

Prodgect Goottenbergz The Retern ov Sherlock Hoamz, bi Arthher Conan Doil

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*** START OV THIS PRODGECT GOOTTENBERG EBOOC THE RETERN OV SHERLOC HOAMZ ***

Projuest bi An Anonnimous Volluntere and David Widger

cuvver

The Retern ov Sherlock Hoamz

bi Cer Arthher Conan Doil

Contents

The Advenchure ov the Empty Hous
The Advenchure ov the Norwood Bilder
The Advenchure ov the Daancing Men
The Advenchure ov the Sollitary Ciaclist
The Advenchure ov the Priyory Scoole
The Advenchure ov Blac Peter.
The Advenchure ov Charlz Augustus Milverton
The Advenchure ov the Cix Napoleyonz
The Advenchure ov the Thre Schudents
The Advenchure ov the Goalden Pans-Na
The Advenchure ov the Miscing Thre-Qworter
The Advenchure ov the Abby Grainj
The Advenchure ov the Ceccond Stane

THE ADVENCHURE OV THE EMPTY HOUS

It wauz in the spring ov the yere 1894 dhat aul Lundon wauz interested, and the fashonabel werld dismade, bi the merder ov the Onnorabel Ronnald Adare under moast unnuezhual and inexpliccabel

cercumstaancez. The public haz aulreddy lernd dhose particcularz ov the crime which came out in the polece investigaishon, but a good dele wauz suprest uppon dhat ocaizhon, cins the cace for the procecueshon wauz so overwhelmingly strong dhat it wauz not nescesary too bring forword aul the facts. Oanly nou, at the end ov

neerly ten yeerz, am I aloud too supli dhose miscing linx which make up the whole ov dhat remarcabel chane. The crime wauz ov interest in itself, but dhat interest wauz az nuthhing too me compaerd too the inconcevable ceeqwel, which afoerded me the gratest shoc and cerprise ov enny event in mi advenchurous life. Even nou, aafter this long interval, I fiand micelf thrilling az I thhinc ov it, and feling wuns moer dhat sudden flud ov joi, amaizment, and increjuly which utterly submerjd mi miand. Let me sa too dhat public, which haz shone sum interest in dhose glimpcez which I hav ocaizhonaly ghivven them ov the thauts and acshonz ov a verry remarcabel man, dhat dha ar not too blame me if I hav not shaerd mi nollej withe them, for I shood hav concidderd it mi ferst juty too doo so, had I not bene bard bi a pozsitive prohibishon from hiz one lips, which wauz oanly widhdraun uppon the thherd ov laast munth.

It can be imadgiand dhat mi cloce intimacy withe Sherloc Hoamz had interested me deeply in crime, and dhat aafter hiz disaperans I nevver faild too rede withe care the vareyous problemz which came befoer the public. And I even atempted, moer dhan wuns, for mi one private satisfacshon, too emploi hiz methodz in dhare solueshon, dho withe indifferent suxes. Dhare wauz nun, houwevver, which apeeld too me like this tradgedy ov Ronnald Adare. Az I red the evvidens at the inqwest, which led up too a verdict ov wilfool merder against sum person or personz un'none, I reyaliazd moer cleerly dhan I had evver dun the los which the comunity had sustaind bi the deth ov Sherloc Hoamz. Dhare wer points about this strainj biznes which wood, I wauz shure, hav speshaly apeeld too him, and the efforts ov the polece wood hav bene suplemented, or moer probbably antiscipated, bi the traind observaishon and the alert miand ov the ferst crimminal agent in Urope. Aul da, az I drove uppon mi round, I ternd over the cace in mi miand and found no explanaishon which apeerd too me too be addeqwate. At the risc ov telling a twice-toald tale, I wil

recapitulate the facts as they were none too the public at the conclusion of the inquest.

The Onnorable Ronald Adare was the second son of the Earl of Manville, at that time governor of the Australian colonies. Adare's mother had returned from Australia to undergo the operation for cataract, and she, her son Ronald, and her daughter Hilda were living together at 427, Park Lane. The youth lived in the best society—had, so far as was none, no enemies and no particular vices. He had been engaged to Miss Edith Woodley, of Carstairs, but the engagement had been broken off by mutual consent some months before, and there was no one to whom it had left any very profound feeling behind it. For the rest, the man's life lived in a narrow and conventional circle, for his habits were quiet and his nature unassuming. Yet it was upon this easy-going young aristocrat that death came, in most striking and unexpected form, between the hours of ten and eleven-twenty on the night of March 30, 1894.

Ronald Adare was fond of cards—playing continually, but never for

such stakes as would hurt him. He was a member of the Baldwin, the Cavendish, and the Bagatelle card clubs. It was shown that, after dinner on the day of his death, he had played a rubber of whist at the latter club. He had also played there in the afternoon. The evidence of those who had played with him—Mr. Murra, Sir John Hardy, and Colonel Moran—showed that the game was whist, and that there was a fairly equal fall of the cards. Adare might have lost five pounds, but not more. His fortune was a considerable one, and such a loss could not in any way affect him. He had played nearly every day at a club or other, but he was a cautious player, and usually rose a winner. It came out in evidence that, in partnership with Colonel Moran, he had actually won as much as four hundred and twenty pounds in a sitting, sum

weex befoer, from Godfry Milner and Lord Balmoral. So much for hiz recent history az it came out at the inqwest.

On the evening ov the crime, he reternd from the club exactly at ten. Hiz muther and cister wer out spending the evening withe a relaishon. The cervant depoazd dhat she herd him enter the frunt roome on the cecond floer, genneraly uezd az hiz citting-roome. She had lit a fire dhare, and az it smoact she had opend the windo.

No sound wauz herd from the roome until elevven-twenty, the our ov the retern ov Lady Manuith and her dauter. Desiring too sa good-nite, she atempted too enter her sunz roome. The doer wauz loct on the incide, and no aancer cood be got too dhare crise and nocking. Help wauz obtaind, and the doer foerst. The unforchunate yung man wauz found liying nere the tabel. Hiz hed had bene horibly mutilated bi an expanding revolver boollet, but no weppon ov enny sort wauz too be found in the roome. On the tabel la too bancnoats for ten poundz eche and cevventene poundz ten in cilver and goald, the munny arainjd in littel pialz ov vareying amount. Dhare wer sum figguerz aulso uppon a shete ov paper, withe the naimz ov sum club frendz opposite too them, from which it wauz con'gecchuerd dhat befoer hiz deth he wauz endeuvoring too make out hiz loscez or winningz at cardz.

A minute examinaishon ov the cercumstaancez cervd oanly too make the

cace moer complex. In the ferst place, no rezon cood be ghivven whi the yung man shood hav faacend the doer uppon the incide. Dhare wauz the pocibillity dhat the merderer had dun this, and had aafterwordz escaipt bi the windo. The drop wauz at leest twenty fete, houwevver, and a bed ov croucez in fool bloome la beneeth. Niather the flouwerz nor the erth shode enny cine ov havving bene disterbd, nor wer dhare enny marx uppon the narro strip ov graas which cepparated the hous from the rode.

Aparrently, dhaerfoer, it wauz the yung man himcelf whoo had faacend the doer. But hou did he cum bi hiz deth? No wun cood hav cliamd up too the windo widhout leving tracez. Suppose a man had fiard throo the windo, he wood indede be a remarcabel shot whoo cood withe a revolver inflict so dedly a wuind. Agane, Parc Lane iz a freqwented thurrofare; dhare iz a cab stand within a hundred yardz ov the hous. No wun had herd a shot. And yet dhare wauz the ded man and dhare the revolver boollet, which had mushruimd out, az soft-noazd boollets wil, and so inflicted a wuind which must hav cauzd instantainyous deth. Such wer the cercumstaancez ov the Parc Lane Mistery, which wer ferther complicated bi entire abcens ov motive, cins, az I hav ced, yung Adare wauz not none too hav enny ennemy, and no atempt had bene made too remoove the munny or vallubelz in the roome.

