intoo the garden belo.

“I wauz shaken but not hert bi the faul; so I pict micelf up and rusht of among the booshez az hard az I cood run, for I understood dhat I wauz far from

being out ov dain'ger yet. Suddenly, houwever, az I ran, a dedly dizesines
and
cines came over me. I glaanst doun at mi hand, which wauz throbbing
painfooly, and then, for the ferst time, sau dhat mi thum had bene cut of
and
dhat the blud wauz poering from mi wuind. I endevvord too ti mi
hankerchefe
round it, but dhare came a sudden buzzsing in mi eerz, and next moment I
fel in
a ded faint among the rose-booshez.

“Hou long I remaind unconshous I canot tel. It must hav bene a verry long
time, for the moone had sunc, and a brite morning wauz braking when I
came too
micelf. Mi cloadhz wer aul sodden withe ju, and mi cote-sleve wauz
drencht
withe blud from mi wuinded thum. The smarting ov it recauld in an
instant aul
the particularz ov mi niats advenchure, and I sprang too mi fete withe the
feling dhat I mite hardly yet be safe from mi pershuwerz. But too mi
astonnishment, when I came too looc round me, niather hous nor garden
wer too be
cene. I had bene liying in an an'ghel ov the hej cloce bi the hirode, and just
a littel lower doun wauz a long bilding, which pruid, uppon mi aproching
it,
too be the verry staishon at which I had ariavd uppon the preveyous nite.
Wer it
not for the ugly wuind uppon mi hand, aul dhat had paast juring dhose
dredfool
ourz mite hav bene an evil dreme.

“Haaf daizd, I went intoo the staishon and aasct about the morning trane.
Dhare

wood be wun too Redding in les dhan an our. The same poerter wauz on
juty, I
found, az had bene dhare when I ariavd. I inqwiard ov him whether he had
evver
herd ov Cuunel Lisander Starc. The name wauz strainj too him. Had he
observd a
carrage the nite befoer wating for me? No, he had not. Wauz dhare a
polece-staishon enniwhare nere? Dhare wauz wun about thre mialz of.

“It wauz too far for me too go, weke and il az I wauz. I determiand too
wate until
I got bac too toun befoer telling mi stoery too the polece. It wauz a littel
paast
cix when I ariavd, so I went ferst too hav mi wuind drest, and then the
doctor wauz kiand enuf too bring me along here. I poot the cace intoo yor
handz
and shal doo exactly whaut u advise.”

We boath sat in cilens for sum littel time aafter liscening too this
extrordnary narrative. Then Sherloc Hoamz poold down from the shelf
wun ov
the ponderous commonplace boox in which he plaist hiz cuttingz.

“Here iz an advertiazment which wil interest u,” ced he. “It apeerd in
aul the paperz about a yere ago. Liscen too this: ‘Lost, on the 9th inst., Mr.
Geremeyah Haling, aijd twenty-cix, a hiadraulic en’ginere. Left hiz
lodgingz at
ten oacloc at nite, and haz not bene herd ov cins. Wauz drest in,’ etc.,
etc. Haa! Dhat represents the laast time dhat the cuunel neded too hav hiz
mashene overhauld, I fancy.”

“Good hevvenz!” cride mi paishent. “Then dhat explainz whaut the gherl
ced.”

“Undoubtedly. It iz qwite clere dhat the cuunel wauz a coole and desperate man, whoo wauz absoluety determiand dhat nuthhing shood stand in the wa ov hiz littel game, like dhose out-and-out piraits whoo wil leve no cervivor from a capchuerd ship. Wel, evvery moment nou iz preshous, so if u fele eequal too it we shal go doun too Scotland Yard at wuns az a prelimminary too starting for Eford.”

Sum thre ourz or so aafterwordz we wer aul in the trane tooghether, bound from Redding too the littel Barcshire village. Dhare wer Sherloc Hoamz, the hiadraulic en‘ginere, Inspector Bradstrete, ov Scotland Yard, a plane-cloadhz man, and micelf. Bradstrete had spred an ordnans map ov the county out uppon the cete and wauz bizsy withe hiz cumpacez drauwing a cerkel withe Eford for its center.

“Dhare u ar,” ced he. “Dhat cerkel iz draun at a rajus ov ten mialz from the village. The place we waunt must be sumwhare nere dhat line. U ced ten mialz, I thhinc, cer.”

“It wauz an ourz good drive.”

“And u thhinc dhat dha braut u bac aul dhat wa when u wer unconshous?”

“Dha must hav dun so. I hav a confuezd memmory, too, ov havving bene lifted

and convade sumwhare.”

“Whaut I canot understand,” ced I, “iz whi dha shood hav spaerd u when dha found u liying fainting in the garden. Perhaps the villane wauz softend bi the woommanz entretese.”

“I hardly thhinc dhat liacly. I nevver sau a moer inexorabel face in mi life.”

“O, we shal soone clere up aul dhat,” ced Bradstrete. “Wel, I hav draun mi cerkel, and I oanly wish I nu at whaut point uppon it the foke dhat we ar in cerch ov ar too be found.”

“I thhinc I cood la mi fin’gher on it,” ced Hoamz qwiyetly.

“Reyaly, nou!” cride the inspector, “u hav formd yor opinyon! Cum, nou, we shal ce whoo agrese withe u. I sa it iz south, for the cuntry iz moer deserted dhare.”

“And I sa eest,” ced mi paishent.

“I am for west,” remarct the plane-cloadhz man. “Dhare ar cevveral qwiyet littel villagez up dhare.”

“And I am for north,” ced I, “becauz dhare ar no hilz dhare, and our frend cez dhat he did not notice the carrage go up enny.”

“Cum,” cride the inspector, laafing; “its a verry pritty divercity ov opinyon. We hav boxt the cumpas amung us. Whoo doo u ghiv yor caasting vote too?”

“U ar aul rong.”

“But we caant aul be.”

"O, yes, u can. This iz mi point." He plaist hiz fin'gher in the center ov the cerkel. "This iz whare we shal fiand them."

"But the twelv-mile drive?" gaaspt Hathherly.

"Cix out and cix bac. Nuthhing cimpler. U sa yorcelf dhat the hors wauz fresh and gloscy when u got in. Hou cood it be dhat if it had gon twelv mialz over hevvy roadz?"

"Indede, it iz a liacly ruse enuf," observd Bradstrete thautfooly. "Ov coers dhare can be no dout az too the nachure ov this gang."

"Nun at aul," ced Hoamz. "Dha ar coinerz on a larj scale, and hav uezd the mashene too form the amalgam which haz taken the place ov silver."

"We hav none for sum time dhat a clevver gang wauz at werc," ced the inspector. "Dha hav bene terning out haaf-crounz bi the thousanz. We even traist them az far az Redding, but cood ghet no farther, for dha had cuvverd dhare tracez in a wa dhat shode dhat dha wer verry oald handz. But nou, thanx too this lucky chaans, I thhinc dhat we hav got them rite enuf."

But the inspector wauz mistaken, for dhose crimminalz wer not destiand too faul intoo the handz ov justice. Az we roald intoo Eford Staishon we sau a gigantic collum ov smoke which streemd up from behiand a smaul clump ov trese in the naborhood and hung like an imens ostrich fether over the landscape.

"A hous on fire?" aasct Bradstrete az the trane steemd of agane on its wa.

"Yes, cer!" ced the staishon-maaster.

“When did it brake out?”

“I here dhat it wauz juring the nite, cer, but it haz got wers, and the whole place iz in a blase.”

“Whoose hous iz it?”

“Dr. Betcherz.”

“Tel me,” broke in the en‘ginere, “iz Dr. Betcher a German, verry thhin, withe a long, sharp nose?”

The staishon-maaster laaft hartily. “No, cer, Dr. Betcher iz an In‘glishman, and dhare iznt a man in the parrish whoo haz a better-liand waistcote. But he haz a gentelman staying withe him, a paishent, az I understand, whoo iz a foraner, and he loox az if a littel good Barcshire befe wood doo him no harm.”

The staishon-maaster had not finnisht hiz speche befoer we wer aul hacening in the direcshon ov the fire. The rode topt a lo hil, and dhare wauz a grate wiadspred whiatwausht bilding in frunt ov us, spouting fire at evvery chinc and windo, while in the garden in frunt thre fire-en‘giansz wer vainly striving too kepe the flaimz under.

“Dhats it!” cride Hathherly, in intens exiatment. “Dhare iz the gravvel-drive, and dhare ar the rose-booshez whare I la. Dhat cecond windo iz the wun dhat I jumpt from.”

“Wel, at leest,” ced Hoamz, “u hav had yor revenj uppon them. Dhare can be no qweschon dhat it wauz yor oil-lamp which, when it wauz crusht in the pres, cet fire too the wooden waulz, dho no dout dha wer too exited in the chace aafter u too observ it at the time. Nou kepe yor ise open in this croud for yor frendz ov laast nite, dho I verry much fere dhat dha ar a good hundred mialz of bi nou.”

And Hoamz’ feerz came too be reyaliagd, for from dhat da too this no werd haz evver bene herd iather ov the butifool woomman, the cinnister German, or the moroce In’glisshman. Erly dhat morning a pezzant had met a cart contaning cevveral pepel and sum verry bulky boxez driving rappidly in the direcshon ov Redding, but dhare aul tracez ov the fugitiavz disapeerd, and even Hoamz’ in’ genuwity faild evver too discuver the leest clu az too dhare wharabouts.

The fiarmen had bene much perterbd at the strainj arainjments which dha had found within, and stil moer so bi discuvering a nuly cevverd human thum uppon a windo-cil ov the cecond floer. About suncet, houwevver, dhare efforts wer at laast suxesfool, and dha subjude the flaimz, but not befoer the roofe had faulen in, and the whole place bene rejuest too such absolute ruwin dhat, save sum twisted cillinderz and iarn piping, not a trace remaind ov the mashenery which had cost our unforchunate aqwaintans so deerly. Larj mascez ov nickel and ov tin wer discuverd stord in an out-hous, but no coinz wer too be

found, which ma hav explaind the prezsens ov dhose bulky boxez which
hav
bene aulreddy referd too.

Hou our hiadraulic en'ginere had bene convade from the garden too the
spot whare
he recuverd hiz cencez mite hav remaind forevver a mistery wer it not for
the soft moald, which toald us a verry plane tale. He had evvidently bene
carrede
doun bi too personz, wun ov whoome had remarcably smaual fete and the
uther
unnuezhuwaly larj wunz. On the whole, it wauz moast probbabel dhat the
cilent
In'glishman, beying les boald or les merderous dhan hiz companyon, had
acisted
the woomman too bare the unconshous man out ov the wa ov dain'ger.

"Wel," ced our en'ginere rufooly az we tooc our ceets too retern wuns moer
too
Lundon, "it haz bene a pritty biznes for me! I hav lost mi thum and I hav
lost a fifty-ghinny fe, and whaut hav I gaind?"

"Expereyens," ced Hoamz, laafing. "Indirectly it ma be ov vally, u no;
u hav oanly too poot it intoo werdz too gane the reputaishon ov beying
exelent
cumpany for the remainder ov yor existens."

The Advenchure ov the Nobel Batchelor

The Lord St. Cimon marrage, and its cureyous terminaishon, hav long ceest too be a subject ov interest in dhose exaulted cerkelz in which the unforchunate briadgroomme muivz. Fresh scandalz hav eclipst it, and dhare moer pecaant detailz hav draun the goscips awa from this foer-yere-oald draamaa. Az I hav rezon too beleve, houwevver, dhat the fool facts hav nevver bene reveeld too the genneral public, and az mi frend Sherloc Hoamz had a concidderabel share in clerling the matter up, I fele dhat no memwar ov him wood be complete widhout sum littel skech ov this remarcabel eppisode.

It wauz a fu weex befoer mi one marrage, juring the dase when I wauz stil sharing ruimz withe Hoamz in Baker Strete, dhat he came home from an aafternoone strole too fiand a letter on the tabel wating for him. I had remaind indoerz aul da, for the wether had taken a sudden tern too rane, withe hi autumnal windz, and the Gezale boollet which I had braut bac in wun ov mi limz az a rellic ov mi Afgan campane throbd withe dul percistens. Withe mi boddy in wun esy-chare and mi legz uppon anuther, I had surounded micelf withe a cloud ov nuespaperz until at laast, satchurated withe the nuse ov the da, I tost them aul

acide and la listles, wauching the huge crest and monnogram upon the envelope
upon the tabel and wundering lasily whoo mi frendz nobel corespondent
cood
be.

“Here iz a verry fashonabel episcel,” I remarct az he enterd. “Yor morning letterz, if I remember rite, wer from a fish-mun’gher and a tide-water.”

“Yes, mi corespondens haz certainly the charm ov varyyety,” he aancerd, smiling, “and the humbler ar uezhuwaly the moer interesting. This loox like wun
ov dhose unwelcum soashal summonsez which caul upon a man iather
too be boerd or
too li.”

He broke the cele and glaanst over the contents.

“O, cum, it ma prove too be sumthhing ov interest, aafter aul.”

“Not soashal, then?”

“No, distinctly profeshonal.”

“And from a nobel cliyent?”

“Wun ov the hiyest in In’gland.”

“Mi dere fello, I con’gratchulate u.”

“I ashure u, Wautson, widhout afectaishon, dhat the status ov mi cliyent iz
a
matter ov les moment too me dhan the interest ov hiz cace. It iz just
poscibel,

houwevver, dhat dhat aulso ma not be waunting in this nu investigaishon.
U hav
bene reding the paperz dilligently ov late, hav u not?"

"It loox like it," ced I rufooly, pointing too a huge bundel in the corner.
"I hav had nuthhing els too doo."

"It iz forchunate, for u wil perhaps be abel too poast me up. I rede
nuthhing
exept the crimminal nuse and the aggyony collum. The latter iz aulwase
instructive. But if u hav follode recent events so cloasly u must hav
red about Lord St. Cimon and hiz wedding?"

"O, yes, withe the depest interest."

"Dhat iz wel. The letter which I hoald in mi hand iz from Lord St. Cimon. I
wil rede it too u, and in retern u must tern over these paperz and let me
hav whautevver baerz uppon the matter. This iz whaut he cez:

" 'MI DERE MR. SHERLOC HOAMZ:—Lord Baqwauter telz me dhat I ma
place
impliscit reliyans uppon yor jujment and discredishon. I hav determiand,
dhaerfoer, too caul uppon u and too consult u in refferens too the verry
painfool
event which haz okerd in conecshon withe mi wedding. Mr. Lestrade, ov
Scotland Yard, iz acting aulreddy in the matter, but he ashuerz me dhat he
cese
no obgecshon too yor co-operaishon, and dhat he even thhinx dhat it mite
be ov
sum acistans. I wil caul at foer oacloc in the aafternoone, and, shood u

hav enny uther en'gaijment at dhat time, I hope dhat u wil poastpone it, az this matter iz ov parramount importans. Yorz faithfooly,

“ ‘ST. CIMON.’

“It iz dated from Grovenor Manshonz, ritten withe a qwil pen, and the nobel lord haz had the misforchune too ghet a smere ov inc uppon the outer cide ov hiz rite littel fin'gher,” remarct Hoamz az he foalded up the episcel.

“He cez foer oacloc. It iz thre nou. He wil be here in an our.”

“Then I hav just time, withe yor acistans, too ghet clere uppon the subject. Tern over dhose paperz and arainj the extracts in dhare order ov time, while I take a glaans az too whoo our cliyent iz.” He pict a red-cuvverd vollume from a line ov boox ov refferens becide the mantelpece. “Here he iz,” ced he, citting down and flattening it out uppon hiz ne. “ ‘Lord Robbert Waulcingam de Vere St. Cimon, cecond sun ov the Juke ov Balmoral.’ Hum! ‘Armz: Azhure, thre caltrops in chefe over a fes sabel. Born in 1846.’ Hese forty-wun yeerz ov age, which iz machure for marrage. Wauz Under-Cecretary for the collonese in a late administrashon. The Juke, hiz faather, wauz at wun time Cecretary for

Forane Afaerz. Dha inherrit Plantadgenet blud bi direct decent, and Chudor on the distaf cide. Haa! Wel, dhare iz nuthhing verry instructive in aul this. I thhinc dhat I must tern too u Wautson, for sumthhing moer sollid."

"I hav verry littel difficulty in fianding whaut I waunt," ced I, "for the facts ar qwite recent, and the matter struc me az remarcabel. I feerd too refer them too u, houwevver, az I nu dhat u had an inqwiry on hand and dhat u disliact the intruezhon ov uther matterz."

"O, u mene the littel problem ov the Grovenor Sqware fernichure van. Dhat iz qwite cleerd up nou—dho, indede, it wauz obveyous from the ferst. Pra ghiv me the rezults ov yor nuespaper celecshonz."

"Here iz the ferst notice which I can fiand. It iz in the personal collum ov the Morning Poast, and daits, az u ce, sum weex bac: 'A marrage haz bene arainjd,' it cez, 'and wil, if rumor iz corect, verry shortly take place, betwene Lord Robbert St. Cimon, cecond sun ov the Juke ov Balmoral, and Mis Hatty Doran, the oonly dauter ov Alowishus Doran. Esq., ov San Francisco, Cal., U.S.A.' Dhat iz aul."

"Ters and too the point," remarct Hoamz, stretching hiz long, thhin legz toowordz the fire.

"Dhare wauz a parragraaf amplifiying this in wun ov the sociyety paperz ov the same weke. Aa, here it iz: 'Dhare wil soone be a caul for protecshon in the marrage market, for the prezsent fre-trade principel apeerz too tel hevvely against

our home product. Wun bi wun the mannaijment ov the nobel housez ov
Grate

Brittane iz paacing intoo the handz ov our fare cuzsinz from across the
Atlantic.

An important adishon haz bene made juring the laast weke too the list ov
the

prisez which hav bene boern awa bi these charming invaderz. Lord St.
Cimon,

whoo haz shone himcelf for over twenty yeeرز prooffe against the littel
godz

arrose, haz nou deffiniatly anounst hiz aproching marrage withe Mis Hatty
Doran, the fascinating dauter ov a Californyaa milleyonare. Mis Doran,

whoose

graisfool figgure and striking face atracted much atenshon at the Westbury
Hous festivvites, iz an oonly chiald, and it iz currently repoerted dhat her
doury wil run too concidderably over the cix figguerz, withe expectancese
for the

fuchure. Az it iz an open ceecret dhat the Juke ov Balmoral haz bene
compeld too

cel hiz picchuerz within the laast fu yeeرز, and az Lord St. Cimon haz no
propperty ov hiz one save the smaule estate ov Berchmoor, it iz obveyous
dhat the

Californyan ares iz not the oonly ganer bi an aliyans which wil enabel her
too make the esy and common traansishon from a Republican lady too a

Brittish

peres.' "

"Ennithhing els?" aasct Hoamz, yauning.

"O, yes; plenty. Then dhare iz anuther note in the Morning Poast too sa
dhat

the marrage wood be an absoluetly qwiyet wun, dhat it wood be at St.
Jorgez, Hanover Sqware, dhat oonly haaf a duzsen intimate frendz wood
be

invited, and dhat the party wood retern too the fernisht hous at Lancaster Gate which haz bene taken bi Mr. Alowishus Doran. Too dase later—dhat iz, on Wednzda laast—dhare iz a kert anounsment dhat the wedding had taken place, and dhat the hunnimoone wood be paast at Lord Baqwauterz place, nere Peterzfeeld. Dhose ar aul the noticez which apeerd befoer the disaperans ov the bride.”

“Befoer the whaut?” aasct Hoamz withe a start.

“The vannishing ov the lady.”

“When did she vannish, then?”

“At the wedding brecfast.”

“Indede. This iz moer interesting dhan it prommiast too be; qwite dramattic, in fact.”

“Yes; it struc me az beying a littel out ov the common.”

“Dha often vannish befoer the cerremony, and ocaizhonaly juring the hunnimoone; but I canot caul too miand ennithhing qwite so prompt az this. Pra let me hav the detailz.”

“I worn u dhat dha ar verry incomplete.”

“Perhaps we ma make them les so.”

“Such az dha ar, dha ar cet foerth in a cin’ghel artikel ov a morning paper ov yesterda, which I wil rede too u. It iz hedded, ‘Cin’gular Occurrens at a Fashionabel Wedding’:

“ ‘The fammily ov Lord Robbert St. Cimon haz bene throne intoo the gratest consternaishon bi the strainj and painfool eppisoadz which hav taken place in conecshon withe hiz wedding. The cerremony, az shortly anounst in the paperz ov yesterda, okerd on the preveyous morning; but it iz oanly nou dhat it haz bene poscibel too confirm the strainj rumorz which hav bene so percistently floting about. In spite ov the atempts ov the frendz too hush the matter up, so much public atenshon haz nou bene draun too it dhat no good perpoce can be cervd bi afecting too disregard whaut iz a common subject for conversaishon.