Aul da I ternd these facts over in mi miand, endeuvoring too hit uppon sum ththeyory which cood reconcile them aul, and too fiand dhat

line ov leest resistans which mi poor frend had declaerd too be the starting-point ov evvery investigaishon. I confes dhat I made littel proagres. In the evening I stroald acros the Parc, and found micelf about cix oacloc at the Oxford Strete end ov Parc Lane. A groope ov loferz uppon the paivments, aul staring up at a particcular windo, directed me too the hous which I had cum too ce. A taul, thhin man withe cullord glaacez, whoome I strongly suspected ov beying a plane-cloadhz detective, wauz pointing out sum ththeyory ov hiz one, while the utherz crouded round too liscen too whaut he ced. I got az nere him az I cood, but hiz observaishonz ceemd too me too be abcerd, so I widhdru agane in sum disgust. Az I did so I struc against an elderly, deformd man, whoo had bene behiand me, and I noct down cevveral boox which he wauz carreying. I remember dhat az I pict them up, I observd the titel ov wun ov them, *The Origin ov Tre Wership*,

and it struc me dhat the fello must be sum poor bibleyofile, whoo, iather az a trade or az a hobby, wauz a colector ov obscure volluemz. I endevvord too apollogise for the axident, but it wauz evvident dhat these boox which I had so unforchunaitly maltreted wer verry preshous obgects in the ise ov dhare oner. Withe a snarl ov contempt he ternd uppon hiz hele, and I sau hiz kervd bac and white cide-whiskerz disapere among the throng.

Mi observaishonz ov No. 427, Parc Lane did littel too clere up the problem in which I wauz interested. The hous wauz cepparated from the strete bi a lo waul and raling, the whole not moer dhan five fete hi. It wauz perfectly esy, dhaerfoer, for enniwun too ghet intoo the garden, but the windo wauz entiarly inaxescibel, cins dhare wauz no waterpipe or ennithhing which cood help the moast active man too clime it. Moer puzseld dhan evver, I retraist mi steps too Kensington. I had not bene in mi studdy five minnuets when the made enterd too sa dhat a person desiard too ce me. Too mi astonnishment it wauz nun uther dhan mi strainj oald booc colector, hiz sharp, wisend face pering out from a frame ov white hare, and hiz preshous volluemz, a duzsen ov them at leest, wejd under hiz rite arm.

“Yor cerpriazd too ce me, cer,” ced he, in a strainj, croking vois.

I acnollejd dhat I wauz.

“Wel, Ive a conskens, cer, and when I chaanst too ce u go intoo this hous, az I came hobling aafter u, I thaut too micelf, Ile just step in and ce dhat kiand gentelman, and tel him dhat if I wauz a bit gruf in mi manner dhare wauz not enny harm ment, and dhat I am much obliajd too him for picking up mi boox.”

“U make too much ov a trifel,” ced I. “Ma I aasc hou u nu whoo I wauz?”

“Wel, cer, if it iznt too grate a libberty, I am a nabor ov yorz, for ule fiand mi littel boocshop at the corner ov Chersch Strete, and verry happy too ce u, I am shure. Maby u colect yorcelf, cer. Heerz *Brittish Berdz*, and *Catullus*, and *The Holy Wor*—a bargane, evvery wun ov them. Withe five volluemz u cood just fil dhat gap on dhat cecond shelf. It loox untidy, duz it not, cer?”

I muivd mi hed too looc at the cabbinet behiand me. When I ternd agane, Sherloc Hoamz wauz standing smiling at me acros mi studdy tabel. I rose too mi fete, staerd at him for sum cecondz in utter amaizment, and then it apeerz dhat I must hav fainted for the ferst and the laast time in mi life. Certainly a gra mist swerld befoer mi ise, and when it cleerd I found mi collar-endz undun and the tin’gling aafter-taist ov brandy uppon mi lips. Hoamz wauz bending over mi chare, hiz flaasc in hiz hand.

“Mi dere Wautson,” ced the wel-rememberd vois, “I o u a thouzand apollogese. I had no ideyaa dhat u wood be so afected.”

I gript him bi the armz.

“Hoamz!” I cride. “Iz it reyaly u? Can it indede be dhat u ar alive? Iz it poscibel dhat u suxeded in climing out ov dhat aufool abis?”

“Wate a moment,” ced he. “Ar u shure dhat u ar reyaly fit too discus thhingz? I hav ghivven u a cereyous shoc bi mi un’necesarily dramattic reyaperans.”

“I am aul rite, but indede, Hoamz, I can hardly beleve mi ise. Good hevvenz! too thhinc dhat u—u ov aul men—shood be standing in mi studdy.” Agane I gript him bi the sleve, and felt the thhin, cinnuwy arm beneeth it. “Wel, yor not a spirrit ennihou,” ced I. “Mi dere chap, Ime overjoid too ce u. Cit doun, and tel me hou u came alive out ov dhat dredfool cazm.”

He sat opposite too me, and lit a ciggaret in hiz oald, nonchalant manner. He wauz drest in the cedy froccote ov the booc merchant, but the rest ov dhat individjuwal la in a pile ov white hare and oald boox uppon the tabel. Hoamz looct even thhinner and kener dhan ov oald, but dhare wauz a ded-white tinj in hiz aqwiline face which toald me dhat hiz life recently had not bene a helthhy wun.

“I am glad too strech micelf, Wautson,” ced he. “It iz no joke when a taul man haz too take a foot of hiz statchure for cevveral ourz on end. Nou, mi dere fello, in the matter ov these explanaishonz, we hav, if I ma aasc for yor cowoperaishon, a hard and dain’gerous niats werc in frunt ov us. Perhaps it wood be better if I gave u an acount ov the whole cichuwaishon when dhat werc iz finnisht.”

“I am fool ov cureyosity. I shood much prefer too here nou.”

“Ule cum withe me too-nite?”

“When u like and whare u like.”

“This iz, indede, like the oald dase. We shal hav time for a mouthfool ov dinner befoer we nede go. Wel, then, about dhat cazm. I had no cereyous difficulty in ghetting out ov it, for the verry cimpel rezon dhat I nevver wauz in it.”

“U nevver wer in it?”

“No, Wautson, I nevver wauz in it. Mi note too u wauz absoluety gennuwine. I had littel dout dhat I had cum too the end ov mi carere when I perceevd the sumwhaut cinnister figgure ov the late Professor Moreyarty standing uppon the narro paathwa which led too saifty. I red an inexorabel perpoce in hiz gra ise. I exchainjd sum remarx withe him, dhaerfoer, and obtaind hiz kerchous permishon too rite the short note which u aafterwordz receevd. I left it withe mi ciggaret-box and mi stic, and I wauct along the paathwa, Moreyarty stil at mi heelz. When I reecht the end I stood at ba. He dru no weppon, but he rusht at me and thru hiz long armz around me. He nu dhat hiz one game wauz up, and wauz oanly ancshous too revenj himcelf uppon me.