“ ‘The cerremony, which wauz performd at St. Jorgez, Hanover Sqware, wauz a verry qwiyet wun, no wun beying prezsent save the faather ov the bride, Mr. Alowishus Doran, the Dutches ov Balmoral, Lord Baqwauter, Lord Uestace and Lady Claraa St. Cimon (the yun’gher bruther and cister ov the briadgroome), and Lady Aleeshaa Whittington. The whole party proceded aafterwordz too the hous ov Mr. Alowishus Doran, at Lancaster Gate, whare brecfast had bene prepaerd. It apeerz dhat sum littel trubbel wauz cauzd bi a woomman, whoose name haz not bene ascertaind,

whoo endeavored too foers her wa intoo the hous aafter the bridal party, aledging dhat she had sum clame uppon Lord St. Cimon. It wauz oonly aafter a painfool and prolongd cene dhat she wauz eected bi the butler and the footman.

The bride, whoo had forchunaitly enterd the hous befoer this unplezzant interupshon, had sat doun too brefast withe the rest, when she complained ov a

sudden indisposishon and retiard too her roome. Her prolongd abcens havving

cauzd sum comment, her faather follode her, but lernd from her made dhat she had oonly cum up too her chaimber for an instant, caut up an ulster and

bonnet, and hurrede doun too the passage. Wun ov the footmen declaerd dhat he

had cene a lady leve the hous dhus aparreld, but had refuezd too credit dhat

it wauz hiz mistres, beleving her too be withe the cumpany. On ascertainig dhat

hiz dauter had disapeerd, Mr. Alowishus Doran, in conjuncshon withe the briadgroom, instantly poot themcelvz in comunicaishon withe the polece, and verry

energetic inqwires ar beying made, which wil probbably rezult in a spedy clering up ov this verry cin'gular biznes. Up too a late our laast nite, houwevver, nuthhing had traanspiard az too the wharabouts ov the miscing lady.

Dhare ar rumorz ov foul pla in the matter, and it iz ced dhat the polece hav cauzd the arest ov the woomman whoo had cauzd the oridginal disterbans, in

the belefe dhat, from gelloucy or sum uther motive, she ma hav bene concernd in the strainj disaperans ov the bride.' "

"And iz dhat aul?"

“Oanly wun littel item in anuther ov the morning paperz, but it iz a sugestive wun.”

“And it iz—”

“Dhat Mis Floeraa Millar, the lady whoo had cauzd the disterbans, haz acchuwaly bene arested. It apeerz dhat she wauz formerly a dansuuz at the Alegro, and dhat she haz none the briadgroome for sum yeerz. Dhare ar no ferther particularz, and the whole cace iz in yor handz nou—so far az it haz bene cet foerth in the public pres.”

“And an exedingly interesting cace it apeerz too be. I wood not hav mist it for werldz. But dhare iz a ring at the bel, Wautson, and az the cloc maix it a fu minnuets aafter foer, I hav no dout dhat this wil prove too be our nobel cliyent. Doo not dreame ov gowing, Wautson, for I verry much prefer havving a witnes, if oanly az a chec too mi one memmory.”

“Lord Robbert St. Cimon,” anounst our page-boi, throwing open the doer. A gentelman enterd, withe a plezzant, culchuerd face, hi-noazd and pale, withe sumthhing perhaps ov petchulans about the mouth, and withe the stedly, wel-opens i ov a man whoose plezzant lot it had evver bene too comaand and too be obade. Hiz manner wauz brisc, and yet hiz genneral aperans gave an unju impreshon ov age, for he had a slite forword stoope and a littel bend ov the nese az he wauct. Hiz hare, too, az he swept of hiz verry kerly-brimd hat,

wauz grizseld round the edgez and thhin uppon the top. Az too hiz dres, it wauz

caerfool too the verj ov foppishnes, withe hi collar, blac froc-cote, white waistcote, yello gluvz, patent-lether shoose, and lite-cullord gaterz. He advaanst sloly intoo the roome, terning hiz hed from left too rite, and swinging in hiz rite hand the cord which held hiz goalden iaglaacez.

“Good-da, Lord St. Cimon,” ced Hoamz, rising and bouwing. “Pra take the baasket-chare. This iz mi frend and colleghe, Dr. Wautson. Drau up a littel too the fire, and we wil tauc this matter over.”

“A moast painfool matter too me, az u can moast reddily imadgine, Mr. Hoamz. I

hav bene cut too the qwic. I understand dhat u hav aulreddy mannaijd cevveral

dellicate cacez ov this sort, cer, dho I prezhume dhat dha wer hardly from the same claas ov sociyety.”

“No, I am decending.”

“I beg pardon.”

“Mi laast cliyent ov the sort wauz a king.”

“O, reyaly! I had no ideyaa. And which king?”

“The King ov Scandinaveyaa.”

“Whaut! Had he lost hiz wife?”

“U can understand,” ced Hoamz swaavly, “dhat I extend too the afaerz ov mi

uther cliyents the same ceecrecy which I prommice too u in yorz.”

“Ov coers! Verry rite! verry rite! Ime shure I beg pardon. Az too mi one cace, I am reddy too ghiv u enny informaishon which ma acist u in forming an opinyon.”

“Thanc u. I hav aulreddy lernd aul dhat iz in the public prints, nuthhing moer. I prezume dhat I ma take it az corect—this artikel, for exaampel, az too the disaperans ov the bride.”

Lord St. Cimon glaanst over it. “Yes, it iz corect, az far az it gose.”

“But it needz a grate dele ov suplementing befoer enniwun cood offer an opinyon. I thhinc dhat I ma arive at mi facts moast directly bi qweschoning u.”

“Pra doo so.”

“When did u ferst mete Mis Hatty Doran?”

“In San Francisco, a yere ago.”

“U wer travveling in the Staits?”

“Yes.”

“Did u becum en‘gaijd then?”

“No.”

“But u wer on a frendly footting?”

“I wauz amuezd bi her sociyety, and she cood ce dhat I wauz amuezd.”

“Her faather iz verry rich?”

“He iz ced too be the rithest man on the Paciffic slope.”

“And hou did he make hiz munny?”

“In mining. He had nuthhing a fu yeerz ago. Then he struc goald, invested it, and came up bi leaps and boundz.”

“Nou, whaut iz yor one impreshon az too the yung ladese—yor wiafs carracter?”

The nobelman swung hiz glaacez a littel faaster and staerd doun intoo the fire.

“U ce, Mr. Hoamz,” ced he, “mi wife wauz twenty befoer her faather became a rich man. Juring dhat time she ran fre in a mining camp and waunderd throo woodz or mountainz, so dhat her ejucaishon haz cum from Nachure raather dhan from the scuilmaaster. She iz whaut we caul in In’gland a tomboi, withe a strong nachure, wiald and fre, unfetterd bi enny sort ov tradishonz. She iz impetchuwous—volcannic, I wauz about too sa. She iz swift in making up her miand and feerles in carreying out her rezolueshonz. On the uther hand, I wood not hav ghivven her the name which I hav the onnor too bare”—he gave a littel staitly cof—“had I not thaut her too be at bottom a nobel woomman. I beleve dhat she iz capabel ov herowic celf-sacrifice and dhat ennithhing disonnorabel wood be

repugnant too her.”

“Hav u her fotograaf?”

“I braut this withe me.” He opend a locket and shode us the fool face ov a verry luvly woomman. It wauz not a fotograaf but an ivory minnichure, and the

artist had braut out the fool efect ov the lustrous blac hare, the larj darc ise, and the exqwizsite mouth. Hoamz gaizd long and earnestly at it. Then

he cloazd the locket and handed it bac too Lord St. Cimon.

“The yung lady came too Lundon, then, and u renude yor aqwaintans?”

“Yes, her faather braut her over for this laast Lundon cezon. I met her cevveral tiamz, became en’gaijd too her, and hav nou marrede her.”

“She braut, I understand, a concidderabel doury?”

“A fare doury. Not moer dhan iz uezhuwal in mi fammily.”

“And this, ov coers, remainz too u, cins the marrage iz a fate accomply?”

“I reyaly hav made no inqwirese on the subgect.”

“Verry natchuraly not. Did u ce Mis Doran on the da befoer the wedding?”

“Yes.”

“Wauz she in good spirrits?”

“Nevver better. She kept tauking ov whaut we shood doo in our fuchure liavz.”

“Indede! Dhat iz verry interesting. And on the morning ov the wedding?”

“She wauz az brite az poscibel—at leest until aafter the cerremony.”

“And did u observ enny chainj in her then?”

“Wel, too tel the trueth, I sau then the ferst cianz dhat I had evver cene dhat her temper wauz just a littel sharp. The incident houwevver, wauz too trivveyal too relate and can hav no poscibel baring uppon the cace.”

“Pra let us hav it, for aul dhat.”

“O, it iz chialdish. She dropt her booca az we went toowordz the vestry. She wauz paacing the frunt pu at the time, and it fel over intoo the pu. Dhare wauz a moments dela, but the gentelman in the pu handed it up too her agane, and it did not apere too be the wers for the faul. Yet when I spoke too her ov the matter, she aancerd me abruptly; and in the carrage, on our wa home, she ceemd abcerdly adgitated over this triafling cauz.”

“Indede! U sa dhat dhare wauz a gentelman in the pu. Sum ov the general public wer prezsent, then?”

“O, yes. It iz imposcibel too exclude them when the cherch iz open.”

“This gentelman wauz not wun ov yor wiafs frendz?”

“No, no; I caul him a gentelman bi kertecy, but he wauz qwite a common-looking person. I hardly notiast hiz aperans. But reyaly I thhinc dhat we ar waundering raather far from the point.”

"Lady St. Cimon, then, reternd from the wedding in a les cheerfool frame ov miand dhan she had gon too it. Whaut did she doo on re-entering her faatherz hous?"

"I sau her in conversaishon withe her made."

"And whoo iz her made?"

"Alicce iz her name. She iz an Amerrican and came from Californyaa withe her."

"A confidenshal cervant?"

"A littel too much so. It ceemd too me dhat her mistres aloud her too take grate libbertese. Stil, ov coers, in Amerricaa dha looc uppon these thhingz in a different wa."

"Hou long did she speke too this Alicce?"

"O, a fu minnuets. I had sumthhing els too thhinc ov."

"U did not overhere whaut dha ced?"

"Lady St. Cimon ced sumthhing about 'jumping a clame.' She wauz acustomd too use slang ov the kiand. I hav no ideyaa whaut she ment."

"Amerrican slang iz verry exprescive sumtiamz. And whaut did yor wife doo when she finnisht speking too her made?"

“She wauct intoo the brecfast-roome.”

“On yor arm?”

“No, alone. She wauz verry independent in littel matterz like dhat. Then, aafter we had sat doun for ten minnuets or so, she rose hurreedly, muttered sum werdz ov apollogy, and left the roome. She nevver came bac.”

“But this made, Allice, az I understand, deposez dhat she went too her roome, cuvverd her briadz dres withe a long ulster, poot on a bonnet, and went out.”

“Qwite so. And she wauz aafterwordz cene wauking intoo Hide Parc in cumpany withe Floeraa Millar, a woomman whoo iz nou in custody, and whoo had aulreddy made a disterbans at Mr. Doranz hous dhat morning.”

“Aa, yes. I shoold like a fu particcularz az too this yung lady, and yor relaishonz too her.”

Lord St. Cimon shrugd hiz shoalderz and raizd hiz iabrouz. “We hav bene on a frendly footting for sum yeerz—I ma sa on a verry frendly footting. She uest too be at the Alegro. I hav not treted her un’gennerously, and she had no just cauz ov complaint against me, but u no whaut wimmen ar, Mr. Hoamz. Floeraa wauz a dere littel thhing, but exedingly hot-hedded and devotedly atacht too me. She rote me dredfool letterz when she herd dhat I wauz about

too be marrede, and, too tel the trueth, the rezon whi I had the marrage
celebrated so qwiyetly wauz dhat I feerd lest dhare mite be a scandal in
the
cherch. She came too Mr. Doranz doer just aafter we reternd, and she
endevvord too poosh her wa in, uttering verry abucive expreshonz
toowordz mi
wife, and even threttening her, but I had foercene the pocibillity ov
sumthhing
ov the sort, and I had too polece fellose dhare in private cloadhz, whoo
soone
poosht her out agane. She wauz qwiyet when she sau dhat dhare wauz no
good in
making a rou.”

“Did yor wife here aul this?”

“No, thanc goodnes, she did not.”

“And she wauz cene wauking withe this verry woomman aafterwordz?”

“Yes. Dhat iz whaut Mr. Lestrade, ov Scotland Yard, loox uppon az so
cereyous. It
iz thaut dhat Floeraa decoid mi wife out and lade sum terribel trap for her.”

“Wel, it iz a poscibel suposishon.”

“U thhinc so, too?”

“I did not sa a probbabel wun. But u doo not yorcelf looc uppon this az
liacly?”

“I doo not thhinc Floeraa wood hert a fli.”

“Stil, gelloucy iz a strainj traansformer ov carracterz. Pra whaut iz yor one

theyory az too whaut tooc place?"

"Wel, reyal, I came too ceke a theyory, not too propound wun. I hav ghivven u aul the facts. Cins u aasc me, houwevver, I ma sa dhat it haz okerd too me az poscibel dhat the exiatment ov this afare, the conshousnes dhat she had made so imens a soashal stride, had the efect ov causing sum littel nervous disterbans in mi wife."

"In short, dhat she had becum suddenly derainjd?"

"Wel, reyal, when I concidder dhat she haz ternd her bac—I wil not sa uppon me, but uppon so much dhat menny hav aspiard too widhout suxes—I can hardly explane it in enny uther fashon."

"Wel, certainly dhat iz aulso a concevabel hipothhecis," ced Hoamz, smiling.

"And nou, Lord St. Cimon, I thhinc dhat I hav neerly aul mi dataa. Ma I aasc whether u wer ceted at the brecfast-tabel so dhat u cood ce out ov the windo?"

"We cood ce the uther cide ov the rode and the Parc."

"Qwite so. Then I doo not thhinc dhat I nede too detane u lon'gher. I shal comunicate withe u."

"Shood u be forchunate enuf too solv this problem," ced our cliyent, rising.

"I hav solvd it."

“A? Whaut wauz dhat?”

“I sa dhat I hav solvd it.”

“Whare, then, iz mi wife?”

“Dhat iz a detale which I shal spedily supli.”

Lord St. Cimon shooc hiz hed. “I am afrade dhat it wil take wiser hedz dhan yorz or mine,” he remarct, and bouwing in a staitly, oald-fashond manner he departed.

“It iz verry good ov Lord St. Cimon too onnor mi hed bi pooting it on a levvel withe hiz one,” ced Sherloc Hoamz, laafing. “I thhinc dhat I shal hav a whisky and sodaa and a cigar aafter aul this cros-qweschoning. I had formd mi concluezhonz az too the cace befoer our cliyent came intoo the roome.”

“Mi dere Hoamz!”

“I hav noats ov cevveral cimmilar cacez, dho nun, az I remarct befoer, which wer qwite az prompt. Mi whole examinaishon cervd too tern mi con’gecchure intoo a certainty. Circumstaanshal evvidens iz ocaizhonaly verry convincing, az when u fiand a trout in the milc, too qwote Thorose exaampel.”

“But I hav herd aul dhat u hav herd.”

“Without, houwevver, the nollej ov pre-existing cacez which cervz me so wel.

Dhare wauz a parrallel instans in Aberdene sum yeerz bac, and sumthhing on verry much the same lianz at Munic the yere aafter the Franco-Prushan Wor. It iz wun ov these cacez—but, hullo, here iz Lestrade! Good-aafternoone, Lestrade! U wil fiand an extraa tumbler uppon the ciadboerd, and dhare ar cigarz in the box.”

The ofishal detective wauz atiard in a pe-jacket and cravat, which gave him a decidedly nautical aperans, and he carrede a blac canvas bag in hiz hand. Withe a short greting he ceted himcelf and lit the cigar which had bene offerd too him.

“Whauts up, then?” aasct Hoamz withe a twinkel in hiz i. “U looc disattisfide.”

“And I fele disattisfide. It iz this infernal St. Cimon marrage cace. I can make niather hed nor tale ov the biznes.”

“Reyaly! U cerprise me.”

“Whoo evver herd ov such a mixt afare? Evvery clu ceemz too slip throo mi fin’gherz. I hav bene at werc uppon it aul da.”

“And verry wet it ceemz too hav made u,” ced Hoamz laying hiz hand uppon the arm ov the pe-jacket.

“Yes, I hav bene dragghing the Serpentine.”

“In hevvenz name, whaut for?”

"In cerch ov the boddy ov Lady St. Cimon."

Sherloc Hoamz leend bac in hiz chare and laaft hartily.

"Hav u dragd the bacin ov Trafalgar Sqware fountane?" he aasct.

"Whi? Whaut doo u mene?"

"Becauz u hav just az good a chaans ov fianding this lady in the wun az in the uther."

Lestrade shot an an'gry glaans at mi companyon. "I supose u no aul about it," he snarld.

"Wel, I hav oonly just herd the facts, but mi miand iz made up."

"O, indede! Then u thhinc dhat the Serpentine plase no part in the matter?"

"I thhinc it verry unliacly."

"Then perhaps u wil kiandly explane hou it iz dhat we found this in it?"

He

opend hiz bag az he spoke, and tumbeld ontoo the floer a wedding-dres ov wauterd cilc, a pare ov white sattin shoose and a briadz reeth and vale, aul discullord and soact in wauter. "Dhare," ced he, pooting a nu wedding-ring

uppon the top ov the pile. "Dhare iz a littel nut for u too crac, Maaster Hoamz."

"O, indede!" ced mi frend, blowing blu ringz intoo the are. "U dragd them from the Serpentine?"

“No. Dha wer found floting nere the margin bi a parc-keper. Dha hav bene identifide az her cloadhz, and it ceemd too me dhat if the cloadhz wer dhare the boddy wood not be far of.”

“Bi the same brilleyant rezoning, evvery manz boddy iz too be found in the naborhood ov hiz wordrobe. And pra whaut did u hope too arive at throo this?”

“At sum evvidens implicating Floeraa Millar in the disaperans.”

“I am afrade dhat u wil fiand it difficult.”

“Ar u, indede, nou?” cride Lestrade withe sum bitternes. “I am afrade, Hoamz, dhat u ar not verry practical withe yor deducshonz and yor inferencez. U hav made too blunderz in az menny minnuets. This dres duz implicate Mis Floeraa Millar.”

“And hou?”

“In the dres iz a pocket. In the pocket iz a card-cace. In the card-cace iz a note. And here iz the verry note.” He slapt it doun uppon the tabel in frunt ov him. “Liscen too this: ‘U wil ce me when aul iz reddy. Cum at wuns. F. H. M.’ Nou mi ththeyory aul along haz bene dhat Lady St. Cimon wauz decoid awa bi Floeraa Millar, and dhat she, withe confedderaits, no dout, wauz responcibel for her disaperans. Here, ciand withe her inishalz, iz the verry note which wauz no dout qwiyetly slipt intoo her hand at the doer and which luerd her within dhare reche.”

"Verry good, Lestrade," ced Hoamz, laafing. "U reyalz ar verry fine indede. Let me ce it." He tooc up the paper in a listles wa, but hiz atenshon instantly became rivveted, and he gave a littel cri ov satisfacshon. "This iz indede important," ced he.

"Haa! u fiand it so?"

"Extreemly so. I con'gratchulate u wormly."

Lestrade rose in hiz triyumf and bent hiz hed too looc. "Whi," he shreect, "yor loocking at the rong cide!"

"On the contrary, this iz the rite cide."

"The rite cide? Yor mad! Here iz the note ritten in pencil over here."

"And over here iz whaut apeerz too be the fragment ov a hotel bil, which interests me deeply."

"Dhaerz nuthhing in it. I looct at it befoer," ced Lestrade. "'Oct. 4th, ruimz 8s., brefast 2s. 6d., coctale 1s., lunch 2s. 6d., glaas sherry, 8d.' I ce nuthhing in dhat."

"Verry liacly not. It iz moast important, aul the same. Az too the note, it iz important aulso, or at leest the inishalz ar, so I con'gratchulate u agane."

"Ive waisted time enuf," ced Lestrade, rising. "I beleve in hard werc and not in citting bi the fire spinning fine ththeyorese. Good-da, Mr. Hoamz, and we shal ce which ghets too the bottom ov the matter ferst." He gatherd up the garments, thrust them intoo the bag, and made for the doer.

"Just wun hint too u, Lestrade," drauld Hoamz befoer hiz rival vannisht; "I wil tel u the tru solueshon ov the matter. Lady St. Cimon iz a mith. Dhare

iz not, and dhare nevvver haz bene, enny such person.”

Lestrade looct sadly at mi companyon. Then he ternd too me, tapt hiz foerhed thre tiamz, shooc hiz hed sollemly, and hurrede awa.

He had hardly shut the doer behiand him when Hoamz rose too poot on hiz overcote.

“Dhare iz sumthhing in whaut the fello cez about outdoer werc,” he remarct,

“so I thhinc, Wautson, dhat I must leve u too yor paperz for a littel.”

It wauz aafter five oacloc when Sherloc Hoamz left me, but I had no time too be

loanly, for within an our dhare ariavd a confecshonerz man withe a verry larj

flat box. This he unpact withe the help ov a ueth whoome he had braut withe

him, and prezsently, too mi verry grate astonishment, a qwite epicureyan littel

coald supper began too be lade out uppon our humbel lodging-hous mahoggany. Dhare

wer a cuppel ov brace ov coald woodcoc, a fezzant, a paata de fwaa graa pi withe a groope ov ainshent and cobwebby bottelz. Havving lade out aul these

lucshurese, mi too vizsitorz vannisht awa, like the geenyi ov the Arabeyan Niats,

withe no explanaishon save dhat the thhingz had bene pade for and wer orderd too this adres.

Just befoer nine oacloc Sherloc Hoamz stept briscly intoo the roome. Hiz fechuerz wer graivly cet, but dhare wauz a lite in hiz i which made me thhinc

dhat he had not bene disapointed in hiz concluezhonz.

“Dha hav lade the supper, then,” he ced, rubbing hiz handz.

“U ceme too expect cumpany. Dha hav lade for five.”

“Yes, I fancy we ma hav sum cumpany dropping in,” ced he. “I am
cerpriazd
dhat Lord St. Cimon haz not aulreddy ariavd. Haa! I fancy dhat I here hiz
step
nou uppon the staerz.”

It wauz indede our vizsitor ov the aafternoone whoo came busling in,
dan’gling hiz
glaacez moer viggorously dhan evver, and withe a verry perterbd
expreshon uppon
hiz aristocrattic fechuerz.

“Mi mescen’ger reecht u, then?” aasct Hoamz.

“Yes, and I confes dhat the contents starteld me beyond mezhure. Hav u
good
authority for whaut u sa?”

“The best poscibel.”

Lord St. Cimon sanc intoo a chare and paast hiz hand over hiz foerhed.

“Whaut wil the Juke sa,” he mermerd, “when he heerz dhat wun ov the
fammily
haz bene subjected too such humileyaishon?”

“It iz the purest axident. I canot alou dhat dhare iz enny humileyaishon.”

“Aa, u looc on these thhingz from anuther standpoint.”

"I fale too ce dhat enniwun iz too blame. I can hardly ce hou the lady cood hav acted uthewise, dho her abrupt method ov doowing it wauz undoutedly too be regretted. Havving no muther, she had no wun too advise her at such a cricis."

"It wauz a slite, cer, a public slite," ced Lord St. Cimon, tapping hiz fin'gherz uppon the tabel.

"U must make alouwans for this poor gherl, plaist in so unprecedented a posishon."

"I wil make no alouwans. I am verry an'gry indede, and I hav bene shaimfooly uezd."

"I thhinc dhat I herd a ring," ced Hoamz. "Yes, dhare ar steps on the landing. If I canot perswade u too take a leenyent vu ov the matter, Lord St. Cimon, I hav braut an advocate here whoo ma be moer suxesfool." He opend the doer and usherd in a lady and gentelman. "Lord St. Cimon," ced he "alou me too introjuce u too Mr. and Mrs. Fraancis Ha Moalton. The lady, I thhinc, u hav aulreddy met."

At the cite ov these nucummerz our cliyent had sprung from hiz cete and stood verry erect, withe hiz ise caast down and hiz hand thrust intoo the brest ov hiz froc-cote, a picchure ov ofended dignity. The lady had taken a qwic step forword and had held out her hand too him, but he stil refuezd too rase hiz ise. It wauz az wel for hiz rezolueshon, perhaps, for her pleding face wauz wun which it wauz hard too resist.

“Yor an’gry, Robbert,” ced she. “Wel, I ghes u hav evvery cauz too be.”

“Pra make no apollogy too me,” ced Lord St. Cimon bitterly.

“O, yes, I no dhat I hav treted u reyal bad and dhat I shood hav spoken too u befoer I went; but I wauz kiand ov ratteld, and from the time when I sau

Franc here agane I just didnt no whaut I wauz doowing or saying. I oanly wunder I didnt faul doun and doo a faint rite dhare befoer the aultar.”

“Perhaps, Mrs. Moalton, u wood like mi frend and me too leve the roome while u explane this matter?”

“If I ma ghiv an opinyon,” remarct the strainj gentelman, “weve had just a littel too much ceecrecy over this biznes aulreddy. For mi part, I shood like aul Urope and Amerricaa too here the riats ov it.” He wauz a smaull, wiry, sunbernt man, clene-shaven, withe a sharp face and alert manner.

“Then Ile tel our stoery rite awa,” ced the lady. “Franc here and I met in ’84, in McQwiarz camp, nere the Rockese, whare Paa wauz werking a clame. We wer en’gaijd too eche uther, Franc and I; but then wun da faather struc a rich pocket and made a pile, while poor Franc here had a clame dhat peterd out and came too nuthhing. The ritche Paa gru the poorer wauz Franc; so at laast Paa woodnt here ov our en’gaijment laasting enny lon’gher, and he tooc me awa too Frisco. Franc woodnt thro up hiz hand, dho; so he follode me dhare, and he sau me widhout Paa nowing ennithhing about it. It wood oanly hav made him mad

too no, so we just fixt it aul up for ourcelvz. Franc ced dhat he wood go and make hiz pile, too, and nevver cum bac too clame me until he had az much az

Paa. So then I prommiast too wate for him too the end ov time and plejd micelf

not too marry enniwun els while he livd. 'Whi shoodnt we be marrede rite awa, then,' ced he, 'and then I wil fele shure ov u; and I woant clame too be yor huzband until I cum bac?' Wel, we tauct it over, and he had fixt it aul up so niasly, withe a clergiman aul reddy in wating, dhat we just did it

rite dhare; and then Franc went of too ceke hiz forchune, and I went bac too Paa.

"The next I herd ov Franc wauz dhat he wauz in Montannaa, and then he went

prospecting in Arizonaa, and then I herd ov him from Nu Mexico. Aafter dhat

came a long nuespaper stoery about hou a minerz' camp had bene atact bi Apatchy Injanz, and dhare wauz mi Franx name among the kild. I fainted ded

awa, and I wauz verry cic for munths aafter. Paa thaut I had a decline and tooc

me too haaf the doctorz in Frisco. Not a werd ov nuse came for a yere and moer,

so dhat I nevver doutd dhat Franc wauz reyaly ded. Then Lord St. Cimon came too

Frisco, and we came too Lundon, and a marrage wauz arainjd, and Paa wauz verry

pleezd, but I felt aul the time dhat no man on this erth wood evver take the place in mi hart dhat had bene ghivven too mi poor Franc.

"Stil, if I had marrede Lord St. Cimon, ov coers Ide hav dun mi juty bi him. We caant comaand our luv, but we can our acshonz. I went too the aultar

withe him withe the intenshon too make him just az good a wife az it wauz
in me too

be. But u ma imadgine whaut I felt when, just az I came too the aultar railz,
I

glaanst bac and sau Franc standing and loocking at me out ov the ferst pu. I
thaut it wauz hiz goast at ferst; but when I looct agane dhare he wauz stil,
withe a kiand ov qweschon in hiz ise, az if too aasc me whether I wer glad
or

sory too ce him. I wunder I didnt drop. I no dhat evverithhing wauz
terning

round, and the werdz ov the clergiman wer just like the buz ov a be in mi
ere. I didnt no whaut too doo. Shood I stop the cervice and make a cene in
the cherch? I glaanst at him agane, and he ceemd too no whaut I wauz
thhinking,

for he raizd hiz fin'gher too hiz lips too tel me too be stil. Then I sau him
scribbel on a pece ov paper, and I nu dhat he wauz riting me a note. Az I
paast hiz pu on the wa out I dropt mi booca over too him, and he slipt
the note intoo mi hand when he reternd me the flouwerz. It wauz oonly a
line

aasking me too join him when he made the cine too me too doo so. Ov
coers I nevver

douted for a moment dhat mi ferst juty wauz nou too him, and I
determiand too doo
just whautevver he mite direct.

“When I got bac I toald mi made, whoo had none him in Californyaa, and
had

aulwase bene hiz frend. I orderd her too sa nuthhing, but too ghet a fu
thhingz

pact and mi ulster reddy. I no I aut too hav spoken too Lord St. Cimon,
but it wauz dredfool hard befoer hiz muther and aul dhose grate pepel. I
just

made up mi miand too run awa and explane aafterwordz. I hadnt bene at
the tabel

ten minnuets befoer I sau Franc out ov the windo at the uther cide ov the rode.
He becond too me and then began wauking intoo the Parc. I slipt out, poot on mi thhingz, and follode him. Sum woomman came tauking sumthhing or uther about Lord St. Cimon too me—ceemd too me from the littel I herd az if he had a littel ceecret ov hiz one befoer marrage aulso—but I mannijd too ghet awa from her and soone overtooc Franc. We got intoo a cab tooggether, and awa we drove too sum lodgingz he had taken in Gordon Sqware, and dhat wauz mi tru wedding aafter aul dhose yeerz ov wating. Franc had bene a prizzoner amung the Apatchese, had escaipt, came on too Frisco, found dhat I had ghivven him up for ded and had gon too In'gland, follode me dhare, and had cum uppon me at laast on the verry morning ov mi cecond wedding.”

“I sau it in a paper,” explaind the Amerrican. “It gave the name and the cherch but not whare the lady livd.”

“Then we had a tauc az too whaut we shood doo, and Franc wauz aul for openes, but I wauz so ashaimd ov it aul dhat I felt az if I shood like too vannish awa and nevver ce enny ov them agane—just cending a line too Paa, perhaps, too sho him dhat I wauz alive. It wauz afool too me too thhinc ov aul dhose lordz and ladese

citting round dhat brecfast-tabel and wating for me too cum bac. So Franc
tooc mi wedding-cloadhz and thhingz and made a bundel ov them, so dhat
I shood
not be traist, and dropt them awa sumwhare whare no wun cood fiand
them. It
iz liacly dhat we shood hav gon on too Parris too-moro, oanly dhat this
good
gentelman, Mr. Hoamz, came round too us this evening, dho hou he found
us iz
moer dhan I can thhinc, and he shode us verry cleerly and kiandly dhat I
wauz
rong and dhat Franc wauz rite, and dhat we shood be pooting ourcelvz in
the
rong if we wer so ceecret. Then he offerd too ghiv us a chaans ov tauking
too
Lord St. Cimon alone, and so we came rite awa round too hiz ruimz at
wuns.
Nou, Robbert, u hav herd it aul, and I am verry sory if I hav ghivven u
pane, and I hope dhat u doo not thhinc verry meenly ov me.”

Lord St. Cimon had bi no meenz relaxt hiz ridgid attichude, but had liscend
withe a frouning brou and a comprest lip too this long narrative.

“Excuse me,” he ced, “but it iz not mi custom too discus mi moast intimate
personal afaerz in this public manner.”

“Then u woant forghiv me? U woant shake handz befoer I go?”

“O, certainly, if it wood ghiv u enny plezhure.” He poot out hiz hand and
coaldly graaspt dhat which she extended too him.

“I had hoapt,” sugested Hoamz, “dhat u wood hav joind us in a frendly
supper.”

“I thhinc dhat dhare u aasc a littel too much,” responded hiz Lordship. “I ma
be foerst too aqweyes in these recent devellopments, but I can hardly be
expected too make merry over them. I thhinc dhat withe yor permishon I
wil nou
wish u aul a verry good-nite.” He included us aul in a sweping bou and
staut out ov the roome.

“Then I trust dhat u at leest wil onnor me withe yor cumpany,” ced
Sherloc Hoamz. “It iz aulwase a joi too mete an Amerrican, Mr. Moalton,
for I am
wun ov dhose whoo beleve dhat the folly ov a monnarc and the blundering
ov a
minnister in far-gon yeerz wil not prevent our children from beying sum da
cittisenz ov the same werld-wide cuntry under a flag which shal be a
qwortering ov the Uenyon Jac withe the Starz and Striaps.”

“The cace haz bene an interesting wun,” remarct Hoamz when our
vizsitorz had
left us, “becauz it cervz too sho verry cleerly hou cimpel the explanaishon
ma
be ov an afare which at ferst cite ceemz too be aulmoast inexpliccabel.
Nuthhing
cood be moer natchural dhan the ceeqwens ov events az narated bi this
lady, and
nuthhing strain’ger dhan the rezult when vude, for instans, bi Mr. Lestrade
ov
Scotland Yard.”

“U wer not yorcelf at fault at aul, then?”

“From the first, too facts wer verry obveyous too me, the wun dhat the lady had bene qwite willing too undergo the wedding cerremony, the uthur dhat she had repented ov it within a fu minnuets ov reterning home. Obveyously sumthhing had okerd juring the morning, then, too cauz her too chainj her miand. Whaut cood dhat sumthhing be? She cood not hav spoken too enniwun when she wauz out, for she had bene in the cumpany ov the briadgroome. Had she cene sumwun, then? If she had, it must be sumwun from Amerricaa becauz she had spent so short a time in this cuntry dhat she cood hardly hav aloud enniwun too aqwire so depe an influwens over her dhat the mere cite ov him wood injuce her too chainj her planz so compleetly. U ce we hav aulreddy ariavd, bi a proces ov excluezhon, at the ideyaa dhat she mite hav cene an Amerrican. Then whoo cood this Amerrican be, and whi shood he poses so much influwens over her? It mite be a luvver; it mite be a huzband. Her yung woommanhood had, I nu, bene spent in ruf ceenz and under strainj condishonz. So far I had got befoer I evver herd Lord St. Cimonz narrative. When he toald us ov a man in a pu, ov the chainj in the briadz manner, ov so traansparent a device for obtaning a note az the dropping ov a booca, ov her rezort too her confidenshal made, and ov her verry cignifficant aluezhon too clame-jumping—which in minerz’ parlans

meenz taking poseshon ov dhat which anuther person haz a priyor clame too—the whole cichuwaishon became absolutely clere. She had gon of withe a man, and the man wauz iather a luvver or wauz a preveyous huzband—the chaancez beying in favor ov the latter.”

“And hou in the werld did u fiand them?”

“It mite hav bene difficult, but frend Lestrade held informaishon in hiz handz the vally ov which he did not himcelf no. The inishalz wer, ov coers, ov the hiyest importans, but moer vallubel stil wauz it too no dhat within a weke he had cetteld hiz bil at wun ov the moast celect Lunden hotelz.”

“Hou did u dejuce the celect?”

“Bi the celect pricez. Ate shillingz for a bed and aitpens for a glaas ov sherry pointed too wun ov the moast expencive hotelz. Dhare ar not menny in Lunden which charj at dhat rate. In the cecond wun which I vizsited in Northumberland Avvenu, I lernd bi an inspecshon ov the booc dhat Fraancis H. Moalton, an Amerrikan gentelman, had left oanly the da befoer, and on loocking over the entrese against him, I came uppon the verry itemz which I had cene in the jueplicate bil. Hiz letterz wer too be forworded too 226 Gordon Sqware; so thither I travveld, and beying forchunate enuf too fiand the luvving cuppel at home, I venchuerd too ghiv them sum paternal advice and too point out too them dhat it wood be better in evvery wa dhat dha shood make dhare posishon a

littel clerer boath too the genneral public and too Lord St. Cimon in particular.
I invited them too mete him here, and, az u ce, I made him kepe the apointment.”

“But withe no verry good rezult,” I remarct. “Hiz conduct wauz certainly not verry graishous.”

“Aa, Wautson,” ced Hoamz, smiling, “perhaps u wood not be verry graishous iather, if, aafter aul the trubbel ov woowing and wedding, u found yorcelf depriavd in an instant ov wife and ov forchune. I thhinc dhat we ma juj Lord St. Cimon verry mercifooly and thanc our starz dhat we ar nevver liacly too fiand ourcelvz in the same posishon. Drau yor chare up and hand me mi viyolin, for the oonly problem we hav stil too solv iz hou too while awa these bleke autumnal eveningz.”

“Hoamz,” ced I az I stood wun morning in our bo-windo loocking doun the strete, “here iz a madman cumming along. It ceemz raather sad dhat hiz rellatiavz shood alou him too cum out alone.”

Mi frend rose lasily from hiz armchare and stood withe hiz handz in the pockets ov hiz drescing-goun, loocking over mi shoalder. It wauz a brite, crisp Februwary morning, and the sno ov the da befoer stil la depe uppon the ground, shimmering briatly in the wintry sun. Doun the center ov Baker Strete it had bene ploud intoo a broun crumbly band bi the traffic, but at iather cide and on the heept-up edgez ov the foot-paaths it stil la az white az when it fel. The gra paivment had bene cleend and sceipt, but wauz stil dain’gerously slippery, so dhat dhare wer fuwer pascen’gerz dhan uezhual. Indede, from the direcshon ov the Metropollitan Staishon no wun wauz cumming save the cin’ghel gentelman whoose exentric conduct had draun mi atenshon.

He wauz a man ov about fifty, taul, poertly, and imposing, withe a mascive, strongly marct face and a comaanding figgure. He wauz drest in a somber yet rich stile, in blac froc-cote, shining hat, nete broun gaterz, and wel-cut perl-gra trouserz. Yet hiz acshonz wer in abcerd contraast too the dignity ov hiz dres and fechuerz, for he wauz running hard, withe ocaizhonal littel springz, such az a wery man ghivz whoo iz littel acustomd too cet enny tax uppon hiz legz. Az he ran he gerct hiz handz up and doun, waggheld hiz hed, and riadhd hiz face intoo the moast extrordinary contorshonz.

“Whaut on erth can be the matter withe him?” I aasct. “He iz loocking up at the numberz ov the housez.”

“I beleve dhat he iz cumming here,” ced Hoamz, rubbing hiz handz.

“Here?”

“Yes; I raather thhinc he iz cumming too consult me profeshonaly. I thhinc dhat I reccognise the cimptomz. Haa! did I not tel u?” Az he spoke, the man, puffing and blowing, rusht at our doer and poold at our bel until the whole hous rezounded withe the clanging.

A fu moments later he wauz in our roome, stil puffing, stil gesticculating, but withe so fixt a looc ov grefe and despere in hiz ise dhat our smialz wer ternd in an instant too horror and pittie. For a while he cood not ghet hiz werdz out, but swade hiz boddy and pluct at hiz hare like wun whoo haz bene drivven too the extreme limmits ov hiz rezon. Then, suddenly springing too hiz fete, he bete hiz hed against the waul withe such foers dhat we boath rusht uppon him and toer him awa too the center ov the roome. Sherloc Hoamz poosht him doun intoo the esy-chare and, citting beside him, patted hiz hand and chatted withe him in the esy, suithing toanz which he nu so wel hou too emploii.

“U hav cum too me too tel yor stoery, hav u not?” ced he. “U ar fateegd withe yor haist. Pra wate until u hav recuvverd yorcelf, and then

I shal be moast happy too looc intoo enny littel problem which u ma submit too me.”

The man sat for a minnute or moer withe a heving chest, fiting against hiz emoashon. Then he paast hiz hankerchefe over hiz brou, cet hiz lips tite, and ternd hiz face toowordz us.

“No dout u thhinc me mad?” ced he.

“I ce dhat u hav had sum grate trubbel,” responded Hoamz.

“God nose I hav!—a trubbel which iz enuf too uncete mi rezon, so sudden and so terribel iz it. Public disgrace I mite hav faist, auldho I am a man whoose carracter haz nevver yet boern a stane. Private aflicshon aulso iz the lot ov evvery man; but the too cumming tooghether, and in so friatfool a form, hav bene enuf too shake mi verry sole. Beciadz, it iz not I alone. The verry noablest in the land ma suffer unles sum wa be found out ov this horibel afare.”

“Pra compose yorcelf, cer,” ced Hoamz, “and let me hav a clere acount ov whoo u ar and whaut it iz dhat haz befaulen u.”

“Mi name,” aancerd our vizsitor, “iz probbably familleyar too yor eerz. I am Alexaander Hoalder, ov the banking ferm ov Hoalder & Stevenson, ov Thrednedel Strete.”

The name wauz indede wel none too us az belonging too the ceenyor partner in the cecond largest private banking concern in the Citty ov Lunden. Whaut cood hav happend, then, too bring wun ov the foermoast cittisenz ov Lunden too this moast pitteyabel paas? We wated, aul cureyoscity, until withe anuther effort he braist himcelf too tel hiz stoery.

“I fele dhat time iz ov vallu,” ced he; “dhat iz whi I hacend here when the polece inspector sugested dhat I shood ceure yor co-operaishon. I came too Baker Strete bi the Underground and hurrede from dhare on foot, for the cabz go sloly throo this sno. Dhat iz whi I wauz so out ov breth, for I am a man whoo taix verry littel exercise. I fele better nou, and I wil poot the facts befoer u az shortly and yet az cleerly az I can.