We

totterd tooghether uppon the brinc ov the faul. I hav sum nollej, houwevver, ov baritshu, or the Japanese cistem ov resling, which haz moer dhan wuns bene verry uesfool too me. I slipt throo hiz grip, and he withe a horibel screme kict madly for a fu cecondz, and claud the are withe boath hiz handz. But for aul hiz efforts he cood not ghet hiz ballans, and over he went. Withe mi face over the brinc, I sau him faul for a long wa. Then he struc a roc, bounded of, and splasht intoo the wauter.”

I liscend withe amaizment too this explanaishon, which Hoamz delivverd betwene the pufs ov hiz ciggaret.

“But the trax!” I cride. “I sau, withe mi one ise, dhat too went down the paath and nun reternd.”

“It came about in this wa. The instant dhat the Professor had disapeerd, it struc me whaut a reyal extrordinarily lucky chaans Fate had plaist in mi wa. I nu dhat Moreyarty wauz not the oanly man whoo had swoern mi deth. Dhare wer at leest thre

utherz whose desire for venjans uppon me wood oonly be increest bi the deth ov dhare leder. Dha wer aul moast dain'gerous men. Wun or uther wood certainly ghet me. On the uther hand, if aul the werld wauz convinst dhat I wauz ded dha wood take libbertese, these men, dha wood soone la themcelvz open, and sooner or later I cood destroi them. Then it wood be time for me too anouns dhat I wauz stil in the land ov the livving. So rappidly duz the brane act dhat I beleve I had thaut this aul out befoer Professor Moreyarty had reecht the bottom ov the Riakhenbaakh Faul.

"I stood up and exammiand the rocky waul behiand me. In yor picchuresc acount ov the matter, which I red withe grate interest sum munths later, u acert dhat the waul wauz shere. Dhat wauz not litteraly tru. A fu smaul foot'hoaldz presented themcelvz, and dhare wauz sum indicaishon ov a lej. The clif iz so hi dhat too clime it aul wauz an obveyous impocibillity, and it wauz eeqwaly imposcibel too make mi wa along the wet paath widhout leving sum trax. I mite, it iz tru, hav reverst mi buits, az I hav dun on cimmilar ocaizhonz, but the cite ov thre cets ov trax in wun direcshon wood certainly hav sugested a decepshon. On the whole, then, it wauz best dhat I shood risc the clime. It wauz not a plezzant biznes, Wautson. The faul roerd beneeth me. I am not a fancifool person, but I ghiv u mi werd dhat I ceemd too here Moreyartese vois screming at me out ov the abis. A mistake wood hav bene fatal. Moer dhan wuns, az tufts ov graas came out in mi hand or mi foot slipt in the wet notchez ov the roc, I thaut dhat I wauz gon. But I struggheld upword, and at laast I reecht a lej cevveral fete depe and cuvverd withe soft grene mos, whare I cood li uncene, in the moast perfect cumfort. Dhare I wauz strecht, when u, mi dere Wautson, and aul yor following wer investigatig in the moast cimpathhettic and inefishent manner the cercumstaancez ov mi deth.

“At laast, when u had aul formd yor inevvitabel and totaly eroanyous concluezhonz, u departed for the hotel, and I wauz left alone. I had imadgiand dhat I had reecht the end ov mi advenchuerz, but a verry unexpected occursens shode me dhat dhare wer cerprisez stil in stoer for me. A huge roc, fauling from abuv, buimd paast me, struc the paath, and bounded over intoo the cazm. For an instant I thaut dhat it wauz an axident, but a moment later, loocking up, I sau a manz hed against the darkening ski, and anuther stone struc the verry lej uppon which I wauz strecht, within a foot ov mi hed. Ov coers, the mening ov this wauz obveyous. Moreyarty had not bene alone. A confedderate—and even dhat wun glaans had toald me hou dain’gerous a

man dhat confedderate wauz—had kept gard while the Professor had atact me. From a distans, uncene bi me, he had bene a witnes ov hiz frendz deth and ov mi escape. He had wated, and then making hiz wa round too the top ov the clif, he had endevvord too suxede whare hiz comrade had faild.

“I did not take long too thhinc about it, Wautson. Agane I sau dhat grim face looc over the clif, and I nu dhat it wauz the prekensor ov anuther stone. I scambeld doun on too the paath. I doant thhinc I cood hav dun it in coald blud. It wauz a hundred tiamz moer difficult dhan ghetting up. But I had no time too thhinc ov the dain’ger, for anuther stone sang paast me az I hung bi mi handz from the ej ov the lej. Haafwa doun I slipt, but, bi the blescing ov God, I landed, toern and bleding, uppon the paath. I tooc too mi heelz, did ten mialz over the mountainz in the darcnes, and a weke later I found micelf in Florens, withe the certainty dhat no wun in the werld nu whaut had becum ov me.

“I had oanly wun confidant—mi bruther Miacroft. I o u menny apollogese, mi dere Wautson, but it wauz aul-important dhat it

shood be thaut I wauz ded, and it iz qwite certane dhat u wood not hav ritten so convincing an acount ov mi unhappy end had u not yorcelf thaut dhat it wauz tru. Cevveral tiamz juring the laast thre yeerz I hav taken up mi pen too rite too u, but aulwase I feerd lest yor afecshonate regard for me shood tempt u too sum indiscrechon which wood betra mi ceecret. For dhat rezon I ternd awa from u this evening when u upcet mi boox, for I wauz in dain'ger at the time, and enny sho ov cerprise and emoashon uppon yor part mite hav draun atenshon too mi identity and led too the moast deplorabel and irepparabel rezults. Az too Miacroft, I had too confide in him in order too obtane the munny which I neded. The coers ov events in Lundon did not run so wel az I had hoapt, for the triyal ov the Moreyarty gang left too ov its moast dain'gerous memberz, mi one moast vindictive ennemese, at libberty. I travveld for too yeerz in Tibet, dhaerfoer, and amuezd micelf bi vizsiting L'hassaa, and spending sum dase withe the hed laamaa. U ma hav red ov the remarabel exploraishonz ov a Norwejan naimd Ciggherson, but I am shure dhat it nevver okerd too u dhat u wer receving nuse ov yor frend. I then paast throo Perzhaa, looct in at Meccaa, and pade a short but interesting vizsit too the C'halifaa at C'hartoum the rezults ov which I hav comunicated too the Forane Office. Retering too Fraans, I spent sum munths in a recerch intoo the cole-tar derivvatiavz, which I conducted in a laboratoery at Montpelleyer, in the south ov Fraans. Havving concluded this too mi satisfacshon and lerning dhat oonly wun ov mi ennemese wauz nou left in Lundon, I wauz about too retern when mi muivments wer hacend bi the nuse ov this verry remarabel Parc Lane Mistery, which not oonly apeeld too me bi its one merrits, but which ceemd too offer sum moast peculeyar personal oporchunitese. I came over at wuns too Lundon, cauld in mi one person at Baker Strete, thru Mrs. Hudson intoo viyolent histerrix, and found dhat Miacroft had preservd mi ruimz and mi paperz exactly az dha had aulwase bene. So it wauz, mi dere Wautson, dhat at too oacloc too-da I found

micelf in mi oald armchare in mi one oald roome, and oanly wishing dhat I cood hav cene mi oald frend Wautson in the uthar chare which he haz so often adornd."

Such wauz the remarcabel narrative too which I liscend on dhat Aipril evening—a narrative which wood hav bene utterly increddibel too me had it not bene confermd bi the acchuwal cite ov the taul, spare figgure and the kene, egher face, which I had nevver thaut too ce agane. In sum manner he had lernd ov mi one sad bereevment, and hiz cimpathhy wauz shone in hiz manner raather dhan in hiz werdz. "Werc iz the best antidote too soro, mi dere Wautson," ced he; "and I hav a pece ov werc for us boath too-nite which, if we can bring it too a suxesfool concluezhon, wil in itcelf justifi a manz life on this plannet." In vane I begd him too tel me moer. "U wil here and ce enuf befoer morning," he aancerd. "We hav thre yeerz ov the paast too discus. Let dhat sufice until haaf-paast nine, when we start uppon the notabel advenchure ov the empty hous."

It wauz indede like oald tiamz when, at dhat our, I found micelf ceted beside him in a hansom, mi revolver in mi pocket, and the thril ov advenchure in mi hart. Hoamz wauz coald and stern and cilent. Az the gleme ov the strete-lamps flasht uppon hiz austere fechuerz, I sau dhat hiz brouz wer draun down in thaut and hiz thhin lips comprest. I nu not whaut wiald beest we wer about too hunt down in the darc jun'ghel ov crimminal Lundon, but I wauz wel ashuerd, from the baring ov this maaster huntsman, dhat the advenchure wauz a moast grave wun—while the sardonnic smile which ocaizhonaly broke throo hiz acettic gloome boded littel good for the obgect ov our qwest.

I had imadgiand dhat we wer bound for Baker Strete, but Hoamz stopt the cab at the corner ov Cavvendish Sqware. I observd dhat az he stept out he gave a moast cerching glaans too rite

and left, and at evvery subceqwent strete corner he tooc the utmoast painz too ashure dhat he wauz not follode. Our roote wauz certainly a cin'gular wun. Hoamsez nollej ov the biwase ov Lunden wauz extrordinary, and on this ocaizhon he paast rappidly and withe an ashuerd step throo a netwerc ov muse and stabelz, the verry existens ov which I had nevver none. We emerjd at laast intoo a smaul rode, liand withe oald, gloomy housez, which led us intoo Manchester Strete, and so too Blandford Strete. Here he ternd swiftly doun a narro passage, paast throo a wooden gate intoo a deserted yard, and then opend withe a ke the bac doer ov a hous. We enterd tooghether, and he cloazd it behiand us.

The place wauz pich darc, but it wauz evvident too me dhat it wauz an empty hous. Our fete creect and crackeld over the bare planking, and mi outstrecht hand tucht a waul from which the paper wauz hanging in ribbonz. Hoamsez coald, thhin fin'gherz cloazd round mi rist and led me forword doun a long haul, until I dimly sau the merky fanlite over the doer. Here Hoamz ternd suddenly too the rite and we found ourcelvz in a larj, sqware, empty roome, hevvely shaddode in the cornerz, but faintly lit in the center from the liats ov the strete beyond. Dhare wauz no lamp nere, and the windo wauz thhic withe dust, so dhat we cood oanly just dicern eche utherz figguerz within. Mi companyon poot hiz hand uppon mi shoalder and hiz lips cloce too mi ere.

"Doo u no whare we ar?" he whisperd.

"Shuerly dhat iz Baker Strete," I aancerd, staring throo the dim windo.

"Exactly. We ar in Camden Hous, which standz opposite too our one oald qworterz."

"But whi ar we here?"

“Becaüz it comaandz so exelent a vu ov dhat picchuresc pile. Mite I trubbel u, mi dere Wautson, too drau a littel nerer too the windo, taking evvery precaushon not too sho yorcelf, and then too looc up at our oald ruimz—the starting-point ov so menny ov yor littel fary-tailz? We wil ce if mi thre yeerz ov abcens hav entiarly taken awa mi pouwer too cerprise u.”

I crept forword and looct acros at the familleyar windo. Az mi ise fel uppon it, I gave a gaasp and a cri ov amaizment. The bliand wauz down, and a strong lite wauz barning in the roome. The shaddo ov a man whoo wauz ceted in a chare within wauz throne in hard, blac outline uppon the luminous screne ov the windo. Dhare wauz no mistaking the poiz ov the hed, the sqwaernes ov the shoalderz, the sharpnes ov the fechuerz. The face wauz ternd haaf-round, and the efect wauz dhat ov wun ov dhose blac cilowets which our grandparents luvd too frame. It wauz a perfect reproducshon ov Hoamz. So amaizd wauz I dhat I thru out mi hand too make shure dhat the man himcelf wauz standing becide me.

He wauz qwivvering withe cilent laafter.

“Wel?” ced he.

“Good hevvenz!” I cride. “It iz marvelous.”

“I trust dhat age duth not wither nor custom stale mi infinite variyety,” ced he, and I reccogniazd in hiz vois the joi and pride which the artist taix in hiz one creyaishon. “It reyaly iz raather like me, iz it not?”

“I shoold be prepaerd too sware dhat it wauz u.”

"The credit ov the execuashon iz ju too Msyer Oscar Muneyer, ov Grenobel, whoo spent sum dase in doowing the moalding. It iz a bust in wax. The rest I arainjd micelf juring mi vizsit too Baker Strete this aafternoone."

"But whi?"

"Becauz, mi dere Wautson, I had the stron'ghest poscibel rezon for wishing certane pepel too thhinc dhat I wauz dhare when I wauz reyaly elshware."

"And u thaut the ruimz wer waucht?"

"I *nu* dhat dha wer waucht."

"Bi whoome?"

"Bi mi oald ennemese, Wautson. Bi the charming sociyety whose leder lise in the Riakhenbaakh Faul. U must remember dhat dha nu, and oonly dha nu, dhat I wauz stil alive. Sooner or later dha beleevd dhat I shood cum bac too mi ruimz. Dha waucht them continuuously, and this morning dha sau me arive."

"Hou doo u no?"

"Becauz I reccogniazd dhare centinel when I glaanst out ov mi windo. He iz a harmles enuf fello, Parker bi name, a garroter bi trade, and a remarcabel performer uppon the juse-harp. I caerd nuthhing for him. But I caerd a grate dele for the much moer formiddabel person whoo wauz behiand him, the boozzom
frend ov Moreyarty, the man whoo dropt the rox over the clif, the moast cunning and dain'gerous crimminal in Lundon. Dhat iz the

man whoo iz aafter me too-nite Wautson, and dhat iz the man whoo iz qwhite unnaware dhat we ar aafter *him*."

Mi frendz planz wer gradjuwaly reveling themcelvz. From this conveyent retrete, the waucherz wer beying waucht and the trackerz tract. Dhat an'gular shaddo up yonder wauz the bate, and we wer the hunterz. In cilens we stood tooghether in the darcnes and waucht the hurreying figguerz whoo paast and repaast in frunt ov us. Hoamz wauz cilent and moashonles; but I cood tel dhat he wauz keenly alert, and dhat hiz ise wer fixt intently uppon the streme ov paacerz-bi. It wauz a bleke and boisterous nite and the wind whisceld shrilly down the long strete. Menny pepel wer mooving too and fro, moast ov them muffeld in dhare coats and cravats. Wuns or twice it ceemd too me dhat I had cene the same figgure befoer, and I espeshaly notiast too men whoo apeerd too be sheltering themcelvz from the wind in the doerwa ov a hous sum distans up the strete. I tride too drau mi companyonz atenshon too them; but he gave a littel ejaculaishon ov impaishens, and continnude too stare intoo the strete. Moer dhan wuns he fidgeted withe hiz fete and tapt rappidly withe hiz fin'gherz uppon the waul. It wauz evvident too me dhat he wauz becumming unnesy, and dhat hiz planz wer not werking out aultooghether az he had hoapt. At laast, az midnite aproacht and the strete gradjuwaly cleerd, he paist up and down the roome in uncontrolabel agitaishon. I wauz about too make sum remarc too him, when I raizd mi ise too the lited windo, and agane expereyenst aulmoast az grate a cerprise az befoer. I clucht Hoamsez arm, and pointed upword.