“It iz, ov coers, wel none too u dhat in a suxesfool banking biznes az much dependz uppon our beying abel too fiand remunerative investments for our fundz az uppon our increcing our conecshon and the number ov our depozsitorz. Wun ov our moast lucrative meenz ov laying out munny iz in the shape ov loanz, whare the ceurity iz unnimpechabel. We hav dun a good dele in this direcshon juring the laast fu yeerz, and dhare ar menny nobel fammilese too whoome we hav advaanst larj sumz uppon the ceurity ov dhare picchuerz, liabrarese, or plate.

“Yesterda morning I wauz ceted in mi office at the banc when a card wauz braut in too me bi wun ov the clarx. I started when I sau the name, for it

wauz dhat ov nun uther dhan—wel, perhaps even too u I had better sa no
moer
dhan dhat it wauz a name which iz a hous'hoald werd aul over the erth—
wun ov the
hiyest, noablest, moast exaulted naimz in In'gland. I wauz overwhelmd bi
the
onnor and atempted, when he enterd, too sa so, but he plunjd at wuns
intoo
biznes withe the are ov a man whoo wishez too hurry qwicly throo a
disagreyabel taasc.

“ ‘Mr. Hoalder,’ ced he, ‘I hav bene informd dhat u ar in the habbit ov
advaancing munny.’

“ ‘The ferm duz so when the cecurity iz good.’ I aancerd.

“ ‘It iz absoluetly ecenshal too me,’ ced he, ‘dhat I shood hav 50,000 at
wuns. I cood, ov coers, boro so triafling a sum ten tiamz over from mi
frendz, but I much prefer too make it a matter ov biznes and too carry out
dhat biznes micelf. In mi posishon u can reddily understand dhat it iz
unwise too place wunz celf under obligaishonz.’

“ ‘For hou long, ma I aasc, doo u waunt this sum?’ I aasct.

“ ‘Next Munda I hav a larj sum ju too me, and I shal then moast certainly
repa whaut u advaans, withe whautevver interest u thhinc it rite too charj.
But it iz verry ecenshal too me dhat the munny shood be pade at wuns.’

“ ‘I shood be happy too advaans it widhout ferther parly from mi one
private
pers,’ ced I, ‘wer it not dhat the strane wood be raather moer dhan it cood
bare. If, on the uther hand, I am too doo it in the name ov the ferm, then in
justice too mi partner I must incist dhat, even in yor cace, evvery bizneslike
precaushon shood be taken.’

“ ‘I shood much prefer too hav it so,’ ced he, rasing up a sqware, blac morocco cace which he had lade beside hiz chare. ‘U hav doutles herd ov the Berril Coronet?’

“ ‘Wun ov the moast preshous public poseshonz ov the empire,’ ced I.

“ ‘Preciasly.’ He opend the cace, and dhare, imbedded in soft, flesh-cullord velvet, la the magnifficent pece ov juwelery which he had naimd. ‘Dhare ar thherty-nine enormous berrilz,’ ced he, ‘and the price ov the goald chacing iz

incalculabel. The lowest estimate wood poot the werth ov the coronet at dubbel

the sum which I hav aasct. I am prepaerd too leve it withe u az mi cecurity.’

“I tooc the preshous cace intoo mi handz and looct in sum perplexity from it too mi ilustreyous cliyent.

“ ‘U dout its vally?’ he aasct.

“ ‘Not at aul. I oanly dout—’

“ ‘The propriyety ov mi leving it. U ma cet yor miand at rest about dhat. I shood not dreame ov doowing so wer it not absolutly certane dhat I shood be abel in foer dase too reclame it. It iz a pure matter ov form. Iz the cecurity sufishent?’

“ ‘Ampel.’

“ ‘U understand, Mr. Hoalder, dhat I am ghivving u a strong prooffe ov the confidens which I hav in u, founded uppon aul dhat I hav herd ov u. I

reli uppon u not oonly too be discrete and too refrane from aul goscip
uppon the
matter but, abuv aul, too preserv this coronet withe evvery poscibel
precaushon
becauz I nede not sa dhat a grate public scandal wood be cauzd if enny
harm
wer too befaul it. Enny injury too it wood be aulmoast az cereyous az its
complete
los, for dhare ar no berrilz in the werld too mach these, and it wood be
imposcibel too replace them. I leve it withe u, houwevver, withe evvery
confidens, and I shal caul for it in person on Munda morning.'

"Ceying dhat mi cliyent wauz ancshous too leve, I ced no moer but, caulng
for mi
casheyer, I orderd him too pa over fifty 1000 noats. When I wauz alone
wuns
moer, houwevver, withe the preshous cace liying uppon the tabel in frunt
ov me, I
cood not but thhinc withe sum misghivvingz ov the imens responcibillity
which it
entaild uppon me. Dhare cood be no dout dhat, az it wauz a nashonal
poseshon, a horibel scandal wood ensu if enny misforchune shood oker too
it. I aulreddy regretted havving evver concented too take charj ov it.
Houwevver, it
wauz too late too aulter the matter nou, so I loct it up in mi private safe and
ternd wuns moer too mi werc.

"When evening came I felt dhat it wood be an imprudens too leve so
preshous a
thhing in the office behiand me. Bankerz' saifs had bene foerst befoer nou,
and
whi shood not mine be? If so, hou terribel wood be the posishon in which I
shood fiand micelf! I determiand, dhaerfoer, dhat for the next fu dase I
wood

aulwase carry the cace baqword and forword withe me, so dhat it mite
nevver be
reyaly out ov mi reche. Withe this intenshon, I cauld a cab and drove out
too mi
hous at Strettam, carreying the juwel withe me. I did not breethe frely until
I had taken it upstaerz and loct it in the buro ov mi drescing-roome.

“And nou a werd az too mi hous’hoald, Mr. Hoamz, for I wish u too
thurroly
understand the cichuwaishon. Mi groome and mi page slepe out ov the
hous, and ma
be cet acide aultooghether. I hav thre made-cervants whoo hav bene withe
me a
number ov yeeرز and whoose absolute reliyabillity iz qwite abuv
suspishon.
Anuther, Lucy Par, the cecond wating-made, haz oonly bene in mi cervice
a fu
munths. She came withe an exelent carracter, houwevver, and haz aulwase
ghivven me
satisfacshon. She iz a verry pritty gherl and haz atracted admirerz whoo
hav
ocaizhonaly hung about the place. Dhat iz the oonly draubac which we hav
found too her, but we beleve her too be a thurroly good gherl in evvery wa.

“So much for the cervants. Mi fammily itcelf iz so smaul dhat it wil not take
me long too describe it. I am a widdower and hav an oonly sun, Arthher.
He haz
bene a disapointment too me, Mr. Hoamz—a grevous disapointment. I hav
no
dout dhat I am micelf too blame. Pepel tel me dhat I hav spoild him. Verry
liacly I hav. When mi dere wife dide I felt dhat he wauz aul I had too luv. I
cood not bare too ce the smile fade even for a moment from hiz face. I hav
nevver denide him a wish. Perhaps it wood hav bene better for boath ov us
had I

bene sterner, but I ment it for the best.

“It wauz natchuraly mi intenshon dhat he shood suxede me in mi biznes, but he wauz not ov a biznes tern. He wauz wiald, waword, and, too speke the trueth, I cood not trust him in the handling ov larj sumz ov munny. When he wauz yung he became a member ov an aristocrattic club, and dhare, havving charming mannerz, he wauz soone the intimate ov a number ov men withe long percez and expencive habbits. He lernd too pla hevvely at cardz and too sqwaunder munny on the terf, until he had agane and agane too cum too me and imploer me too ghiv him an advaans uppon hiz alouwans, dhat he mite cettel hiz dets ov onnor. He tride moer dhan wuns too brake awa from the dain’gerous cumpany which he wauz keping, but eche time the influwens ov hiz frend, Cer Jorj Bernwel, wauz enuf too drau him bac agane.

“And, indede, I cood not wunder dhat such a man az Cer Jorj Bernwel shood gane an influwens over him, for he haz freeqwently braut him too mi hous, and I hav found micelf dhat I cood hardly resist the facinaishon ov hiz manner. He iz oalder dhan Arthher, a man ov the werld too hiz fin’gher-tips, wun whoo had bene evveriwshare, cene evverithhing, a brilleyant tauker, and a man ov grate personal buty. Yet when I thhinc ov him in coald blud, far awa from the

glammor ov hiz prezsens, I am convinst from hiz cinnical speche and the looc

which I hav caut in hiz ise dhat he iz wun whoo shood be deeply distrusted.

So I thhinc, and so, too, thhinx mi littel Mary, whoo haz a woommanz qwic incite intoo carracter.

“And nou dhare iz oonly she too be descriabd. She iz mi nece; but when mi bruther dide five yearz ago and left her alone in the werld I adopted her, and

hav looct uppon her evver cins az mi dauter. She iz a sunbeme in mi hous—swete, luvving, butifool, a wunderfool mannager and houskeper, yet az

tender and qwiyet and gentel az a woomman cood be. She iz mi rite hand. I doo not

no whaut I cood doo widhout her. In oonly wun matter haz she evver gon against

mi wishez. Twice mi boi haz aasct her too marry him, for he luvz her devotedly,

but eche time she haz refuezd him. I thhinc dhat if enniwun cood hav draun him

intoo the rite paath it wood hav bene she, and dhat hiz marrage mite hav chainjd hiz whole life; but nou, alaa! it iz too late—forevver too late!

“Nou, Mr. Hoamz, u no the pepel whoo liv under mi roofe, and I shal continnu withe mi mizserabel stoery.

“When we wer taking coffy in the drauwing-roome dhat nite aafter dinner, I toald

Arthher and Mary mi expereyens, and ov the preshous trezhure which we had under

our roofe, suprescing oonly the name ov mi cliyent. Lucy Par, whoo had braut in

the coffy, had, I am shure, left the roome; but I canot sware dhat the doer wauz cloazd. Mary and Arthher wer much interested and wisht too ce the famous coronet, but I thaut it better not too disterb it.

“ ‘Whare hav u poot it?’ aasct Arthher.

“ ‘In mi one buro.’

“ ‘Wel, I hope too goodnes the hous woant be bergheld juring the nite.’ ced he.

“ ‘It iz loct up,’ I aancerd.

“ ‘O, enny oald ke wil fit dhat buro. When I wauz a yungster I hav opend it micelf withe the ke ov the box-roome cubbord.’

“ ‘He often had a wiald wa ov tauking, so dhat I thaut littel ov whaut he ced. He follode me too mi roome, houwevver, dhat nite withe a verry grave face.

“ ‘Looc here, dad,’ ced he withe hiz ise caast doun, ‘can u let me hav 200?’

“ ‘No, I canot!’ I aancerd sharply. ‘I hav bene far too gennerous withe u in munny matterz.’

“ ‘U hav bene verry kiand,’ ced he, ‘but I must hav this munny, or els I can nevver sho mi face incide the club agane.’

“ ‘And a verry good thhing, too!’ I cride.

“ ‘Yes, but u wood not hav me leve it a disonnord man,’ ced he. ‘I cood not bare the disgrace. I must rase the munny in sum wa, and if u

wil not let me hav it, then I must tri uther meenz.'

"I wauz verry an'gry, for this wauz the thherd demaand juring the munth.
'U shal
not hav a farthing from me,' I cride, on which he boud and left the roome
widhout anuther werd.

"When he wauz gon I unloct mi buro, made shure dhat mi trezhure wauz
safe,
and loct it agane. Then I started too go round the hous too ce dhat aul wauz
cecure—a juty which I uezhuwaly leve too Mary but which I thaut it wel
too
perform micelf dhat nite. Az I came down the staerz I sau Mary hercelf at
the
cide windo ov the haul, which she cloazd and faacend az I aproacht.

" 'Tel me, dad,' ced she, loocking, I thaut, a littel disterbd, 'did u
ghiv Lucy, the made, leve too go out too-nite?'

" 'Certainly not.'

" 'She came in just nou bi the bac doer. I hav no dout dhat she haz oonly
bene too the cide gate too ce sumwun, but I thhinc dhat it iz hardly safe
and
shood be stopt.'

" 'U must speke too her in the morning, or I wil if u prefer it. Ar u
shure dhat evverithhing iz faacend?'

" 'Qwite shure, dad.'

" 'Then, good-nite.' I kist her and went up too mi bedroome agane, whare I
wauz
soone aslepe.

“I am endeavoring too tel u evverithhing, Mr. Hoamz, which ma hav enny baring uppon the cace, but I beg dhat u wil qweschon me uppon enny point which I doo not make clere.”

“On the contrary, yor staitment iz cin’gularly lucid.”

“I cum too a part ov mi stoery nou in which I shood wish too be particcularly so. I am not a verry hevvy sleper, and the anxiyety in mi miand tended, no dout, too make me even les so dhan uezhuwal. About too in the morning, then, I wauz awakend bi sum sound in the hous. It had ceest are I wauz wide awake, but it had left an impreshon behiand it az dho a windo had gently cloazd sumwhare. I la liscening withe aul mi eerz. Suddenly, too mi horror, dhare wauz a distinct sound ov footsteps mooving softly in the next roome. I slipt out ov bed, aul palpitating withe fere, and peept round the corner ov mi drescing-roome doer.

“ ‘Arthher!’ I screemd, ‘u villane! u thhefe! Hou dare u tuch dhat coronet?’

“The gas wauz haaf up, az I had left it, and mi unhappy boi, drest oonly in hiz shert and trouserz, wauz standing becide the lite, hoalding the coronet in hiz handz. He apeerd too be renching at it, or bending it withe aul hiz strength. At mi cri he dropt it from hiz graasp and ternd az pale az deth. I snacht it up and exammiand it. Wun ov the goald cornerz, withe thre ov the berrilz in it,

wauz miscing.

“ ‘U blacgard!’ I shouted, beside micelf withe rage. ‘U hav destroid it! U hav disonnord me forevver! Whare ar the juwelz which u hav stolen?’

“ ‘Stolen!’ he cride.

“ ‘Yes, thhefe!’ I roerd, shaking him bi the shoalder.

“ ‘Dhare ar nun miscing. Dhare canot be enny miscing,’ ced he.

“ ‘Dhare ar thre miscing. And u no whare dha ar. Must I caul u a liyar az wel az a thhefe? Did I not ce u trying too tare of anuther pece?’

“ ‘U hav cauld me naimz enuf,’ ced he, ‘I wil not stand it enny lon’gher. I shal not sa anuther werd about this biznes, cins u hav chosen too insult me. I wil leve yor hous in the morning and make mi one wa in the world.’

“ ‘U shal leve it in the handz ov the polece!’ I cride haaf-mad withe grefe and rage. ‘I shal hav this matter proabd too the bottom.’

“ ‘U shal lern nuthhing from me,’ ced he withe a pashon such az I shood not hav thaut wauz in hiz nachure. ‘If u chuse too caul the polece, let the polece fiand whaut dha can.’

“Bi this time the whole hous wauz aster, for I had raizd mi vois in mi an’gher.

Mary wauz the ferst too rush intoo mi roome, and, at the cite ov the coronet and

ov Arthherz face, she red the whole stoery and, withe a screme, fel down censles on the ground. I cent the hous-made for the polece and poot the investigaishon intoo dhare handz at wuns. When the inspector and a cunstabel

entered the house, Arthur, who had stood sullenly with his arms folded, asked me whether it was my intention to charge him with the theft. I answered that it had ceased to be a private matter, but had become a public one, since the returned coronet was national property. I was determined that the law should have its way in everything.

“ ‘At least,’ said he, ‘you will not have me arrested at once. It would be too your advantage as well as mine if I might leave the house for five minutes.’

“ ‘That you may get away, or perhaps that you may conceal what you have stolen,’ said I. And then, realising the dreadful position in which I was placed, I implored him to remember that not only my honor but that of my wife was far greater than I was at stake; and that he threatened to raise a scandal which would convulse the nation. He might avert it all if he would but tell me what he had done with the three missing stones.

“ ‘You may as well face the matter,’ said I; ‘you have been caught in the act, and no confession could make your guilt more heinous. If you but make such reparation as is in your power, by telling us where the berries are, all shall be forgiven and forgotten.’

“ ‘Keep your forgiveness for those who ask for it,’ he answered, turning away from me with a sneer. I saw that he was too hardened for any words of mine to influence him. There was but one way for it. I called in the inspector and gave him into custody. A search was made at once not only of his person but of his

roome and ov evvery porshon ov the hous whare he cood poscibly hav
conceeld
the gemz; but no trace ov them cood be found, nor wood the retched boi
open
hiz mouth for aul our perswaizhonz and our threts. This morning he wauz
remuivd
too a cel, and I, aafter gowing throo aul the polece formallitese, hav
hurrede
round too u too imploer u too use yor skil in unravveling the matter. The
polece hav openly confest dhat dha can at prezsent make nuthhing ov it. U
ma go too enny expens which u thhinc nescesary. I hav aulreddy offerd a
reword ov 1000. Mi God, whaut shal I doo! I hav lost mi onnor, mi gemz,
and mi
sun in wun nite. O, whaut shal I doo!"

He poot a hand on iather cide ov hiz hed and roct himcelf too and fro,
droning
too himcelf like a chiald whoose grefe haz got beyond werdz.

Sherloc Hoamz sat cilent for sum fu minnuets, withe hiz brouz nitted and
hiz
ise fixt uppon the fire.

"Doo u receve much cumpany?" he aasct.

"Nun save mi partner withe hiz fammily and an ocaizhonal frend ov
Arthherz. Cer
Jorj Bernwel haz bene cevveral tiamz laitly. No wun els, I thhinc."

"Doo u go out much in sociyety?"

"Arthher duz. Mary and I sta at home. We niather ov us care for it."

"Dhat iz unnuezhuwal in a yung gherl."

"She iz ov a qwiyet nachure. Beciadz, she iz not so verry yung. She iz foer-and-twenty."

"This matter, from whaut u sa, ceemz too hav bene a shoc too her aulso."

"Terribel! She iz even moer afected dhan I."

"U hav niather ov u enny dout az too yor sunz ghilt?"

"Hou can we hav when I sau him withe mi one ise withe the coronet in hiz handz."

"I hardly concidder dhat a conclucive prooffe. Wauz the remainder ov the coronet at aul injuerd?"

"Yes, it wauz twisted."

"Doo u not thhinc, then, dhat he mite hav bene triying too straten it?"

"God bles u! U ar doowing whaut u can for him and for me. But it iz too hevvy a taasc. Whaut wauz he doowing dhare at aul? If hiz perpoce wer innocent, whi did he not sa so?"

"Preciasly. And if it wer ghilty, whi did he not invent a li? Hiz cilens apeerz too me too cut boath wase. Dhare ar cevveral cin'gular points about the cace. Whaut did the polece thhinc ov the noiz which awoke u from yor slepe?"

"Dha concidderd dhat it mite be cauzd bi Arthherz closing hiz bedroome doer."

“A liacly stoery! Az if a man bent on felony wood slam hiz doer so az too wake a hous’hoald. Whaut did dha sa, then, ov the disaperans ov these gemz?”

“Dha ar stil sounding the planking and probing the fernichure in the hope ov fianding them.”

“Hav dha thaut ov loocking outside the hous?”

“Yes, dha hav shone extrordinary ennergy. The whole garden haz aulreddy bene minuetly exammiand.”

“Nou, mi dere cer,” ced Hoamz, “iz it not obveyous too u nou dhat this matter reyaly striax verry much deper dhan iather u or the polece wer at ferst incliand too thhinc? It apeerd too u too be a cimpel cace; too me it ceemz exedingly complex. Concidder whaut iz involvd bi yor ththeyory. U suppose dhat yor sun came doun from hiz bed, went, at grate risc, too yor drescing-roome, opend yor buro, tooc out yor coronet, broke of bi mane foers a smaual porshon ov it, went of too sum uther place, conceeld thre gemz out ov the thherty-nine, withe such skil dhat nobody can fiand them, and then reternd withe the uther thherty-cix intoo the roome in which he expoazd himcelf too the gratest dain’ger ov beying discuverd. I aasc u nou, iz such a ththeyory tennabel?”

“But whaut uther iz dhare?” cride the banker withe a geschure ov despare. “If hiz motiavz wer innocent, whi duz he not explane them?”

“It iz our taasc too fiand dhat out,” replide Hoamz; “so nou, if u plese, Mr. Hoalder, we wil cet of for Strettam tooghether, and devote an our too glaancing a littel moer cloasly intoo detailz.”