"The shaddo haz muivd!" I cride.

It wauz indede no lon'gher the profile, but the bac, which wauz

ternd toowordz us.

Thre yeerz had certainly not smuidhd the asperritese ov hiz temper or hiz impaishens withe a les active intelligens dhan hiz one.

“Ov coers it haz muivd,” ced he. “Am I such a farcical bun’gler, Wautson, dhat I shood erect an obveyous dummy, and expect dhat sum ov the sharpest men in Urope wood be deceevd bi it? We hav bene in this roome too ourz, and Mrs. Hudson haz made sum chainj in dhat figgure ate tiamz, or wuns in evvery qworter ov an our. She werx it from the frunt, so dhat her shaddo ma nevver be cene. Aa!” He dru in hiz breth withe a shril, exited intake. In the dim lite I sau hiz hed throne forward, hiz whole attichude ridgid withe atenshon. Outcide the strete wauz absoluetly deserted. Dhose too men mite stil be crouching in the doerwa, but I cood no lon’gher ce them. Aul wauz stil and darc, save oonly dhat brilleyant yello screne in frunt ov us withe the blac figgure outliand uppon its center. Agane in the utter cilens I herd dhat thhin, cibbilant note which spoke ov intens suprest exiatment. An instant later he poold me bac intoo the blackest corner ov the roome, and I felt hiz worning hand uppon mi lips. The fin’gherz which clucht me wer qwivvering. Nevver had I none mi frend moer muivd, and yet the darc strete stil strecht loanly and moashonles befoer us.

But suddenly I wauz aware ov dhat which hiz kener cencez had aulreddy distin’gwisht. A lo, stelthhy sound came too mi eerz, not from the direcshon ov Baker Strete, but from the bac ov the verry hous in which we la conceeld. A doer opennd and shut. An instant later steps crept down the passage—steps which wer ment too be cilent, but which reverberated harshly throo the empty hous. Hoamz croucht bac against the waul, and I did the same, mi hand closing uppon the handel ov mi revolver. Pering throo

the gloome, I sau the vaghe outline ov a man, a shade blacker dhan the blacnes ov the open doer. He stood for an instant, and then he crept forword, crouching, mennacing, intoo the roome. He wauz within thre yardz ov us, this cinnister figgure, and I had braist micelf too mete hiz spring, befoer I reyaliazd dhat he had no ideyaa ov our prezsens. He paast cloce becide us, stole over too the windo, and verry softly and noizlesly raizd it for haaf a foot. Az he sanc too the levvel ov this opening, the lite ov the strete, no lon'gher dimd bi the dusty glaas, fel fool uppon hiz face. The man ceemd too be becide himcelf withe exiatment. Hiz too ise shon like starz, and hiz fechuerz wer werking convulciavly. He wauz an elderly man, withe a thhin, progecting nose, a hi, bauld foerhed, and a huge grizseld moostaash. An opperaa hat wauz poosht too the bac ov hiz hed, and an evening dres shert-frunt gleemd out throo hiz open overcote. Hiz face wauz gaunt and sworthy, scoerd withe depe, savvage lianz. In hiz hand he carrede whaut apeerd too be a stic, but az he lade it doun uppon the floer it gave a metallic clang. Then from the pocket ov hiz overcote he dru a bulky obgect, and he bizsede himcelf in sum taasc which ended withe a loud, sharp clic, az if a spring or bolt had faulen intoo its place. Stil neling uppon the floer he bent forword and thru aul hiz wate and strength uppon sum lever, withe the rezult dhat dhare came a long, wherling, grianding noiz, ending wuns moer in a pouwerfool clic. He stratend himcelf then, and I sau dhat whaut he held in hiz hand wauz a sort ov gun, withe a cureyously misshapen but. He opend it at the breche, poot sumthhing in, and snapt the breche-loc. Then, crouching doun, he rested the end ov the barrel uppon the lej ov the open windo, and I sau hiz long moostaash droope over the stoc and hiz i gleme az it peerd along the ciats. I herd a littel ci ov satisfacshon az he cuddeld the but intoo hiz shoalder; and sau dhat amasing targhet, the blac man on the yello ground, standing clere at the end ov hiz foercite. For an instant he wauz ridgid and moashonles. Then

hiz fin'gher titend on the trigger. Dhare wauz a strainj, loud whiz and a long, cilvery tinkel ov broken glaas. At dhat instant Hoamz sprang like a tigher on too the marxmanz bac, and herld him flat uppon hiz face. He wauz up agane in a moment, and withe convulcive strength he ceezd Hoamz bi the throte, but I struc him on the hed withe the but ov mi revolver, and he dropt agane uppon the floer. I fel uppon him, and az I held him mi comrade blu a shril caul uppon a whiscel. Dhare wauz the clatter ov running fete uppon the pairment, and too poleesmen in uniform, withe wun plane-cloadhz detective, rusht throo the frunt entrans and intoo the roome.

“Dhat u, Lestrade?” ced Hoamz.

“Yes, Mr. Hoamz. I tooc the job micelf. Its good too ce u bac in Lundon, cer.”

“I thhinc u waunt a littel unnofishal help. Thre undetected merderz in wun yere woant doo, Lestrade. But u handeld the Moalsy Mistery withe les dhan yor uezhuwal—dhats too sa, u handeld it faerly wel.”

We had aul rizens too our fete, our prizzoner breething hard, withe a staulwort cunstabel on eche cide ov him. Aulreddy a fu loitererz had begun too colect in the strete. Hoamz stept up too the windo, cloazd it, and dropt the bliandz. Lestrade had projuest too candelz, and the poleesmen had uncuvverd dhare lanternz. I wauz abel at laast too hav a good looc at our prizzoner.

It wauz a tremendously virile and yet cinnister face which wauz ternd toowordz us. Withe the brou ov a filossofer abuv and the jau ov a censhuwalist belo, the man must hav started withe grate capacitese for good or for evil. But wun cood not looc uppon hiz cruwel blu ise, withe dhare drooping, cinnical lidz, or uppon the

feers, agrescive nose and the threttening, depe-liand brou, without reding Nachuerz planest dain'ger-cignalz. He tooc no hede ov enny ov us, but hiz ise wer fixt uppon Hoamsez face withe an expreshon in which haitred and amaizment wer eeqwaly blended. "U feend!" he kept on muttering. "U clevver, clevver feend!"

"Aa, Cuunel!" ced Hoamz, arain'ging hiz rumpeld collar. "'Gernese end in luvverz' metingz,' az the oald pla cez. I doant thhinc I hav had the plezhure ov ceying u cins u favord me withe dhose atenshonz az I la on the lej abuv the Riakhenbaakh Faul."

The cuunel stil staerd at mi frend like a man in a traans. "U cunning, cunning feend!" wauz aul dhat he cood sa.

"I hav not introjuest u yet," ced Hoamz. "This, gentelmen, iz Cuunel Cebaschan Moran, wuns ov Her Madgestese Injan Army, and the best hevvy-game shot dhat our Eestern Empire haz ever projuest. I beleve I am corect Cuunel, in saying dhat yor bag ov tigherz stil remainz unrivald?"

The feers oald man ced nuthhing, but stil glaerd at mi companyon. Withe hiz savvage ise and brisling moostaash he wauz wunderfooly like a tigher himcelf.

"I wunder dhat mi verry cimpel strattagem cood deceve so oald a *shicary*," ced Hoamz. "It must be verry familleyar too u. Hav u not tetherd a yung kid under a tre, lane abuv it withe yor rifel, and wated for the bate too bring up yor tigher? This empty hous iz mi tre, and u ar mi tigher. U hav poscibly had uther gunz in reserv in cace dhare shood be cevveral tigherz, or in the unliacly suposishon ov yor one ame faling u. These," he pointed around, "ar mi uther gunz. The parralel iz

exact.”

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

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

Cuunel Moran turned to the official detective.

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

“Well, that is reasonable enough,” said Lestrade. “Nothing further do you have to say, Mr. Hoamz, before we go?”

Hoamz had picked up the powerful air-gun from the floor, and was examining its mechanism.

“An admirable and unique weapon,” said he, “noises and of tremendous power: I know Von Herder, the brilliant German mechanic, who constructed it to the order of the late Professor Moriarty. For years I have been aware of its existence though I have never before had the opportunity of handling it. I commend it very especially to your attention, Lestrade and also the bullets which fit it.”

“U can trust us too looc aafter dhat, Mr. Hoamz,” ced Lestrade, az the whole party muivd toowordz the doer. “Ennithhing ferther too sa?”

“Oanly too aasc whaut charj u intend too prefer?”

“Whaut charj, cer? Whi, ov coers, the atempted merder ov Mr. Sherloc Hoamz.”

“Not so, Lestrade. I doo not propose too apere in the matter at aul. Too u, and too u oanly, belongz the creddit ov the remarcabel arest which u hav efected. Yes, Lestrade, I con’gratchulate u! Withe yor uezhuwal happy mixchure ov cunning and audascity, u hav got him.”

“Got him! Got whoome, Mr. Hoamz?”

“The man dhat the whole foers haz bene ceking in vane—Cuunel Cebaschan Moran, whoo shot the Onnorabel Ronnald Adare withe an expanding boollet from an are-gun throo the open windo ov the cecond-floer frunt ov No. 427, Parc Lane, uppon the thherteyeth ov laast munth. Dhats the charj, Lestrade. And nou, Wautson, if u can enjure the draaft from a broken windo, I thhinc dhat haaf an our in mi studdy over a cigar ma afoerd u sum proffitabel amuezment.”

Our oald chaimberz had bene left unchainjd throo the supervizhon ov Miacroft Hoamz and the imejate care ov Mrs. Hudson. Az I enterd I sau, it iz tru, an unwoanted tidines, but the oald landmarx wer aul in dhare place. Dhare wer the kemmical corner and the ascid-staind, dele-topt tabel. Dhare uppon a shelf wauz the ro ov formiddabel scrap-boox and boox ov refferens which menny ov our fello-cittisenz wood hav bene so glad too bern. The

diyagramz, the viyolin-ace, and the pipe-rac—even the Perzhan slipper which containd the tobacco—aul met mi ise az I glaanst round me. Dhare wer too occupants ov the roome—wun, Mrs. Hudson, whoo beemd uppon us boath az we enterd—the uther, the strainj dummy which had plade so important a part in the eveningz advenchuerz. It wauz a wax-cullord moddel ov mi frend, so admirably dun dhat it wauz a perfect faximmily. It stood on a smaul peddestal tabel withe an oald drescing-goun ov Hoamsez so draipt round it dhat the iluezhon from the strete wauz absoluetly perfect.

“I hope u observd aul precaushonz, Mrs. Hudson?” ced Hoamz.

“I went too it on mi nese, cer, just az u toald me.”

“Exelent. U carrede the thhing out verry wel. Did u observ whare the boollet went?”

“Yes, cer. Ime afrade it haz spoilt yor butifool bust, for it paast rite throo the hed and flattend itself on the waul. I pict it up from the carpet. Here it iz!”

Hoamz held it out too me. “A soft revolver boollet, az u perceve, Wautson. Dhaerz geenyus in dhat, for whoo wood expect too fiand such a thhing fiand from an aergun? Aul rite, Mrs. Hudson. I am much obliajd for yor acistans. And nou, Wautson, let me ce u in yor oald cete wuns moer, for dhare ar cevveral points which I shood like too discuss withe u.”

He had throne of the cedy froccote, and nou he wauz the Hoamz ov oald in the mous-cullord drescing-goun which he tooc from hiz effigy.

“The oald *shicarese* nervz hav not lost dhare steddines, nor

hiz ise dhare keen'nes," ced he, withe a laaf, az he inspected the shattered foerhed ov hiz bust.

"Plum in the middel ov the bac ov the hed and smac throo the brane. He wauz the best shot in Injaa, and I expect dhat dhare ar fu better in Lunden. Hav u herd the name?"

"No, I hav not."

"Wel, wel, such iz fame! But, then, if I remember rite, u had not herd the name ov Professor Jaimz Moreyarty, whoo had wun ov the grate brainz ov the cenchury. Just ghiv me doun mi index ov biyograafese from the shelf."

He ternd over the pagez lasily, lening bac in hiz chare and blowing grate cloudz from hiz cigar.

"Mi colecshon ov M'z iz a fine wun," ced he. "Moreyarty himcelf iz enuf too make enny letter ilustreyous, and here iz Morgan the poizoner, and Merriju ov abomminabel memmory, and Mathuse, whoo noct out mi left canine in the wating-roome at Charing Cros, and, finaly, here iz our frend ov too-nite."

He handed over the booc, and I rede:

Moran, Cebaschan, Cuunel. Unnemploid. Formerly 1st Ban'galor Piyoneerz. Born Lunden, 1840. Sun ov Cer Augustus Moran, C.B., wuns Brittish Minnister too Perzhaa. Edjucated Eton and Oxford. Cervd in Jouwaky Campane, Afgan Campane, Charaizhab (despachez), Sherper, and Cabul. Author ov *Hevvy Game ov the Western Himalayaaz* (1881); *Thre Munths in the Jun'ghel* (1884). Adres: Conjuwit Strete. Clubz: The An'glo-Injan, the Tankervil, the Bagatel Card Club.

On the margin wauz ritten, in Hoamsez precice hand:

The cecond moast dain'gerous man in Lundon.

"This iz astonnishing," ced I, az I handed bac the vollume. "The manz carere iz dhat ov an onnorabel soalger."

"It iz tru," Hoamz aancerd. "Up too a certane point he did wel. He wauz aulwase a man ov iarn nerv, and the stoery iz stil toald in Injaa hou he crauld doun a drane aafter a wuinded man-eting tigher. Dhare ar sum trese, Wautson, which gro too a certane hite, and then suddenly devellop sum unciatly exentriscity. U wil ce it often in humanz. I hav a ththeyory dhat the individjuwal represents in hiz devellopment the whole proceshon ov hiz ancestorz, and dhat such a sudden tern too good or evil standz for sum strong influwens which came intoo the line ov hiz peddigry. The person becumz, az it wer, the epittomy ov the history ov hiz one fammily."

"It iz shuerly raather fancifool."