Mi frend incisted uppon mi acumpaneying them in dhare expedishon, which I wauz egher enuf too doo, for mi cureyoscity and cimpathhy wer deeply sterd bi the stoery too which we had liscend. I confes dhat the ghilt ov the bankerz sun apeerd too me too be az obveyous az it did too hiz unhappy faather, but stil I had such faith in Hoamz’ jujment dhat I felt dhat dhare must be sum groundz for hope az long az he wauz disattisfide withe the axepted explanaishon. He hardly spoke a werd the whole wa out too the suthern subberb, but sat withe hiz chin uppon hiz brest and hiz hat draun over hiz ise, sunc in the depest thaut. Our cliyent apeerd too hav taken fresh hart at the littel glimps ov hope which had bene presented too him, and he even broke intoo a dezultory chat withe me over hiz biznes afaerz. A short railwa gerny and a shorter wauc braut us too Faerbanc, the moddest rezsidens ov the grate financeyer.

Faerbanc wauz a good-ciazd sqware hous ov white stone, standing bac a littel from the rode. A dubbel carrage-swepe, withe a sno-clad laun, strecht down in frunt too too larj iarn gaitz which cloazd the entrans. On the rite side wauz a smaul wooden thhicket, which led intoo a narro paath betwene too nete hedgez stretching from the rode too the kitchen doer, and forming the

traidzmenz entrans. On the left ran a lane which led too the stabelz, and wauz

not itcelf within the groundz at aul, beying a public, dho littel uezd, thurrofare. Hoamz left us standing at the doer and wauct sloly aul round the hous, acros the frunt, doun the traidzmenz paath, and so round bi the garden behiand intoo the stabel lane. So long wauz he dhat Mr. Hoalder and I went

intoo the dining-roome and wated bi the fire until he shood retern. We wer citting dhare in cilens when the doer opend and a yung lady came in. She wauz

raather abuv the middel hite, slim, withe darc hare and ise, which ceemd the

darker against the absolute pallor ov her skin. I doo not thhinc dhat I hav evver

cene such dedly pailnes in a woommanz face. Her lips, too, wer bludles, but

her ise wer flusht withe crying. Az she swept cilently intoo the roome she imprest me withe a grater cens ov grefe dhan the banker had dun in the morning, and it wauz the moer striking in her az she wauz evvidently a woomman ov

strong carracter, withe imens capascity for celf-restraint. Disregarding mi prezsens, she went strate too her unkel and paast her hand over hiz hed withe

a swete woommanly cares.

“U hav ghivven orderz dhat Arthher shood be libberated, hav u not, dad?”

she
aasct.

“No, no, mi gherl, the matter must be proabd too the bottom.”

“But I am so shure dhat he iz innocent. U no whaut woommanz instincts ar. I

no dhat he haz dun no harm and dhat u wil be sory for havving acted so

harshly.”

“Whi iz he cilent, then, if he iz innocent?”

“Whoo nose? Perhaps becauz he wauz so an’gry dhat u shood suspect him.”

“Hou cood I help suspecting him, when I acchuwaly sau him withe the coronet in hiz hand?”

“O, but he had oanly pict it up too looc at it. O, doo, doo take mi werd for it dhat he iz innocent. Let the matter drop and sa no moer. It iz so dredfool too thhinc ov our dere Arthher in prizzon!”

“I shal nevver let it drop until the gemz ar found—nevver, Mary! Yor afecshon for Arthher bliandz u az too the afool conceqwencez too me. Far from hushing the thhing up, I hav braut a gentelman doun from Lundon too inqwire moer deeply intoo it.”

“This gentelman?” she aasct, facing round too me.

“No, hiz frend. He wisht us too leve him alone. He iz round in the stabel lane nou.”

“The stabel lane?” She raizd her darc iabrouz. “Whaut can he hope too fiand dhare? Aa! this, I supose, iz he. I trust, cer, dhat u wil suxede in prooving, whaut I fele shure iz the trueth, dhat mi cuzsin Arthher iz innocent ov

this crime."

"I foolly share yor opinyon, and I trust, withe u, dhat we ma prove it,"
reternd Hoamz, gowing bac too the mat too noc the sno from hiz shoose. "I
beleve I hav the onnor ov adrescing Mis Mary Hoalder. Mite I aasc u a
qweschon or too?"

"Pra doo, cer, if it ma help too clere this horibel afare up."

"U herd nuthhing yorcelf laast nite?"

"Nuthhing, until mi unkel here began too speke loudly. I herd dhat, and I
came
doun."

"U shut up the windose and doerz the nite befoer. Did u faacen aul the
windose?"

"Yes."

"Wer dha aul faacend this morning?"

"Yes."

"U hav a made whoo haz a sweet'hart? I thhinc dhat u remarct too yor
unkel
laast nite dhat she had bene out too ce him?"

"Yes, and she wauz the gherl whoo wated in the drauwing-roome, and
whoo ma hav
herd unkelz remarx about the coronet."

"I ce. U infer dhat she ma hav gon out too tel her sweet'hart, and dhat
the too ma hav pland the robbery."

“But whaut iz the good ov aul these vaghe ththeyorese,” cride the banker impaishently, “when I hav toald u dhat I sau Arthher withe the coronet in hiz handz?”

“Wate a littel, Mr. Hoalder. We must cum bac too dhat. About this gherl, Mis Hoalder. U sau her retern bi the kitchen doer, I prezume?”

“Yes; when I went too ce if the doer wauz faacend for the nite I met her slipping in. I sau the man, too, in the gloome.”

“Doo u no him?”

“O, yes! he iz the grene-grocer whoo bringz our vedgetabelz round. Hiz name iz Fraancis Prosper.”

“He stood,” ced Hoamz, “too the left ov the doer—dhat iz too sa, farther up the paath dhan iz nescesary too reche the doer?”

“Yes, he did.”

“And he iz a man withe a wooden leg?”

Sumthhing like fere sprang up in the yung ladese exprescive blac ise. “Whi, u ar like a magishan,” ced she. “Hou doo u no dhat?” She smiald, but dhare wauz no aancering smile in Hoamz’ thhin, egher face.

“I shood be verry glad nou too go upstaerz,” ced he. “I shal probbably wish too

go over the outside ov the hous agane. Perhaps I had better take a looc at the lower windose befoer I go up."

He wauct swiftly round from wun too the uther, pausing oonly at the larj wun which looct from the haul ontoo the stabel lane. This he opend and made a verry caerfool examinaishon ov the cil withe hiz pouwerfool magnifiying lenz. "Nou we shal go upstaerz," ced he at laast.

The bankerz drescing-roome wauz a plainly fernisht littel chaimber, withe a gra carpet, a larj buro, and a long mirror. Hoamz went too the buro ferst and looct hard at the loc.

"Which ke wauz uest too open it?" he aasct.

"Dhat which mi sun himself indicated—dhat ov the cubbord ov the lumber-roome."

"Hav u it here?"

"Dhat iz it on the drescing-tabel."

Sherloc Hoamz tooc it up and opend the buro.

"It iz a noizles loc," ced he. "It iz no wunder dhat it did not wake u. This cace, I prezhume, containz the coronet. We must hav a looc at it." He opend the cace, and taking out the diyadem he lade it uppon the tabel. It wauz a magnificent spescimen ov the juwelerz art, and the thherty-cix stoanz wer the

finest dhat I hav evver cene. At wun cide ov the coronet wauz a cract ej, whare a corner hoalder had bene toern awa.

"Nou, Mr. Hoalder," ced Hoamz, "here iz the corner which corespondz too dhat which haz bene so unforchunaitly lost. Mite I beg dhat u wil brake it of."

The banker recoild in horror. "I shood not dreame ov triying," ced he.

"Then I wil." Hoamz suddenly bent hiz strength uppon it, but widhout rezult.

"I fele it ghiv a littel," ced he; "but, dho I am exepshonaly strong in the fin'gherz, it wood take me aul mi time too brake it. An ordinary man cood

not doo it. Nou, whaut doo u thhinc wood happen if I did brake it, Mr. Hoalder?

Dhare wood be a noiz like a pistol shot. Doo u tel me dhat aul this happend within a fu yardz ov yor bed and dhat u herd nuthhing ov it?"

"I doo not no whaut too thhinc. It iz aul darc too me."

"But perhaps it ma gro liter az we go. Whaut doo u thhinc, Mis Hoalder?"

"I confes dhat I stil share mi unkelz perplexity."

"Yor sun had no shoose or slipperz on when u sau him?"

"He had nuthhing on save oonly hiz trouserz and shert."

"Thanc u. We hav certainly bene favord withe extrordinary luc juring this inqwiry, and it wil be entiarly our one fault if we doo not suxede in clering the matter up. Withe yor permishon, Mr. Hoalder, I shal nou continnu mi investigaishonz outcide."

He went alone, at his one request, for he explained that any unnecessary footmarks might make his task much more difficult. For an hour or more he was at work, returning at last with his feet heavy with the snow and his fingers as inscrutable as ever.

"I think that I have seen you and that share is too close, Mr. Hoalder," said he; "I can serve you best by returning to my room."

"But the gems, Mr. Hoalder. Where are they?"

"I cannot tell."

The banker rang his hands. "I shall never see them again!" he cried. "And my
sun? You give me hopes?"

"My opinion is in no way altered."

"Then, for God's sake, what was this dark business which was acted in my
house
last night?"

"If you can call upon me at my Baker Street rooms tomorrow morning
between
nine and ten I shall be happy to do what I can to make it clearer. I
understand
that you give me carte blanche to act for you, provided only that I get back
the gems, and that you place no limit on the sum I may draw."

"I would give my fortune to have them back."

"Very good. I shall look into the matter between this and then. Good-bye; it
is
just possible that I may have to come over here again before evening."

It wauz obveyous too me dhat mi companyonz miand wauz nou made up about the cace, auldho whaut hiz concluezhonz wer wauz moer dhan I cood even dimly imadgine.

Cevveral tiamz juring our hoamword gerny I endevvord too sound him uppon the point, but he aulwase glided awa too sum uther toppic, until at laast I gave it

over in despare. It wauz not yet thre when we found ourcelvz in our ruimz wuns

moer. He hurrede too hiz chaimber and wauz doun agane in a fu minnuets drest az

a common lofer. Withe hiz collar ternd up, hiz shiny, cedy cote, hiz red cravat, and hiz woern buits, he wauz a perfect saampel ov the claas.

“I thhinc dhat this shood doo,” ced he, glaancing intoo the glaas abuv the fiarplace. “I oonly wish dhat u cood cum withe me, Wautson, but I fere dhat it

woant doo. I ma be on the trale in this matter, or I ma be following a wil-o’-the-wisp, but I shal soone no which it iz. I hope dhat I ma be bac in a fu ourz.” He cut a slice ov befe from the joint uppon the ciadboerd, sandwicht it betwene too roundz ov bred, and thrusting this rude mele intoo

hiz pocket he started of uppon hiz expedishon.

I had just finnisht mi te when he reternd, evvidently in exelent spirrits, swinging an oald elaastic-cided boote in hiz hand. He chuct it doun intoo a corner and helpt himcelf too a cup ov te.

“I oonly looct in az I paast,” ced he. “I am gowing rite on.”

“Whare too?”

“O, too the uther cide ov the West End. It ma be sum time befoer I ghet bac. Doant wate up for me in cace I shood be late.”

“Hou ar u ghetting on?”

“O, so so. Nuthhing too complane ov. I hav bene out too Strettam cins I sau u laast, but I did not caul at the hous. It iz a verry swete littel problem, and I wood not hav mist it for a good dele. Houwevver, I must not cit gosciping here, but must ghet these disrepputabel cloadhz of and retern too mi hily respectabel celf.”

I cood ce bi hiz manner dhat he had stron'gher rezonz for satisfacshon dhan hiz werdz alone wood impli. Hiz ise twinkeld, and dhare wauz even a tuch ov cullor uppon hiz sallo cheex. He hacend upstaerz, and a fu minnuets later I herd the slam ov the haul doer, which toald me dhat he wauz of wuns moer uppon hiz con'geenyal hunt.

I wated until midnite, but dhare wauz no cine ov hiz retern, so I retiard too mi roome. It wauz no uncommon thhing for him too be awa for dase and niats on end when he wauz hot uppon a cent, so dhat hiz laitnes cauzd me no cerprise. I doo not no at whaut our he came in, but when I came down too breccfast in the morning dhare he wauz withe a cup ov coffy in wun hand and the paper in the uther, az fresh and trim az poscibel.

“U wil excuse mi beghinning widhout u, Wautson,” ced he, “but u remember dhat our cliyent haz raather an erly apointment this morning.”

"Whi, it iz aafter nine nou," I aancerd. "I shood not be cerpriazd if dhat wer he. I thaut I herd a ring."

It wauz, indede, our frend the financeyer. I wauz shoct bi the chainj which had cum over him, for hiz face which wauz natchuraly ov a braud and mascive moald, wauz nou pincht and faulen in, while hiz hare ceemd too me at leest a shade whiter. He enterd withe a werines and lethargy which wauz even moer painfool dhan hiz viyolens ov the morning befoer, and he dropt hevvely intoo the armchare which I poosht forword for him.

"I doo not no whaut I hav dun too be so ceveerly tride," ced he. "Oonly too dase ago I wauz a happy and prosperous man, widhout a care in the werld. Nou I am left too a loanly and disonnord age. Wun soro cumz cloce uppon the heelz ov anuther. Mi nece, Mary, haz deserted me."

"Deserted u?"

"Yes. Her bed this morning had not bene slept in, her roome wauz empty, and a note for me la uppon the haul tabel. I had ced too her laast nite, in soro and not in an'gher, dhat if she had marrede mi boi aul mite hav bene wel withe him. Perhaps it wauz thautles ov me too sa so. It iz too dhat remarc dhat she referz in this note:

“ ‘MI DEREST UNKEL:—I fele dhat I hav braut trubbel uppon u, and dhat if I had acted differently this terribel misforchune mite nevver hav okerd. I canot, withe this thaut in mi miand, evver agane be happy under yor roofe, and I fele dhat I must leve u forevver. Doo not wurry about mi fuchure, for dhat iz provided for; and, abuv aul, doo not cerch for me, for it wil be fruetles labor and an il-cervice too me. In life or in deth, I am evver yor luvving

“ ‘MARY.’

“Whaut cood she mene bi dhat note, Mr. Hoamz? Doo u thhinc it points too suwicide?”

“No, no, nuthhing ov the kiand. It iz perhaps the best poscibel solueshon. I trust, Mr. Hoalder, dhat u ar nering the end ov yor trubbelz.”

“Haa! U sa so! U hav herd sumthhing, Mr. Hoamz; u hav lernd sumthhing! Whare ar the gemz?”

“U wood not thhinc 1000 apece an exescive sum for them?”

“I wood pa ten.”

“Dhat wood be un’nescesary. Thre thousand wil cuvver the matter. And dhare iz a littel reword, I fancy. Hav u yor chec-booc? Here iz a pen. Better make it out for 4000.”

Withe a daizd face the banker made out the reqwiard chec. Hoamz wauct over too hiz desc, tooc out a littel triyan’gular pece ov goald withe thre gemz in it, and thru it doun uppon the tabel.

Withe a shreke ov joi our cliyent clucht it up.

“U hav it!” he gaaspt. “I am saivd! I am saivd!”

The reyacshon ov joi wauz az pashonate az hiz grefe had bene, and he hugd hiz recuverd gemz too hiz boozzom.

“Dhare iz wun uther thhing u o, Mr. Hoalder,” ced Sherloc Hoamz raather sternly.

“O!” He caut up a pen. “Name the sum, and I wil pa it.”

“No, the det iz not too me. U o a verry humbel apollogy too dhat nobel lad, yor sun, whoo haz carrede himcelf in this matter az I shood be proud too ce mi one sun doo, shood I evver chaans too hav wun.”

“Then it wauz not Arthher whoo tooc them?”

“I toald u yesterda, and I repete too-da, dhat it wauz not.”

“U ar shure ov it! Then let us hurry too him at wuns too let him no dhat the

trueth iz none.”

“He nose it aulreddy. When I had cleerd it aul up I had an intervü withe him, and fianding dhat he wood not tel me the stoery, I toald it too him, on which he had too confes dhat I wauz rite and too ad the verry fu detailz which wer not yet qwite clere too me. Yor nuse ov this morning, houwevver, ma open hiz lips.”

“For hevvenz sake, tel me, then, whaut iz this extrordinary mistery!”

“I wil doo so, and I wil sho u the steps bi which I reecht it. And let me sa too u, ferst, dhat which it iz hardest for me too sa and for u too here: dhare haz bene an understanding betwene Cer Jorj Bernwel and yor nece Mary. Dha hav nou fled tooghether.”

“Mi Mary? Imposcibel!”

“It iz unforchunaitly moer dhan poscibel; it iz certane. Niather u nor yor sun nu the tru carracter ov this man when u admitted him intoo yor fammily cerkel. He iz wun ov the moast dain’gerous men in In’gland—a ruwind gambler, an absoluety desperate villane, a man widhout hart or conspens. Yor nece nu nuthing ov such men. When he breedhd hiz vouz too her, az he had dun too a hundred befoer her, she flatterd hercelf dhat she alone had tucht hiz hart. The devvil nose best whaut he ced, but at leest she became hiz toole and wauz in the habbit ov ceying him neerly evvery evening.”

“I canot, and I wil not, beleve it!” cride the banker withe an ashen face.

“I wil tel u, then, whaut okerd in yor hous laast nite. Yor nece,
when u had, az she thaut, gon too yor roome, slipt doun and tauct too her
luvver throo the windo which leedz intoo the stabel lane. Hiz footmarx had
prest rite throo the sno, so long had he stood dhare. She toald him ov the
coronet. Hiz wicked lust for goald kindeld at the nuse, and he bent her too
hiz
wil. I hav no dout dhat she luvd u, but dhare ar wimmen in whoome the
luv
ov a luvver extin’gwishez aul uther luvz, and I thhinc dhat she must hav
bene
wun. She had hardly liscend too hiz instrucshonz when she sau u cumming
dounstaerz, on which she cloazd the windo rappidly and toald u about
wun ov
the cervants’ escapade withe her woodden-legghed luvver, which wauz aul
perfectly
tru.

“Yor boi, Arthher, went too bed aafter hiz intervü withe u but he slept
badly
on acount ov hiz unnesines about hiz club dets. In the middel ov the nite
he herd a soft tred paas hiz doer, so he rose and, loocking out, wauz
cerpriazd
too ce hiz cuzsin wauking verry stelthhily along the passage until she
disapeerd intoo yor drescing-roome. Petrifide withe astonishment, the lad
slipt on sum cloadhz and wated dhare in the darc too ce whaut wood cum
ov
this strainj afare. Prezsently she emerjd from the roome agane, and in the
lite ov the passage-lamp yor sun sau dhat she carrede the preshous coronet
in
her handz. She paast doun the staerz, and he, thrilling withe horror, ran
along
and slipt behiand the kertane nere yor doer, whens he cood ce whaut paast
in the haul beneeth. He sau her stelthhily open the windo, hand out the

coronet too sumwun in the gloome, and then closing it wuns moer hurry
bac too
her roome, paacing qwite cloce too whare he stood hid behiand the
kertane.

“Az long az she wauz on the cene he cood not take enny acshon widhout a
horibel expoazhure ov the woomman whoome he luvd. But the instant
dhat she wauz gon
he reyaliazd hou crushing a misforchune this wood be for u, and hou
aul-important it wauz too cet it rite. He rusht down, just az he wauz, in hiz
bare fete, opend the windo, sprang out intoo the sno, and ran down the
lane,
whare he cood ce a darc figgure in the muinlite. Cer Jorj Bernwel tride too
ghet awa, but Arthher caut him, and dhare wauz a strugghel betwene
them, yor
lad tugging at wun cide ov the coronet, and hiz oponent at the uther. In
the
scuffel, yor sun struc Cer Jorj and cut him over the i. Then sumthhing
suddenly snapt, and yor sun, fianding dhat he had the coronet in hiz
handz,
rusht bac, cloazd the windo, acended too yor roome, and had just observd
dhat the coronet had bene twisted in the strugghel and wauz endeuvoring
too
straten it when u apeerd uppon the cene.”

“Iz it poscibel?” gaaspt the banker.

“U then rouzd hiz an’gher bi caulng him naimz at a moment when he felt
dhat
he had deservd yor wormest thanx. He cood not explane the tru state ov
afaerz widhout betrayng wun whoo certainly deservd littel enuf
concideraishon at hiz handz. He tooc the moer shivvalrous vu, houwevver,
and
preservd her ceecret.”

“And dhat wauz whi she shreect and fainted when she sau the coronet,”
cride Mr.

Hoalder. “O, mi God! whaut a bliand foole I hav bene! And hiz aasking too
be
aloud too go out for five minnuets! The dere fello waunted too ce if the
miscing pece wer at the cene ov the strugghel. Hou cruwely I hav misjujd
him!”

“When I ariavd at the hous,” continnude Hoamz, “I at wuns went verry
caerfooly
round it too observ if dhare wer enny tracez in the sno which mite help me.
I
nu dhat nun had faulen cins the evening befoer, and aulso dhat dhare had
bene a strong frost too preserv impreshonz. I paast along the traidzmenz
paath, but found it aul trampeld doun and indistin’gwishabel. Just beyond
it,
houwevver, at the far cide ov the kitchen doer, a woomman had stood and
tauct withe
a man, whose round impreshonz on wun cide shode dhat he had a
woodden leg. I
cood even tel dhat dha had bene disterbd, for the woomman had run bac
swiftly too the doer, az wauz shone bi the depe to and lite hele marx, while
Woodden-leg had wated a littel, and then had gon awa. I thaut at the time
dhat this mite be the made and her sweet’hart, ov whoome u had aulreddy
spoken
too me, and inqwiry shode it wauz so. I paast round the garden widhout
ceying
ennithhing moer dhan random trax, which I tooc too be the polece; but
when I got
intoo the stabel lane a verry long and complex stoery wauz ritten in the sno
in
frunt ov me.

“Dhare wauz a dubbel line ov trax ov a booted man, and a cecond dubbel
line
which I sau withe delite belongd too a man withe naked fete. I wauz at
wuns
convinst from whaut u had toald me dhat the latter wauz yor sun. The ferst
had
wauct boath wase, but the uther had run swiftly, and az hiz tred wauz
marct in
placez over the depreshon ov the boote, it wauz obveyous dhat he had
paast aafter
the uther. I follode them up and found dha led too the haul windo, whare
Buits had woern aul the sno awa while wating. Then I wauct too the uther
end,
which wauz a hundred yardz or moer doun the lane. I sau whare Buits had
faist
round, whare the sno wauz cut up az dho dhare had bene a strugghel, and,
finaly, whare a fu drops ov blud had faulen, too sho me dhat I wauz not
mistaken. Buits had then run doun the lane, and anuther littel smuj ov blud
shode dhat it wauz he whoo had bene hert. When he came too the hirede at
the
uther end, I found dhat the paivment had bene cleerd, so dhare wauz an
end too
dhat clu.

“On entering the hous, houwevver, I exammiand, az u remember, the cil
and
fraimwerc ov the haul windo withe mi lenz, and I cood at wuns ce dhat
sumwun
had paast out. I cood distin'gwish the outline ov an instep whare the wet
foot
had bene plaist in cumming in. I wauz then beghinning too be abel too
form an
opinyon az too whaut had okerd. A man had wated outside the windo;
sumwun

had braut the gemz; the dede had bene overcene bi yor sun; he had
pershude
the thhefe; had struggheld withe him; dha had eche tugd at the coronet,
dhare
united strength causing injurese which niather alone cood hav efected. He
had reternd withe the prise, but had left a fragment in the graasp ov hiz
oponent. So far I wauz clere. The qweschon nou wauz, whoo wauz the man
and whoo wauz
it braut him the coronet?

“It iz an oald maxim ov mine dhat when u hav excluded the imposcibel,
whautevver remainz, houwevver improbbabel, must be the trueth. Nou, I
nu dhat it
wauz not u whoo had braut it down, so dhare oonly remaind yor nece and
the
maidz. But if it wer the maidz, whi shood yor sun alou himcelf too be
acuezd in dhare place? Dhare cood be no poscibel rezon. Az he luvd hiz
cuzsin, houwevver, dhare wauz an exelent explanaishon whi he shood
retane her
ceecret—the moer so az the ceecret wauz a disgraisfool wun. When I
rememberd dhat
u had cene her at dhat windo, and hou she had fainted on ceying the
coronet
agane, mi con’gechure became a certainty.

“And whoo cood it be whoo wauz her confedderate? A luvver evvidently,
for whoo els
cood outwa the luv and grattichude which she must fele too u? I nu dhat
u went out littel, and dhat yor cerkel ov frendz wauz a verry limmited
wun.
But among them wauz Cer Jorj Bernwel. I had herd ov him befoer az
beying a
man ov evil reputaishon among wimmen. It must hav bene he whoo woer
dhose buits

and retained the missing gemz. Even dho he nu dhat Arthher had discuvverd him, he mite stil flatter himcelf dhat he wauz safe, for the lad cood not sa a werd widhout compromising hiz one fammily.

“Wel, yor one good cens wil sugest whaut mezhuerz I tooc next. I went in the shape ov a lofer too Cer Jorgez hous, mannajd too pic up an aqwaintans withe hiz valla, lernd dhat hiz maaster had cut hiz hed the nite befoer, and, finaly, at the expens ov cix shillingz, made aul shure bi biying a pare ov hiz caast-of shoose. Withe these I gernede doun too Strettam and sau dhat dha exactly fitted the trax.”

“I sau an il-drest vagabond in the lane yesterda evening,” ced Mr. Hoalder.

“Preciasly. It wauz I. I found dhat I had mi man, so I came home and chainjd mi cloadhz. It wauz a dellicate part which I had too pla then, for I sau dhat a procecushon must be avoided too avert scandal, and I nu dhat so aschute a villane wood ce dhat our handz wer tide in the matter. I went and sau him. At ferst, ov coers, he denide evverithhing. But when I gave him evvery particcular dhat had okerd, he tride too bluster and tooc doun a life-preserver from the waul. I nu mi man, houwevver, and I clapt a pistol too hiz hed befoer he cood strike. Then he became a littel moer rezonabel. I toald him dhat we wood ghiv him a price for the stoanz he held—1000 apece. Dhat braut out the ferst cianz ov grefe dhat he had shone. ‘Whi, dash it aul!’ ced he, ‘Ive let them go at cix hundred for the thre!’ I soone mannajd too ghet the adres ov the recever whoo had them, on prommicig him dhat dhare wood be no procecushon. Of

I cet too him, and aafter much chaffering I got our stoanz at 1000 apece.
Then I
looct in uppon yor sun, toald him dhat aul wauz rite, and evenchuwaly got
too mi
bed about too oacloc, aafter whaut I ma caul a reyaly hard dase werc.”

“A da which haz saivd In’gland from a grate public scandal,” ced the
banker,
rising. “Cer, I canot fiand werdz too thanc u, but u shal not fiand me
un’graitfool for whaut u hav dun. Yor skil haz indede exeded aul dhat I
hav herd ov it. And nou I must fli too mi dere boi too apollogise too him for
the
rong which I hav dun him. Az too whaut u tel me ov poor Mary, it gose too
mi
verry hart. Not even yor skil can inform me whare she iz nou.”

“I thhinc dhat we ma saifly sa,” reternd Hoamz, “dhat she iz wharevver
Cer
Jorj Bernwel iz. It iz eeqwaly certane, too, dhat whautevver her cinz ar,
dha wil soone receve a moer dhan sufishment.”

“Too the man whoo luvz art for its one sake,” remarkt Sherloc Hoamz,
tosing
acide the advertiazment shete ov the Daly Tellegraaf, “it iz freeqwently in
its
leest important and loleyest manifestaishonz dhat the kenest plezhure iz
too be
deriavd. It iz plezzant too me too observ, Wautson, dhat u hav so far
graaspt
this trueth dhat in these littel reccordz ov our cacez which u hav bene good
enuf too drau up, and, I am bound too sa, ocaizhonaly too embellish, u hav
ghivven promminens not so much too the menny causez salaeberz and
censaishonal triyalz
in which I hav figguerd but raather too dhose incidents which ma hav bene
trivveyal in themcelvz, but which hav ghivven roome for dhose faccultese
ov
deducshon and ov lodgical cinthhecis which I hav made mi speshal
provvins.”

“And yet,” ced I, smiling, “I canot qwite hoald micelf absolvd from the
charj ov censaishonalizm which haz bene erjd against mi reccordz.”

“U hav erd, perhaps,” he observd, taking up a glowing cinder withe the
tongz and liting withe it the long cherry-wood pipe which wauz woant too
replace
hiz cla when he wauz in a disputaishous raather dhan a medditative
moode—“u hav
erd perhaps in atempting too poot cullor and life intoo eche ov yor
staitments
insted ov confining yorcelf too the taasc ov placing uppon reccord dhat
cevere
rezoning from cauz too efect which iz reyaly the oonly notabel fechure
about
the thhing.”

“It ceemz too me dhat I hav dun u fool justice in the matter,” I remarct
withe sum coaldnes, for I wauz repeld bi the egotizm which I had moer
dhan
wuns observd too be a strong factor in mi frendz cin’gular carracter.

“No, it iz not celfishnes or concete,” ced he, aancering, az wauz hiz woant,
mi
thauts raather dhan mi werdz. “If I clame fool justice for mi art, it iz
becauz it iz an impersonal thhing—a thhing beyond micelf. Crime iz
common. Lodgic
iz rare. Dhaerfoer it iz uppon the lodgic raather dhan uppon the crime dhat
u
shood dwel. U hav degraded whaut shood hav bene a coers ov lecchuerz
intoo
a cerese ov tailz.”

It wauz a coald morning ov the erly spring, and we sat aafter breccfast on
iather
cide ov a chery fire in the oald roome at Baker Strete. A thhic fog roald
doun
betwene the lianz ov dun-cullord housez, and the oposing windose luimd
like
darc, shaiples blerz throo the hevvy yello reeths. Our gas wauz lit and
shon on the white cloth and glimmer ov chinaa and mettal, for the tabel
had not
bene cleerd yet. Sherloc Hoamz had bene cilent aul the morning, dipping
continnuowsly intoo the advertiazment collumz ov a suxeshon ov paperz
until at
laast, havving aparrently ghivven up hiz cerch, he had emerjd in no verry
swete
temper too lecchue me uppon mi litterary shortcuttingz.

“At the same time,” he remarct aafter a pauz, juring which he had sat
puffing

at hiz long pipe and gasing doun intoo the fire, "u can hardly be open too a charj ov censaishonalizm, for out ov these cacez which u hav bene so kiand az

too interest yorcelf in, a fare propoershon doo not trete ov crime, in its legal cens, at aul. The smaull matter in which I endevvord too help the King ov Bohemeyaa, the cin'gular expereyens ov Mis Mary Sutherland, the problem conected

withe the man withe the twisted lip, and the incident ov the nobel batchelor, wer

aul matterz which ar outside the pale ov the lau. But in avoiding the censaishonal, I fere dhat u ma hav borderd on the trivveyal."

"The end ma hav bene so," I aancerd, "but the methodz I hoald too hav bene novvel and ov interest."

"Pshau, mi dere fello, whaut doo the public, the grate unobservant public, whoo

cood hardly tel a wever bi hiz tuith or a compozsitor bi hiz left thum, care about the finer shaidz ov anallicis and deducshon! But, indede, if u ar trivveyal, I canot blame u, for the dase ov the grate cacez ar paast. Man, or at leest crimminal man, haz lost aul enterprise and originallity. Az too mi one

littel practice, it ceemz too be degennerating intoo an agency for recuvvering lost

led pencilz and ghivving advice too yung ladese from boerding-scuilz. I thhinc

dhat I hav tucht bottom at laast, houwevver. This note I had this morning marx

mi sero-point, I fancy. Rede it!" He tost a crumpeld letter acros too me.

It wauz dated from Montagu Place uppon the preceding evening, and ran dhus:

“DERE MR. HOAMZ:—I am verry ancshous too consult u az too whether I shood or shood not axept a cichuwaishon which haz bene offerd too me az guvvernes. I shal caul at haaf-paast ten too-moro if I doo not inconveenyens u. Yorz faithfooly,

“VIYOLET HUNTER.”

“Doo u no the yung lady?” I aasct.

“Not I.”

“It iz haaf-paast ten nou.”

“Yes, and I hav no dout dhat iz her ring.”

“It ma tern out too be ov moer interest dhan u thhinc. U remember dhat the afare ov the blu carbunkel, which apeerd too be a mere whim at ferst, devellopt intoo a cereyous investigaishon. It ma be so in this cace, aulso.”

“Wel, let us hope so. But our douts wil verry soone be solvd, for here, unles I am much mistaken, iz the person in qweschon.”

Az he spoke the doer opend and a yung lady enterd the roome. She wauz plainly
but neetly drest, withe a brite, qwic face, freckeld like a pluvverz eg,
and withe the brisc manner ov a woomman whoo haz had her one wa too
make in the
werld.

“U wil excuse mi trubling u, I am shure,” ced she, az mi companyon rose
too grete her, “but I hav had a verry strainj expereyens, and az I hav no
parents or relaishonz ov enny sort from whoome I cood aasc advice, I thaut
dhat
perhaps u wood be kiand enuf too tel me whaut I shood doo.”

“Pra take a cete, Mis Hunter. I shal be happy too doo ennithhing dhat I can
too
cerv u.”

I cood ce dhat Hoamz wauz favorably imprest bi the manner and speche
ov
hiz nu cliyent. He looct her over in hiz cerching fashon, and then
compoazd
himself, withe hiz lidz drooping and hiz fin'gher-tips tooghether, too liscen
too her
stoery.

“I hav bene a guvvernes for five yeerz,” ced she, “in the fammily ov
Cuunel
Spens Munro, but too munths ago the cuunel receevd an apointment at
Halifax, in Novaa Scoashaa, and tooc hiz children over too Amerricaa
withe him, so
dhat I found micelf widhout a cichuwaishon. I advertiazd, and I aancerd
advertiazments, but widhout suxes. At laast the littel munny which I had
saivd
began too run short, and I wauz at mi wits end az too whaut I shood doo.

“Dhare iz a wel-none agency for guvvernecez in the West End cauld Westawase, and dhare I uest too caul about wuns a weke in order too ce whether ennithhing had ternd up which mite sute me. Westawa wauz the name ov the founder ov the biznes, but it iz reyaly mannaijd bi Mis Stoper. She cits in her one littel office, and the ladese whoo ar ceking employment wate in an anterome, and ar then shone in wun bi wun, when she consults her ledgerz and cese whether she haz ennithhing which wood sute them.

“Wel, when I cauld laast weke I wauz shone intoo the littel office az uezhuwal, but I found dhat Mis Stoper wauz not alone. A prodidjously stout man withe a verry smiling face and a grate hevvy chin which roald down in foald uppon foald over hiz throte sat at her elbo withe a pare ov glaacez on hiz nose, loocking verry earnestly at the ladese whoo enterd. Az I came in he gave qwite a jump in hiz chare and ternd qwicly too Mis Stoper.

“ ‘Dhat wil doo,’ ced he; ‘I cood not aasc for ennithhing better. Cappital! cappital!’ He ceemd qwite enthuseyaastic and rubd hiz handz tooghether in the moast geenyal fashon. He wauz such a cumfortabel-loocking man dhat it wauz qwite a plezhure too looc at him.

“ ‘U ar loocking for a cichuwaishon, mis?’ he aasct.

“ ‘Yes, cer.’

“ ‘Az guvvernes?’

“ ‘Yes, cer.’

“ ‘And whaut sallary doo u aasc?’

“ ‘I had 4 a munth in mi laast place withe Cuunel Spens Munro.’

“ ‘O, tut, tut! swetting—ranc swetting!’ he cride, throwing hiz fat handz out intoo the are like a man whoo iz in a boiling pashon. ‘Hou cood enniwun offer so pittifool a sum too a lady withe such atracshonz and acumplishments?’

“ ‘Mi acumplishments, cer, ma be les dhan u imadgine,’ ced I. ‘A littel French, a littel German, music, and drauwing—’

“ ‘Tut, tut!’ he cride. ‘This iz aul qwite becide the qweschon. The point iz, hav u or hav u not the baring and depoertment ov a lady? Dhare it iz in a nutshel. If u hav not, u ar not fitted for the rering ov a chiald whoo ma sum da pla a concidderabel part in the history ov the cuntry. But if u hav whi, then, hou cood enny gentelman aasc u too condecend too axept ennithhing under the thre figguerz? Yor sallary withe me, maddam, wood comens at 100 a yere.’

“U ma imadgine, Mr. Hoamz, dhat too me, destichute az I wauz, such an offer ceemd aulmoast too good too be tru. The gentelman, houwevver, ceying perhaps the looc ov increjularity uppon mi face, opend a pocket-booc and tooc out a note.

“ ‘It iz aulso mi custom,’ ced he, smiling in the moast plezzant fashon until hiz ise wer just too littel shining slits amid the white crecez ov hiz face,

'too advaans too mi yung ladese haaf dhare sallary befoerhand, so dhat dha ma mete enny littel expencez ov dhare gerny and dhare wordrobe.'

"It ceemd too me dhat I had nevver met so fascinating and so thautfool a man.

Az I wauz aulreddy in det too mi traidzmen, the advaans wauz a grate conveenyens, and yet dhare wauz sumthhing un'natchural about the whole traanzacshon which made me wish too no a littel moer befoer I qwite comitted micelf.

" 'Ma I aasc whare u liv, cer?' ced I.

" 'Hampshire. Charming rural place. The Copper Bechez, five mialz on the far cide ov Winchester. It iz the moast luvly cuntry, mi dere yung lady, and the derest oald cuntry-hous.'

" 'And mi jutese, cer? I shoed be glad too no whaut dha wood be.'

" 'Wun chiald—wun dere littel romper just cix yeerz oald. O, if u cood ce him killing cocrochez withe a slipper! Smac! smac! smac! Thre gon befoer u cood winc!' He leend bac in hiz chare and laaft hiz ise intoo hiz hed agane.

"I wauz a littel starteld at the nachure ov the chialdz amuegment, but the faatherz laafter made me thhinc dhat perhaps he wauz joking.

" 'Mi sole jutese, then,' I aasct, 'ar too take charj ov a cin'ghel chiald?'

" 'No, no, not the sole, not the sole, mi dere yung lady,' he cride. 'Yor jutj wood be, az I am shure yor good cens wood sugest, too oba enny littel

comaandz mi wife mite ghiv, provided aulwase dhat dha wer such
comaandz az a
lady mite withe propriyety oba. U ce no difficulty, ha?’

“ ‘I shood be happy too make micelf uesfool.’

“ ‘Qwite so. In dres nou, for exaampel. We ar faddy pepel, u no—faddy but
kiand-harted. If u wer aasct too ware enny dres which we mite ghiv u, u
wood not obgett too our littel whim. Ha?’

“ ‘No,’ ced I, concidderably astonnisht at hiz werdz.

“ ‘Or too cit here, or cit dhare, dhat wood not be ofencive too u?’

“ ‘O, no.’

“ ‘Or too cut yor hare qwite short befoer u cum too us?’

“ ‘I cood hardly beleve mi eerz. Az u ma observ, Mr. Hoamz, mi hare iz
sumwhaut lucshureyant, and ov a raather peculeyar tint ov chesnut. It haz
bene
concidderd artistic. I cood not dreame ov sacrificing it in this ofhand
fashion.

“ ‘I am afrade dhat dhat iz qwite imposcibel,’ ced I. He had bene wauching
me
egherly out ov hiz smaule, and I cood ce a shaddo paas over hiz face az I
spoke.

“ ‘I am afrade dhat it iz qwite ecenshal,’ ced he. ‘It iz a littel fancy ov
mi wiafs, and ladese’ fancese, u no, maddam, ladese’ fancese must be
consulted. And so u woant cut yor hare?’

“ ‘No, cer, I reyaly cood not,’ I aancerd fermly.

“ ‘Aa, verry wel; then dhat qwite cettelz the matter. It iz a pittly, becauz in uther respects u wood reyaly hav dun verry niasly. In dhat cace, Mis Stoper, I had best inspect a fu moer ov yor yung ladese.’

“The manageres had sat aul this while bizsy withe her paperz widhout a werd too iather ov us, but she glaanst at me nou withe so much anoiyans uppon her face dhat I cood not help suspecting dhat she had lost a handsum comishon throo mi refuzal.

“ ‘Doo u desire yor name too be kept uppon the boox?’ she aasct.

“ ‘If u plese, Mis Stoper.’

“ ‘Wel, reyaly, it ceemz raather uesles, cins u refuse the moast exelent offerz in this fashon,’ ced she sharply. ‘U can hardly expect us too exert ourcelvz too fiand anuther such opening for u. Good-da too u, Mis Hunter.’ She struc a gong uppon the tabel, and I wauz shone out bi the page.

“Wel, Mr. Hoamz, when I got bac too mi lodgingz and found littel enuf in the cubbord, and too or thre bilz uppon the tabel, I began too aasc micelf whether I had not dun a verry foolish thhing. Aafter aul, if these pepel had strainj fadz and expected obegens on the moast extrordinary matterz, dha wer at leest reddy too pa for dhare exentriscity. Verry fu guvvernecez in In’ gland ar ghetting 100 a yere. Beciadz, whaut uce wauz mi hare too me? Menny pepel ar impruivd bi waring it short and perhaps I shood be among the number. Next da I wauz incliand too thhinc dhat I had made a mistake, and bi the da aafter I wauz shure ov it. I had aulmoast overcum mi pride so far az too go bac

too the agency and inqwire whether the place wauz stil open when I
receevd this
letter from the gentelman himcelf. I hav it here and I wil rede it too u:

“ ‘The Copper Bechez, nere Winchester.