"Wel, I doant incist uppon it. Whautevver the cauz, Cuunel Moran began too go rong. Widhout enny open scandal, he stil made Injaa too hot too hoald him. He retiard, came too Lundon, and agane aqwiard an evil name. It wauz at this time dhat he wauz saut out bi Professor Moreyarty, too whoome for a time he wauz chefe ov the staaf. Moreyarty suplide him libberaly withe munny, and uezd him oanly in wun or too verry hi-claas jobz, which no ordinary crimminal cood hav undertaken. U ma hav sum recolecshon ov the deth ov Mrs. Schuwart, ov Lauder, in 1887. Not? Wel, I am shure Moran wauz at the bottom ov it, but nuthhing cood be pruivd. So clevverly wauz the cuunel conceeld dhat, even when the Moreyarty gang wauz broken up, we cood not incrimminate him. U

remember at dhat date, when I cauld uppon u in yor ruimz, hou I poot up the shutterz for fere ov are-gunz? No dout u thaut me fancifool. I nu exactly whaut I wauz doowing, for I nu ov the existens ov this remarcabel gun, and I nu aulso dhat wun ov the best shots in the werld wood be behiand it. When we wer in Switzerland he follode us withe Moreyarty, and it wauz undoutedly he whoo gave me dhat evil five minnuets on the Riakhenbaakh lej.

“U ma thhinc dhat I rede the paperz withe sum atenshon juring mi sogern in Fraans, on the looc-out for enny chaans ov laying him bi the heelz. So long az he wauz fre in Lunden, mi life wood reyal not hav bene werth livving. Nite and da the shaddo wood hav bene over me, and sooner or later hiz chaans must hav cum. Whaut cood I doo? I cood not shoote him at cite, or I shoold micelf be in the doc. Dhare wauz no uce apeling too a madgistrate. Dha canot interfere on the strength ov whaut wood apere too them too be a wiald suspishon. So I cood doo nuthhing. But I waucht the crimminal nuse, nowing dhat sooner or later I shoold ghet him. Then came the deth ov this Ronnald Adare. Mi chaans had cum at laast. Nowing whaut I did, wauz it not certane dhat Cuunel Moran had dun it? He had plade cardz withe the lad, he had follode him home from the club, he had shot him throo the open windo. Dhare wauz not a dout ov it. The boollets alone ar enuf too poot hiz hed in a nooce. I came over at wuns. I wauz cene bi the centinel, whoo wood, I nu, direct the cuunelz atenshon too mi prezsens. He cood not fale too conect mi sudden retern withe hiz crime, and too be terribly alarmd. I wauz shure dhat he wood make an atempt too ghet me out ov the wa *at wuns*, and wood bring round hiz merderous weppon for dhat perpoce. I left him an exelent marc in the windo, and, havving wornd the polece dhat dha mite be neded—bi the wa, Wautson, u spotted dhare prezsens in dhat doerwa withe unnuuring accuracy—I tooc up whaut ceemd too me too be a judishous poast for observaishon, nevver

dremin'g dhat he wood chuse the same spot for hiz atac. Nou, mi dere Wautson, duz ennithhing remane for me too explane?"

"Yes," ced I. "U hav not made it clere whaut wauz Cuunel Moran's motive in merdering the Onnorabel Ronald Adare?"

"Aa! mi dere Wautson, dhare we cum intoo dhose relmz ov con'gechure, whare the moast lodgical miand ma be at fault. Eche ma form hiz one hipothhecis uppon the prezsent evvidens, and yorz iz az liacly too be corect az mine."

"U hav formd wun, then?"

"I thhinc dhat it iz not difficult too explane the facts. It came out in evvidens dhat Cuunel Moran and yung Adare had, betwene them, wun a concidderabel amount ov munny. Nou, Moran undoutedly plade foul—ov dhat I hav long bene aware. I beleve dhat on the da ov the merder Adare had discuverd dhat Moran wauz cheting. Verry liacly he had spoken too him privaitly, and had threttend too expose him unles he voluntarily resiand hiz membership ov the club, and prommiast not too pla cardz agane. It iz unliacly dhat a yungster like Adare wood at wuns make a hidjous scandal bi exposing a wel-none man so much oalder dhan himcelf. Probbably he acted az I sugest. The excluezhon from hiz clubz wood mene ruwin too Moran, whoo livd bi hiz il-gotten card-gainz. He dhaerfoer merderd Adare, whoo at the time wauz endeavouring too werc out hou much munny he shood himcelf retern, cins he cood not proffit bi hiz partnerz foul pla. He loct the doer lest the ladese shood cerprise him and incist uppon nowing whaut he wauz doowing withe these naimz and coinz. Wil it paas?"

"I hav no dout dhat u hav hit uppon the trueth."

"It wil be verrifide or dispruivd at the triyal. Meenwhile, cum

whaut ma, Cuunel Moran wil trubbel us no moer. The famous are-gun ov Von Herder wil embellish the Scotland Yard Museyum, and wuns agane Mr. Sherloc Hoamz iz fre too devote hiz life too exammining dhose interesting littel problemz which the complex life ov Lunden so plentifooly presents."

THE ADVENCHURE OV THE NORWOOD BILDER

"From the point ov vu ov the crimminal expert," ced Mr. Sherloc Hoamz, "Lunden haz becum a cin'gularly uninteresting citty cins the deth ov the late lamented Professor Morearty."

"I can hardly thhinc dhat u wood fiand menny decent cittisenz too agry withe u," I aancerd.

"Wel, wel, I must not be celfish," ced he, withe a smile, az he poosht bac hiz chare from the brecfast-tabel. "The comunity iz certainly the ganer, and no wun the looser, save the poor out-ov-werc speshalist, whoose ocupaishon haz gon. Withe dhat man in the feeld, wunz morning paper presented infinite pocibillitese. Often it wauz oonly the smaulest trace, Wautson, the faintest indicaishon, and yet it wauz enuf too tel me dhat the grate malignant brane wauz dhare, az the gentlest tremmorz ov the edgez ov the web remiand wun ov the foul spider which lerx in the center. Petty ththefts, waunton asaults, perpoasles outrage—too the man whoo held the clu aul cood be werct intoo wun conected whole. Too the ciyentiffic schudent ov the hiyer crimminal werld, no cappital in Urope offerd the advaantagez which Lunden then posest. But nou——" He shrugd hiz shoalderz in humorous deprecaishon ov the state ov thhingz which he had himself dun so much too projuce.

At the time ov which I speke, Hoamz had bene bac for sum munths, and I at hiz request had soald mi practice and reternd too

share the oald qworterz in Baker Strete. A yung doctor, naimd Verner, had perchaist mi smaual Kensington practice, and ghivven withe astonnishingly littel demer the hiyest price dhat I venchuerd too aasc—an incident which oanly explaind itcelf sum yeerz later, when I found dhat Verner wauz a distant relaishon ov Hoamz, and dhat it wauz mi frend whoo had reyaly found the munny.

Our munths ov partnership had not bene so unneventfool az he had stated, for I fiand, on loocking over mi noats, dhat this pereyod includedz the cace ov the paperz ov ex-Prezsident Murillo, and aulso the shocking afare ov the Duch steemship *Freezland*, which so neerly cost us boath our liavz. Hiz coald and proud nachure wauz aulwase avers, houwevver, from ennithing in the shape ov public aplauz, and he bound me in the moast strin'gent termz too sa no ferther werd ov himcelf, hiz methodz, or hiz suxescez—a prohibishon which, az I hav explaind, haz oanly nou bene remuivd.

Mr. Sherloc Hoamz wauz lening bac in hiz chare aafter hiz whimsical protest, and wauz unfoalding hiz morning paper in a lezhuerly fashon, when our atenshon wauz arested bi a tremendous ring at the bel, follode imejaitly bi a hollo drumming sound, az if sumwun wer beting on the outer doer withe hiz fist. Az it opend dhare came a chumulchuwous rush intoo the haul, rappid fete clatterd up the stare, and an instant later a wiald-ide and frantic yung man, pale, dishevveld, and palpitating, berst intoo the roome. He looct from wun too the uther ov us, and under our gase ov inqwiry he became conshous dhat sum apollogy wauz neded for this unceremoanyous entry.