“ ‘DERE MIS HUNTER:—Mis Stoper haz verry kiandly ghivven me yor
adres, and I
rite from here too aasc u whether u hav reconciderd yor decizhon. Mi wife
iz verry ancshous dhat u shood cum, for she haz bene much atracted bi mi
descripshon ov u. We ar willing too ghiv 30 a qworter, or 120 a yere, so az
too recompens u for enny littel inconveenyens which our fadz ma cauz u.
Dha ar not verry exacting, aafter aul. Mi wife iz fond ov a particcular shade
ov
electric blu and wood like u too ware such a dres indoerz in the morning.
U nede not, houwevver, go too the expans ov perchacing wun, az we hav
wun
belonging too mi dere dauter Allice (nou in Filadelfeyaa), which wood, I
shood thhinc, fit u verry wel. Then, az too citting here or dhare, or amusing
yorcelf in enny manner indicated, dhat nede cauz u no inconveenyens. Az
regardz yor hare, it iz no dout a pittty, espeshaly az I cood not help
remarking its buty juring our short intervū, but I am afrade dhat I must
remane ferm uppon this point, and I oonly hope dhat the increest sallary
ma
recompens u for the los. Yor jutese, az far az the chiald iz concernd, ar
verry lite. Nou doo tri too cum, and I shal mete u withe the dog-cart at
Winchester. Let me no yor trane. Yorz faithfooly,

“ ‘GEFRO RUCAACEL.’

“Dhat iz the letter which I hav just receevd, Mr. Hoamz, and mi miand iz made up dhat I wil axept it. I thaut, houwevver, dhat befoer taking the final step I shood like too submit the whole matter too yor concideraishon.”

“Wel, Mis Hunter, if yor miand iz made up, dhat cettelz the qweschon,” ced Hoamz, smiling.

“But u wood not advise me too refuse?”

“I confes dhat it iz not the cichuwaishon which I shood like too ce a cister ov mine apli for.”

“Whaut iz the mening ov it aul, Mr. Hoamz?”

“Aa, I hav no dataa. I canot tel. Perhaps u hav yorcelf formd sum opinyon?”

“Wel, dhare ceemz too me too be oonly wun poscibel solueshon. Mr. Rucaacel ceemd too be a verry kiand, good-nachuerd man. Iz it not poscibel dhat hiz wife iz a lunatic, dhat he desiarz too kepe the matter qwiyet for fere she shood be taken too an acilum, and dhat he humorz her fancese in evvery wa in order too prevent an outbrake?”

“Dhat iz a poscibel solueshon—in fact, az matterz stand, it iz the moast probbabel wun. But in enny cace it duz not ceme too be a nice hous’hoald for a yung lady.”

“But the munny, Mr. Hoamz, the munny!”

“Wel, yes, ov coers the pa iz good—too good. Dhat iz whaut maix me unnesy.

Whi shood dha ghiv u 120 a yere, when dha cood hav dhare pic for 40? Dhare must be sum strong rezon behiand.”

“I thaut dhat if I toald u the cercumstaancez u wood understand aafterwordz

if I waunted yor help. I shood fele so much stron’gher if I felt dhat u wer at the bac ov me.”

“O, u ma carry dhat feling awa withe u. I ashure u dhat yor littel problem prommicez too be the moast interesting which haz cum mi wa for sum

munths. Dhare iz sumthhing distinctly novvel about sum ov the fechuerz. If u

shood fiand yorcelf in dout or in dain’ger—”

“Dain’ger! Whaut dain’ger doo u foercy?”

Hoamz shooc hiz hed graivly. “It wood cece too be a dain’ger if we cood define it,” ced he. “But at enny time, da or nite, a tellegram wood bring me doun too yor help.”

“Dhat iz enuf.” She rose briscly from her chare withe the anxiyety aul swept

from her face. “I shal go doun too Hampshire qwite esy in mi miand nou. I shal

rite too Mr. Rucaacel at wuns, sacrifice mi poor hare too-nite, and start for
Winchester too-moro." Withe a fu graitfool werdz too Hoamz she bad us
boath
good-nite and busceld of uppon her wa.

"At leest," ced I az we herd her qwic, ferm steps decending the staerz,
"she ceemz too be a yung lady whoo iz verry wel abel too take care ov
hercelf."

"And she wood nede too be," ced Hoamz graivly. "I am much mistaken if
we doo
not here from her befoer menny dase ar paast."

It wauz not verry long befoer mi frendz predicshon wauz foolfild. A
fortnite
went bi, juring which I freeqwently found mi thauts terning in her
direcshon
and wondering whaut strainj cide-ally ov human expereyens this loanly
woomman had
strade intoo. The unnuezhual sallary, the cureyous condishonz, the lite
jutese, aul
pointed too sumthhing abnormal, dho whether a fad or a plot, or whether
the
man wer a philanthropist or a villane, it wauz qwite beyond mi pouwerz too
determine. Az too Hoamz, I observd dhat he sat freeqwently for haaf an
our on
end, withe nitted brouz and an abstracted are, but he swept the matter awa
withe a wave ov hiz hand when I menshond it. "Dataa! dataa! dataa!" he
cride
impaishently. "I caant make brix widhout cla." And yet he wood aulwase
wiand
up bi muttering dhat no cister ov hiz shood evver hav axepted such a
cichuwaishon.

The tellegram which we evenchuwaly receevd came late wun nite just az I
wauz
thhinking ov terning in and Hoamz wauz cetling down too wun ov dhose
aul-nite
kemical recerchez which he freeqwently induljd in, when I wood leve
him
stooping over a retort and a test-chube at nite and fiand him in the same
posishon when I came doun too breccfast in the morning. He opend the
yello
envelope, and then, glaancing at the message, thru it acros too me.

“Just looc up the trainz in Bradshau,” ced he, and ternd bac too hiz
kemical
studdese.

The summonz wauz a brefe and ergent wun.

“Plese be at the Blac Swaun Hotel at Winchester at midda too-moro,” it ced.
“Doo cum! I am at mi wits end.

“HUNTER.”

“Wil u cum withe me?” aasct Hoamz, glaancing up.

"I shood wish too."

"Just looc it up, then."

"Dhare iz a trane at haaf-paast nine," ced I, glaancing over mi Bradshau. "It iz ju at Winchester at 11:30."

"Dhat wil doo verry niasly. Then perhaps I had better poastpone mi anallicis ov the acetoanz, az we ma nede too be at our best in the morning."

Bi elevven oacloc the next da we wer wel uppon our wa too the oald In'glish cappital. Hoamz had bene berrede in the morning paperz aul the wa doun, but aafter we had paast the Hampshire border he thru them doun and began too admire the cenary. It wauz an ideyal spring da, a lite blu ski, flect withe littel flecy white cloudz drifting acros from west too eest. The sun wauz shining verry briatly, and yet dhare wauz an exillarating nip in the are, which cet an ej too a manz ennergy. Aul over the cuntricide, awa too the roling hilz around Auldershot, the littel red and gra ruifs ov the farm-steddingz peept out from amid the lite grene ov the nu foleyage.

"Ar dha not fresh and butifool?" I cride withe aul the enthuseyazm ov a man fresh from the fogz ov Baker Strete.

But Hoamz shooc hiz hed graivly.

“Doo u no, Wautson,” ced he, “dhat it iz wun ov the kercez ov a miand
withe a
tern like mine dhat I must looc at evverithhing withe refferens too mi one
speshal
subject. U looc at these scatterd housez, and u ar imprest bi dhare
buty. I looc at them, and the oanly thaut which cumz too me iz a feling ov
dhare isolaishon and ov the impunity withe which crime ma be comitted
dhare.”

“Good hevvenz!” I cride. “Whoo wood asoasheyate crime withe these dere
oald
hoamstedz?”

“Dha aulwase fil me withe a certane horror. It iz mi belefe, Wautson,
founded
uppon mi expereyens, dhat the lowest and vilest allese in Lundon doo not
present
a moer dredfool reccord ov cin dhan duz the smiling and butifool
cuntricide.”

“U horifi me!”

“But the rezon iz verry obveyous. The preshure ov public opinyon can doo
in the
toun whaut the lau canot acumplish. Dhare iz no lane so vile dhat the
screme
ov a torchuerd chiald, or the thud ov a druncardz blo, duz not beghet
cimpathy
and indignaishon amung the naborz, and then the whole mashenery ov
justice

iz evver so cloce dhat a werd ov complaint can cet it gowing, and dhare iz but a step betwene the crime and the doc. But looc at these loanly housez, eche in its one feeldz, fild for the moast part withe poor ignorant foke whoo no littel ov the lau. Thhinc ov the deedz ov hellish cruwelty, the hidden wickednes which ma go on, yere in, yere out, in such placez, and nun the wiser. Had this lady whoo apeelz too us for help gon too liv in Winchester, I shood nevver hav had a fere for her. It iz the five mialz ov cuntry which maix the dain'ger. Stil, it iz clere dhat she iz not personaly threttend."

"No. If she can cum too Winchester too mete us she can ghet awa."

"Qwite so. She haz her fredom."

"Whaut can be the matter, then? Can u sugest no explanaishon?"

"I hav deviazd cevven cepparate explanaishonz, eche ov which wood cuvver the facts az far az we no them. But which ov these iz corect can oanly be determiand bi the fresh informaishon which we shal no dout fiand wating for us. Wel, dhare iz the touwer ov the cathheedral, and we shal soone lern aul dhat Mis Hunter haz too tel."

The Blac Swaun iz an in ov repute in the Hi Strete, at no distans from the staishon, and dhare we found the yung lady wating for us. She had en'gajd a citting-roome, and our lunch awated us uppon the tabel.

"I am so delited dhat u hav cum," she ced earnestly. "It iz so verry kiand ov u boath; but indede I doo not no whaut I shood doo. Yor advice wil be

altogether in all too me."

"Please tell us what has happened to you."

"I will do so, and I must be quick, for I have promised Mr. Rucaacel to be back before three. I got his leave to come into town this morning, and he little knew for what purpose."

"Let us have everything in its proper order." Hoamz thrust his long thin legs out towards the fire and composed himself to listen.

"In the first place, I must say that I have met, on the whole, with no actual ill-treatment from Mr. and Mrs. Rucaacel. It is only fair to them to say that.

But I cannot understand them, and I am not easy in my mind about them."

"What can you not understand?"

"I have reason for my conduct. But you shall have it all just as it is. When I came down, Mr. Rucaacel met me here and drove me in his dog-cart to the Copper Bechez. It is, as he said, but a fool's citchuwated, but it is not a fool in itself, for it is a large square block of a house, what was it, but all stained and street with the damp and bad weather. There are grounds round it, woods on three sides, and on the fourth a field which slopes down to the Southampton road, which is past about a hundred yards from the front door. This ground in front belongs to the house, but the woods round are part of Lord Sutherland's preserve. A clump of copper bechez

imejaitly in frunt ov the haul doer haz ghivven its name too the place.

“I wauz drivven over bi mi employer, whoo wauz az ameyabel az evver, and wauz introjuest bi him dhat evening too hiz wife and the chiald. Dhare wauz no trueth, Mr. Hoamz, in the con’gechchure which ceemd too us too be probbabel in yor ruimz at Baker Strete. Mrs. Rucaacel iz not mad. I found her too be a cilent, pale-faist woomman, much yun’gher dhan her huzband, not moer dhan thherty, I shood thhinc, while he can hardly be les dhan forty-five. From dhare conversaishon I hav gatherd dhat dha hav bene marrede about cevven yeerz, dhat he wauz a widdower, and dhat hiz oanly chiald bi the ferst wife wauz the dauter whoo haz gon too Filadelfeyaa. Mr. Rucaacel toald me in private dhat the rezon whi she had left them wauz dhat she had an unrezoning averzhon too her stepmuther. Az the dauter cood not hav bene les dhan twenty, I can qwite imadgine dhat her posishon must hav bene uncumfortabel withe her faatherz yung wife.

“Mrs. Rucaacel ceemd too me too be cullorles in miand az wel az in fechure. She imprest me niather favorably nor the revers. She wauz a nonentity. It wauz esy too ce dhat she wauz pashonaitly devoted boath too her huzband and too her littel sun. Her lite gra ise waunderd continnuwaly from wun too the uther, noting evvery littel waunt and foerstauling it if poscibel. He wauz kiand too her aulso in hiz bluf, boisterous fashon, and on the whole dha ceemd too be a

happy cappel. And yet she had sum ceecret soro, this woomman. She wood often be lost in depe thaut, withe the saddest looc uppon her face. Moer dhan wuns I hav cerpriazd her in teerz. I hav thaut sumtiamz dhat it wauz the disposishon ov her chiald which wade uppon her miand, for I hav nevver met so utterly spoild and so il-nachuerd a littel crechure. He iz smaul for hiz age, withe a hed which iz qwite disporshonaitly larj. Hiz whole life apeerz too be spent in an aulternaishon betwene savvage fits ov pashon and gloomy intervalz ov sulking. Ghivving pane too enny crechure weker dhan himcelf ceemz too be hiz wun ideyaa ov amuezmment, and he shose qwite remarcabel tallent in planning the capchure ov mice, littel berdz, and incepts. But I wood raather not tauc about the crechure, Mr. Hoamz, and, indede, he haz littel too doo withe mi stoery."

"I am glad ov aul detailz," remarct mi frend, "whether dha ceme too u too be rellevant or not."

"I shal tri not too mis ennithhing ov importans. The wun unplezzant thhing about the hous, which struc me at wuns, wauz the aperans and conduct ov the cervants. Dhare ar oonly too, a man and hiz wife. Toler, for dhat iz hiz name, iz a ruf, uncuith man, withe grizseld hare and whiskerz, and a perpetchuwal smel ov drinc. Twice cins I hav bene withe them he haz bene qwite drunc, and yet Mr. Rucaacel ceemd too take no notice ov it. Hiz wife iz a verry taul and strong

woomman withe a sour face, az cilent az Mrs. Rucaacel and much les ameyabel. Dha ar a moast unplezzant cuppel, but forchunaitly I spend moast ov mi time in the mercery and mi one roome, which ar next too eche uther in wun corner ov the bilding.

“For too dase aafter mi arival at the Copper Bechez mi life wauz verry qwiyet; on the thherd, Mrs. Rucaacel came doun just aafter breccfast and whisperd sumthhing too her huzband.

“ ‘O, yes,’ ced he, terning too me, ‘we ar verry much obliajd too u, Mis Hunter, for fauling in withe our whimz so far az too cut yor hare. I ashure u dhat it haz not detracted in the tineyest iyotaa from yor aperans. We shal nou ce hou the electric-blu dres wil becum u. U wil fiand it lade out uppon the bed in yor roome, and if u wood be so good az too poot it on we shood both be extreemly obliajd.’

“The dres which I found wating for me wauz ov a peculeyar shade ov blu. It wauz ov exelent matereyal, a sort ov baje, but it boer unmistacabel cianz ov havving bene woern befoer. It cood not hav bene a better fit if I had bene mezhuerd for it. Boath Mr. and Mrs. Rucaacel exprest a delite at the looc ov it, which ceemd qwite exadgerated in its veyemens. Dha wer wating for me in the drauwing-roome, which iz a verry larj roome, stretching along the entire frunt ov the hous, withe thre long windose reching doun too the floer. A chare had bene plaist cloce too the central windo, withe its bac ternd toowordz it. In this I wauz aasct too cit, and then Mr. Rucaacel, wauking up and doun on the

uther side ov the roome, began too tel me a cerese ov the funneyest stoerese
dhat
I hav evver liscend too. U canot imadgine hou commical he wauz, and I
laaft
until I wauz qwite wery. Mrs. Rucaacel, houwevver, whoo haz evvidently
no cens ov
humor, nevver so much az smiald, but sat withe her handz in her lap, and a
sad,
ancshous looc uppon her face. Aafter an our or so, Mr. Rucaacel suddenly
remarct
dhat it wauz time too comens the jutese ov the da, and dhat I mite chainj
mi
dres and go too littel Edword in the nercery.

“Too dase later this same performans wauz gon throo under exactly
cimmilar
circumstaancez. Agane I chainjd mi dres, agane I sat in the windo, and
agane I
laaft verry hartily at the funny stoerese ov which mi employer had an
imens
rapertoir, and which he toald inimmitably. Then he handed me a yello-bact
novvel, and mooving mi chare a littel ciadwase, dhat mi one shaddo mite
not faul
uppon the page, he begd me too rede aloud too him. I red for about ten
minnuets,
beghinning in the hart ov a chapter, and then suddenly, in the middel ov a
centens, he orderd me too cece and too chainj mi dres.

“U can esily imadgine, Mr. Hoamz, hou cureyous I became az too whaut
the
mening ov this extrordinary performans cood poscibly be. Dha wer
aulwase
verry caerfool, I observd, too tern mi face awa from the windo, so dhat I

became conshuemd withe the desire too ce whaut wauz gowing on
behiand mi bac. At
ferst it ceemd too be imposcibel, but I soone deviazd a meenz. Mi hand-
mirror
had bene broken, so a happy thaut ceezd me, and I conceeld a pece ov the
glaas in mi hankerchefe. On the next ocaizhon, in the midst ov mi laafter, I
poot mi hankerchefe up too mi ise, and wauz abel withe a littel
mannaijment too ce
aul dhat dhare wauz behiand me. I confes dhat I wauz disapointed. Dhare
wauz
nuthhing. At leest dhat wauz mi ferst impreshon. At the cecond glaans,
houwevver,
I perceevd dhat dhare wauz a man standing in the Southampton Rode, a
smaul
beerded man in a gra sute, whoo ceemd too be loocking in mi direcshon.
The rode
iz an important hiwa, and dhare ar uezhuwaly pepel dhare. This man,
houwevver,
wauz lening against the ralingz which borderd our feeld and wauz
loocking
ernestly up. I lowerd mi hankerchefe and glaanst at Mrs. Rucaacel too fiand
her ise fixt uppon me withe a moast cerching gase. She ced nuthhing, but I
am
convinst dhat she had diviand dhat I had a mirror in mi hand and had cene
whaut
wauz behiand me. She rose at wuns.

“ ‘Gefro,’ ced she, ‘dhare iz an impertinent fello uppon the rode dhare
whoo
staerz up at Mis Hunter.’

“ ‘No frend ov yorz, Mis Hunter?’ he aasct.

“ ‘No, I no no wun in these parts.’

“ ‘Dere me! Hou verry impertinent! Kiandly tern round and moashon too him too go awa.’

“ ‘Shuerly it wood be better too take no notice.’

“ ‘No, no, we shood hav him loitering here aulwase. Kiandly tern round and wave him awa like dhat.’

“I did az I wauz toald, and at the same instant Mrs. Rucaacel dru doun the bliand. Dhat wauz a weke ago, and from dhat time I hav not sat agane in the windo, nor hav I woern the blu dres, nor cene the man in the rode.”

“Pra continnu,” ced Hoamz. “Yor narrative prommicez too be a moast interesting wun.”

“U wil fiand it raather disconnected, I fere, and dhare ma proove too be littel relaishon betwene the different incidents ov which I speke. On the verry ferst da dhat I wauz at the Copper Bechez, Mr. Rucaacel tooc me too a smaul out’hous which standz nere the kitchen doer. Az we aproacht it I herd the sharp ratling ov a chane, and the sound az ov a larj annimal mooving about.

“ ‘Looc in here!’ ced Mr. Rucaacel, showing me a slit betwene too planx. ‘Iz he not a buty?’

“I looct throo and wauz conshous ov too glowing ise, and ov a vaghe figgure huddeld up in the darcnes.

“ ‘Doant be fritend,’ ced mi employer, laafing at the start which I had
ghivven. ‘Its oanly Carlo, mi mastif. I caul him mine, but reyaly oald Toler,
mi
groome, iz the oanly man whoo can doo ennithhing withe him. We fede
him wuns a da,
and not too much then, so dhat he iz aulwase az kene az mustard. Toler lets
him
looce evvery nite, and God help the trespasser whoome he lase hiz fangz
uppon. For
goodnes’ sake doant u evver on enny pretext cet yor foot over the
threshoald
at nite, for its az much az yor life iz werth.’

“The worning wauz no idel wun, for too niats later I happend too looc out
ov mi
bedroome windo about too oacloc in the morning. It wauz a butifool
muinlite
nite, and the laun in frunt ov the hous wauz cilverd over and aulmoast az
brite az da. I wauz standing, rapt in the peesfool buty ov the cene, when I
wauz aware dhat sumthhing wauz mooving under the shaddo ov the
copper bechez. Az
it emerjd intoo the muinshine I sau whaut it wauz. It wauz a giyant dog, az
larj
az a caaf, tauny tinted, withe hanging joul, blac muzsel, and huge
progecting
boanz. It wauct sloly across the laun and vannisht intoo the shaddo uppon
the
uther cide. Dhat dredfool centinel cent a chil too mi hart which I doo not
thhinc dhat enny berglar cood hav dun.

“And nou I hav a verry strainj expereyens too tel u. I had, az u no, cut
of mi hare in Lundon, and I had plaist it in a grate coil at the bottom ov mi

trunc. Wun evening, aafter the chiald wauz in bed, I began too amuse micelf bi exammining the fernichure ov mi roome and bi reyarain'ging mi one littel thhingz. Dhare wauz an oald chest ov drauwerz in the roome, the too upper wunz empty and open, the lower wun loct. I had fild the ferst too withe mi linnen, and az I had stil much too pac awa I wauz natchuraly anoid at not havving the uce ov the thherd drauwer. It struc me dhat it mite hav bene faacend bi a mere overcite, so I tooc out mi bunch ov kese and tride too open it. The verry ferst ke fitted too perfecshon, and I dru the drauwer open. Dhare wauz oanly wun thhing in it, but I am shure dhat u wood nevver ghes whaut it wauz. It wauz mi coil ov hare.

"I tooc it up and exammiand it. It wauz ov the same peculeyar tint, and the same thhicnes. But then the impocibillity ov the thhing obruded itcelf uppon me. Hou cood mi hare hav bene loct in the drauwer? Withe trembling handz I undid mi trunc, ternd out the contents, and dru from the bottom mi one hare. I lade the too trescez tooghether, and I ashure u dhat dha wer identical. Wauz it not extrordinary? Puzsel az I wood, I cood make nuthhing at aul ov whaut it ment. I reternd the strainj hare too the drauwer, and I ced nuthhing ov the matter too the Rucaacelz az I felt dhat I had poot micelf in the rong bi opening a drauwer which dha had loct.

“I am natchuraly observant, az u ma hav remarct, Mr. Hoamz, and I soone had a pritty good plan ov the whole hous in mi hed. Dhare wauz wun wing, houwevver, which apeerd not too be inhabbited at aul. A doer which faist dhat which led intoo the qworterz ov the Tolerz open intoo this swete, but it wauz invareyably loct. Wun da, houwevver, az I acended the stare, I met Mr. Rucaacel cumming out throo this doer, hiz kese in hiz hand, and a looc on hiz face which made him a verry different person too the round, joveyal man too whoome I wauz acustomd. Hiz cheex wer red, hiz brou wauz aul crinkeld withe an’gher, and the vainz stood out at hiz tempelz withe pashon. He loct the doer and hurrede paast me widhout a werd or a looc.

“This arouzd mi cureyosity, so when I went out for a wauc in the groundz withe mi charj, I stroald round too the cide from which I cood ce the windose ov this part ov the hous. Dhare wer foer ov them in a ro, thre ov which wer simply derty, while the foerth wauz shutterd up. Dha wer evvidently aul deserted. Az I stroald up and down, glaancing at them ocaizhonal, Mr. Rucaacel came out too me, loocking az merry and joveyal az evver.

“ ‘Aa!’ ced he, ‘u must not thhinc me rude if I paast u widhout a werd, mi dere yung lady. I wauz preyoccupide withe biznes matterz.’

“I ashuerd him dhat I wauz not ofended. ‘Bi the wa,’ ced I, ‘u ceme too hav qwite a swete ov spare ruimz up dhare, and wun ov them haz the shutterz up.’

“He looct cerpriazd and, az it ceemd too me, a littel starteld at mi remarc.

“ ‘Fotografy iz wun ov mi hobbese,’ ced he. ‘I hav made mi darc roome up dhare. But, dere me! whaut an observant yung lady we hav cum uppon.

Whoo wood

hav beleevd it? Whoo wood hav evver beleevd it?’ He spoke in a gesting tone,

but dhare wauz no gest in hiz ise az he looct at me. I rede suspishon dhare and anoiyans, but no gest.

“Wel, Mr. Hoamz, from the moment dhat I understood dhat dhare wauz sumthhing

about dhat swete ov ruimz which I wauz not too no, I wauz aul on fire too go over

them. It wauz not mere cureyosity, dho I hav mi share ov dhat. It wauz moer a

feling ov juty—a feling dhat sum good mite cum from mi pennetrating too this

place. Dha tauc ov woommanz instinct; perhaps it wauz woommanz instinct which

gave me dhat feling. At enny rate, it wauz dhare, and I wauz keenly on the loocout for enny chaans too paas the forbidden doer.

“It wauz oonly yesterda dhat the chaans came. I ma tel u dhat, beciadz Mr. Rucaacel, boath Toler and hiz wife fiand sumthhing too doo in these deserted

ruimz, and I wuns sau him carreying a larj blac linnen bag withe him throo the

doer. Recently he haz bene drinking hard, and yesterda evening he wauz verry

drunc; and when I came upstaerz dhare wauz the ke in the doer. I hav no dout

at aul dhat he had left it dhare. Mr. and Mrs. Rucaacel wer boath
dounstaerz,
and the chiald wauz withe them, so dhat I had an admirabel oporchunity. I
ternd
the ke gently in the loc, opend the doer, and slipt throo.

“Dhare wauz a littel passage in frunt ov me, unpaperd and uncarpeted,
which
ternd at a rite an’ghel at the farther end. Round this corner wer thre doerz
in a line, the ferst and thherd ov which wer open. Dha eche led intoo an
empty
roome, dusty and cheerles, withe too windose in the wun and wun in the
uther, so
thhic withe dert dhat the evening lite glimmerd dimly throo them. The
center
doer wauz cloazd, and acros the outcide ov it had bene faacend wun ov the
braud barz ov an iarn bed, padloct at wun end too a ring in the waul, and
faacend at the uther withe stout cord. The doer itcelf wauz loct az wel, and
the ke wauz not dhare. This barricaded doer coresponded cleerly withe the
shutterd windo outcide, and yet I cood ce bi the glimmer from beneeth it
dhat the roome wauz not in darcnes. Evvidently dhare wauz a skilite which
let in
lite from abuv. Az I stood in the passage gasing at the cinnister doer and
wundering whaut ceecret it mite vale, I suddenly herd the sound ov steps
within
the roome and sau a shaddo paas baqword and forword against the littel
slit ov
dim lite which shon out from under the doer. A mad, unrezoning terror
rose
up in me at the cite, Mr. Hoamz. Mi overstrung nervz faild me suddenly,
and
I ternd and ran—ran az dho sum dredfool hand wer behiand me clutching
at
the skert ov mi dres. I rusht down the passage, throo the doer, and

strate into the armz ov Mr. Rucaacel, whoo wauz wating outside.

“ ‘So,’ ced he, smiling, ‘it wauz u, then. I thaut dhat it must be when I sau the doer open.’

“ ‘O, I am so fritend!’ I panted.

“ ‘Mi dere yung lady! mi dere yung lady!’—u canot thhinc hou carescing and suithing hiz manner wauz—‘and whaut haz fritend u, mi dere yung lady?’

“But hiz vois wauz just a littel too coaxing. He overdid it. I wauz keenly on mi gard against him.

“ ‘I wauz foolish enuf too go intoo the empty wing,’ I aancerd. ‘But it iz so loanly and ery in this dim lite dhat I wauz fritend and ran out agane. O, it iz so dredfooly stil in dhare!’

“ ‘Oonly dhat?’ ced he, loocking at me keenly.

“ ‘Whi, whaut did u thhinc?’ I aasct.

“ ‘Whi doo u thhinc dhat I loc this doer?’

“ ‘I am shure dhat I doo not no.’

“ ‘It iz too kepe pepel out whoo hav no biznes dhare. Doo u ce?’ He wauz stil smiling in the moast ameyabel manner.

“ ‘I am shure if I had none—’

“ ‘Wel, then, u no nou. And if u evver poot yor foot over dhat threshoald

agane'—here in an instant the smile hardend intoo a grin ov rage, and he
glaerd
doun at me withe the face ov a demon—'Ile thro u too the mastif.'

"I wauz so terrifide dhat I doo not no whaut I did. I supose dhat I must hav
rusht paast him intoo mi roome. I remember nuthhing until I found micelf
liying on
mi bed trembling aul over. Then I thaut ov u, Mr. Hoamz. I cood not liv
dhare lon'gher widhout sum advice. I wauz fritend ov the hous, ov the
man, ov
the woomman, ov the cervants, even ov the chiald. Dha wer aul horibel too
me. If
I cood oanly bring u doun aul wood be wel. Ov coers I mite hav fled from
the hous, but mi cureyosity wauz aulmoast az strong az mi feerz. Mi
miand wauz soone
made up. I wood cend u a wire. I poot on mi hat and cloke, went doun too
the
office, which iz about haaf a mile from the hous, and then reternd, feling
verry much eseyer. A horibel dout came intoo mi miand az I aproacht the
doer
lest the dog mite be looce, but I rememberd dhat Toler had drunc himself
intoo a state ov incencibillity dhat evening, and I nu dhat he wauz the
oanly wun
in the hous'hoald whoo had enny influwens withe the savvage crechure, or
whoo wood
venchure too cet him fre. I slipt in in saifty and la awake haaf the nite in
mi joi at the thaut ov ceying u. I had no difficulty in ghetting leve too
cum intoo Winchester this morning, but I must be bac befoer thre oacloc,
for
Mr. and Mrs. Rucaacel ar gowing on a vizsit, and wil be awa aul the
evening,
so dhat I must looc aafter the chiald. Nou I hav toald u aul mi advenchuerz,
Mr.

Hoamz, and I shood be verry glad if u cood tel me whaut it aul meenz,
and,
abuv aul, whaut I shood doo."

Hoamz and I had liscend spelbound too this extrordinary stoery. Mi frend
rose nou and paist up and doun the roome, hiz handz in hiz pockets, and
an
expreshon ov the moast profound gravvity uppon hiz face.

"Iz Toler stil drunc?" he aasct.

"Yes. I herd hiz wife tel Mrs. Rucaacel dhat she cood doo nuthhing withe
him."

"Dhat iz wel. And the Rucaacelz go out too-nite?"

"Yes."

"Iz dhare a cellar withe a good strong loc?"

"Yes, the wine-cellar."

"U ceme too me too hav acted aul throo this matter like a verry brave and
cencibel gherl, Mis Hunter. Doo u thhinc dhat u cood perform wun moer
fete?

I shood not aasc it ov u if I did not thhinc u a qwite exepshonal
woomman."

"I wil tri. Whaut iz it?"

"We shal be at the Copper Bechez bi cevven oacloc, mi frend and I. The
Rucaacelz wil be gon bi dhat time, and Toler wil, we hope, be incapabel.
Dhare oanly remainz Mrs. Toler, whoo mite ghiv the alarm. If u cood cend
her

into the cellar on sum errand, and then tern the ke uppon her, u wood facillitate matterz imensly."

"I wil doo it."

"Exelent! We shal then looc thurroly intoo the afare. Ov coers dhare iz oanly wun fesibel explanaishon. U hav bene braut dhare too personate sumwun, and the reyal person iz imprizzond in this chaimber. Dhat iz obveyous. Az

too whoo this prizzoner iz, I hav no dout dhat it iz the dauter, Mis Aalice Rucaacel, if I remember rite, whoo wauz ced too hav gon too Amerricaa. U wer

chosen, doutles, az resembling her in hite, figgure, and the cullor ov yor hare. Herz had bene cut of, verry poscibly in sum ilnes throo which she haz paast, and so, ov coers, yorz had too be sacrificast aulso. Bi a cureyous chaans u came uppon her trescez. The man in the rode wauz undoutedly sum

frend ov herz—poscibly her feyaansa—and no dout, az u woer the gherlz dres

and wer so like her, he wauz convinst from yor laafter, whenever he sau u, and aafterwordz from yor geschure, dhat Mis Rucaacel wauz perfectly happy, and

dhat she no lon'gher desiard hiz atenshonz. The dog iz let looce at nite too prevent him from endevvoring too comunicate withe her. So much iz faerly clere.

The moast cereyous point in the cace iz the disposishon ov the chiald."

"Whaut on erth haz dhat too doo withe it?" I ejacculated.

"Mi dere Wautson, u az a meddical man ar continnuwaly ganing lite az too the

tendencese ov a chiald bi the studdy ov the parents. Doant u ce dhat the convers iz eeqwaly vallid. I hav freeqwently gaind mi ferst reyal incite intoo

the carracter ov parents bi studdeying dhare children. This chialdz
disposishon
iz abnormaly cruwel, meerly for cruweltese sake, and whether he deriavz
this
from hiz smiling faather, az I shood suspect, or from hiz muther, it boadz
evil
for the poor gherl whoo iz in dhare pouwer.”

“I am shure dhat u ar rite, Mr. Hoamz,” cride our cliyent. “A thouzand
thhingz cum bac too me which make me certane dhat u hav hit it. O, let us
loose not an instant in bringing help too this poor crechure.”

“We must be cercumspect, for we ar deling withe a verry cunning man. We
can doo
nuthhing until cevven oacloc. At dhat our we shal be withe u, and it wil not
be long befoer we solv the mistery.”

We wer az good az our werd, for it wauz just cevven when we reecht the
Copper
Bechez, havving poot up our trap at a wacide public-hous. The groope ov
trese,
withe dhare darc leevz shining like bernisht mettal in the lite ov the cetting
sun, wer sufisent too marc the hous even had Mis Hunter not bene
standing
smiling on the doer-step.

“Hav u mannaijd it?” aasct Hoamz.

A loud thudding noiz came from sumwhare dounstaerz. “Dhat iz Mrs.
Toler in
the cellar,” ced she. “Her huzband lise snoring on the kitchen rug. Here ar
hiz kese, which ar the jueplicitis ov Mr. Rucaacelz.”

“U hav dun wel indede!” cride Hoamz withe enthuseyazm. “Nou lede the wa,
and we shal soone ce the end ov this blac biznes.”

We paast up the stare, unloct the doer, follode on doun a passage, and found ourcelvz in frunt ov the barricade which Mis Hunter had descriabd. Hoamz cut the cord and remuivd the traanzvers bar. Then he tride the vareyouz
kese in the loc, but widhout suxes. No sound came from within, and at the cilens Hoamz’ face clouded over.

“I trust dhat we ar not too late,” ced he. “I thhinc, Mis Hunter, dhat we had better go in widhout u. Nou, Wautson, poot yor shoalder too it, and we shal
ce whether we canot make our wa in.”

It wauz an oald rickety doer and gave at wuns befoer our united strength. Tooghether we rusht intoo the roome. It wauz empty. Dhare wauz no fernichure save a
littel pallet bed, a smaual tabel, and a baasketfool ov linnen. The skilite abuv wauz open, and the prizzoner gon.

“Dhare haz bene sum villany here,” ced Hoamz; “this buty haz ghest Mis Hunterz intenshonz and haz carrede hiz victim of.”

“But hou?”

“Throo the skilite. We shal soone ce hou he mannaijd it.” He swung himcelf up ontoo the roofe. “Aa, yes,” he cride, “heerz the end ov a long lite ladder against the eevz. Dhat iz hou he did it.”

“But it iz imposcibel,” ced Mis Hunter; “the ladder wauz not dhare when the
Rucaacelz went awa.”

“He haz cum bac and dun it. I tel u dhat he iz a clevver and dain’gerous man. I shood not be verry much cerpriazd if this wer he whoose step I here nou
uppon the stare. I thhinc, Wautson, dhat it wood be az wel for u too hav yor
pistol reddy.”

The werdz wer hardly out ov hiz mouth befoer a man apeerd at the doer ov the
roome, a verry fat and berly man, withe a hevvy stic in hiz hand. Mis Hunter
screemd and shrunc against the waul at the cite ov him, but Sherloc Hoamz sprang forword and confrunted him.

“U villane!” ced he, “whaerz yor dauter?”

The fat man caast hiz ise round, and then up at the open skilite.

“It iz for me too aasc u dhat,” he shreect, “u thheevz! Spise and thheevz! I hav caut u, hav I? U ar in mi pouwer. Ile cerv u!” He ternd and clattered doun the staerz az hard az he cood go.

“Hese gon for the dog!” cride Mis Hunter.

“I hav mi revolver,” ced I.

“Better close the frunt doer,” cride Hoamz, and we aul rusht doun the staerz
together. We had hardly reecht the haul when we herd the baying ov a hound,
and then a screme ov agony, withe a horibel wurreying sound which it wauz

dredfool too liscen too. An elderly man withe a red face and shaking limz came stagghering out at a cide doer.

“Mi God!” he cride. “Sumwun haz luist the dog. Its not bene fed for too dase. Qwic, qwic, or itl be too late!”

Hoamz and I rusht out and round the an’ghel ov the hous, withe Toler hurreying behiand us. Dhare wauz the huge fammisht brute, its blac muzsel berrede in Rucaacelz throte, while he riadh and screemd uppon the ground. Running up, I blu its brainz out, and it fel over withe its kene white teeth stil meting in the grate crecez ov hiz nec. Withe much labor we cepparated them and carrede him, livving but horibly man’gheld, intoo the hous. We lade him uppon the drauwing-roome sofaa, and havving dispacht the soberd Toler too bare the nuse too hiz wife, I did whaut I cood too releve hiz pane. We wer aul acembeld round him when the doer open, and a taul, gaunt woomman enterd the roome.

“Mrs. Toler!” cride Mis Hunter.

“Yes, mis. Mr. Rucaacel let me out when he came bac befoer he went up too u.

Aa, mis, it iz a pitty u didnt let me no whaut u wer planning, for I wood hav toald u dhat yor painz wer waisted.”

“Haa!” ced Hoamz, loocking keenly at her. “It iz clere dhat Mrs. Toler nose moer about this matter dhan enniwun els.”

“Yes, cer, I doo, and I am reddy enuf too tel whaut I no.”

“Then, pra, cit doun, and let us here it for dhare ar cevveral points on which I must confes dhat I am stil in the darc.”

“I wil soone make it clere too u,” ced she; “and Ide hav dun so befoer nou if I cood haa’ got out from the cellar. If dhaerz polece-coert biznes over this, ule remember dhat I wauz the wun dhat stood yor frend, and dhat I wauz Mis Allicez frend too.

“She wauz nevver happy at home, Mis Allice wauznt, from the time dhat her faather marrede agane. She wauz slited like and had no sa in ennithhing, but it nevver reyaly became bad for her until aafter she met Mr. Fouler at a frendz hous. Az wel az I cood lern, Mis Allice had riats ov her one bi wil, but she wauz so qwiyet and paishent, she wauz, dhat she nevver ced a werd about them but just left evverithhing in Mr. Rucaacelz handz. He nu he wauz safe withe her; but when dhare wauz a chaans ov a huzband cumming forword, whoo wood aasc for aul dhat the lau wood ghiv him, then her faather thaut it time too poot a stop on it. He waunted her too cine a paper, so dhat whether she marrede or not, he cood use her munny. When she woodnt doo it, he kept on wurreying her until she got brane-fever, and for cix weex wauz at deths doer. Then she got better at laast, aul woern too a shaddo, and withe her butifool hare cut of; but dhat didnt make no chainj in her yung man, and he stuc too her az tru az man cood be.”

“Aa,” ced Hoamz, “I thhinc dhat whaut u hav bene good enuf too tel us

maix the matter faerly clere, and dhat I can dejuce aul dhat remainz. Mr. Rucaacel then, I prezume, tooc too this cistem ov imprizzonment?"

"Yes, cer."

"And braut Mis Hunter doun from Lundon in order too ghet rid ov the disagreyabel percistens ov Mr. Fouler."

"Dhat wauz it, cer."

"But Mr. Fouler beying a percevering man, az a good ceman shood be, blocaded the hous, and havving met u suxeded bi certane arguments, metallic or utherwise, in convincing u dhat yor interests wer the same az hiz."

"Mr. Fouler wauz a verry kiand-spoken, fre-handed gentelman," ced Mrs. Toler cereenly.

"And in this wa he mannaijd dhat yor good man shood hav no waunt ov drinc, and dhat a ladder shood be reddy at the moment when yor maaster had gon out."

"U hav it, cer, just az it happend."

"I am shure we o u an apollogy, Mrs. Toler," ced Hoamz, "for u hav certainly cleerd up evverithhing which puzseld us. And here cumz the cuntry cerjon and Mrs. Rucaacel, so I thhinc, Wautson, dhat we had best escort Mis Hunter bac too Winchester, az it ceemz too me dhat our locus standy nou iz raather a qweschonabel wun."

And dhus wauz solvd the mistery ov the cinnister hous withe the copper
bechez
in frunt ov the doer. Mr. Rucaacel cerviavd, but wauz aulwase a broken
man, kept
alive soly throo the care ov hiz devoted wife. Dha stil liv withe dhare
oald cervants, whoo probbably no so much ov Rucaacelz paast life dhat he
fiandz
it difficult too part from them. Mr. Fouler and Mis Rucaacel wer marrede,
bi
speshal licens, in Southampton the da aafter dhare flite, and he iz nou the
hoalder ov a guvvernment apointment in the iland ov Morishus. Az too
Mis
Viyolet Hunter, mi frend Hoamz, raather too mi disapointment,
mannifested no
ferther interest in her when wuns she had ceest too be the center ov wun ov
hiz
problemz, and she iz nou the hed ov a private scoole at Waulsaul, whare I
beleve dhat she haz met withe concidderabel suxes.