“Ime sorry, Mr. Hoamz,” he cride. “U musnt blame me. I am neerly mad. Mr. Hoamz, I am the unhappy Jon Hector McFarlane.”

He made the anounsment az if the name alone wood explane boath hiz vizsit and its manner, but I cood ce, bi mi companyonz unresponcive face, dhat it ment no moer too him dhan too me.

“Hav a ciggaret, Mr. McFarlane,” ced he, pooshing hiz cace acros. “I am shure dhat, withe yor cimptomz, mi frend Dr. Wautson here wood prescribe a ceddative. The wether haz bene so verry worm these laast fu dase. Nou, if u fele a littel moer compoazd, I shood be glad if u wood cit down in dhat chare, and tel us verry sloly and qwiyetly whoo u ar, and whaut it iz dhat u waunt. U menshond yor name, az if I shood reccognise it, but I ashure u dhat, beyond the obveyous facts dhat u ar a batchelor, a soliscitor, a Fremason, and an asthmattic, I no nuthhing whautevver about u.”

Familleyar az I wauz withe mi frendz methodz, it wauz not difficult for me too follo hiz deducshonz, and too observ the untidines ov atire, the shefe ov legal paperz, the wauch-charm, and the breathing which had prompted them. Our cliyent, houwevver, staerd in amaizment.

“Yes, I am aul dhat, Mr. Hoamz; and, in adishon, I am the moast unforchunate man at this moment in Lundon. For hevvenz sake, doant abandon me, Mr. Hoamz! If dha cum too arest me befoer I hav finnisht mi stoery, make them ghiv me time, so dhat I ma tel u the whole trueth. I cood go too jale happy if I nu dhat u wer werking for me outside.”

“Arest u!” ced Hoamz. “This iz reyaly moast graty—moast interesting. On whaut charj doo u expect too be arested?”

“Uppon the charj ov merdering Mr. Jonas Oaldaker, ov Lower Norwood.”

Mi companyonz exprescive face shode a cimpathhy which wauz not, I am afrade, entiarly unmixt withe satisfacshon.

“Dere me,” ced he, “it wauz oonly this moment at brecfast dhat I wauz saying too mi frend, Dr. Wautson, dhat censaishonal cacez had disapeerd out ov our paperz.”

Our vizsitor strecht forword a qwivvering hand and pict up the *Daly Tellegraaf*, which stil la uppon Hoamsez ne.

“If u had looct at it, cer, u wood hav cene at a glaans whaut the errand iz on which I hav cum too u this morning. I fele az if mi name and mi misforchune must be in evvery manz mouth.” He ternd it over too expose the central page. “Here it iz, and withe yor permishon I wil rede it too u. Liscen too this, Mr. Hoamz. The hedlianz ar: ‘Mistereyous Afare at Lower Norwood. Disaperans ov a Wel-none Bilder. Suspishon ov Merder and Arson. A Clu too the Crimminal.’ Dhat iz the clu which dha ar aulreddy following, Mr. Hoamz, and I no dhat it leedz infallibly too me. I hav bene follode from Lundon Brij Staishon, and I am shure dhat dha ar oonly wating for the worant too arest me. It wil brake mi mutherz hart—it wil brake her hart!” He rung hiz handz in an aggonny ov apreghenshon, and swade baqword and forword in hiz chare.

I looct withe interest uppon this man, whoo wauz acuezd ov beying the perpetrator ov a crime ov viyolens. He wauz flaxen-haerd and handsum, in a wausht-out neggative fashon, withe fritend bluish, and a clene-shaven face, withe a weke, cencitive mouth. Hiz age ma hav bene about twenty-cevven, hiz dres and baring dhat ov a gentelman. From the pocket ov hiz lite summer overcote protruded the bundel ov indorst paperz which proclaimd hiz profeshon.

“We must use whaut time we hav,” ced Hoamz. “Wautson, wood u hav the kiandnes too take the paper and too rede the parragraaf in qweschon?”

Underneeth the viggorous hedlianz which our cliyent had qwoted, I red the following sugestive narrative:

“Late laast nite, or erly this morning, an incident okerd at Lower Norwood which points, it iz feerd, too a cereyous crime. Mr. Jonas Oaldaker iz a wel-none rezident ov dhat subberb, whare he haz carrede on hiz biznes az a bilder for menny yeerz. Mr. Oaldaker iz a batchelor, fifty-too yeerz ov age, and livz in Depe Dene Hous, at the Ciddenam end ov the rode ov dhat name. He haz had the reputaishon ov beyng a man ov exentric habbits, ceecretive and retiring. For sum yeerz he haz practicaly widhdraun from the biznes, in which he iz ced too hav mast concidderabel welth. A smaul timber-yard stil exists, houwevver, at the bac ov the hous, and laast nite, about twelv oacloc, an alarm wauz ghivven dhat wun ov the stax wauz on fire. The en’gians wer soone uppon the spot, but the dri wood bernd withe grate fury, and it wauz imposcibel too arest the conflagraishon until the stac had bene entiarly conshuemd. Up too this point the incident boer the aperans ov an ordinary axident, but fresh indicaishonz ceme too point too cereyous crime. Cerprise wauz exprest at the abcens ov the maaster ov the establishment from the cene ov the fire, and an inqwiry follode, which shode dhat he had disapeerd from the hous. An examinaishon ov hiz roome reveeld dhat the bed had not bene slept in, dhat a safe which stood in it wauz open, dhat a number ov important paperz wer scatterd about the roome, and finaly, dhat dhare wer cianz ov a merderous strugghel, slite tracez ov blud beyng found within the roome, and an oken wauking-stic, which aulso shode stainz ov blud uppon the handel. It iz none dhat Mr. Jonas Oaldaker had receevd a late vizsitor in

hiz bedroome uppon dhat nite, and the stic found haz bene identifide az the propperty ov this person, whoo iz a yung Lndon soliscitor naimd Jon Hector McFarlane, juenyor partner ov Grayam and McFarlane, ov 426, Gresham Bildingz, E.C. The polece beleve dhat dha hav evvidens in dhare poseshon which suplise a verry convincing motive for the crime, and aultooghether it cannot be douted dhat censaishonal devellopments wil follo.

“LATER.—It iz rumord az we go too pres dhat Mr. Jon Hector McFarlane haz acchuwaly bene arested on the charj ov the merder ov Mr. Jonas Oaldaker. It iz at leest certane dhat a worant haz bene ishude. Dhare hav bene ferther and cinnister devellopments in the investigaishon at Norwood. Beciadz the cianz ov a strugghel in the roome ov the unforchunate bilder it iz nou none dhat the French windose ov hiz bedroome (which iz on the ground floer) wer found too be open, dhat dhare wer marx az if sum bulky obgett had bene dragd acros too the wood-pile, and, finaly, it iz acerted dhat chard remainz hav bene found amung the charcole ashez ov the fire. The polece ththeyory iz dhat a moast censaishonal crime haz bene comitted, dhat the victim wauz clubd too deth in hiz one bedroome, hiz paperz rifeld, and hiz ded boddy dragd acros too the wood-stac, which wauz then ignited so az too hide aul tracez ov the crime. The conduct ov the crimminal investigaishon haz bene left in the expereyenst handz ov Inspector Lestrade, ov Scotland Yard, whoo iz following up the cluse withe hiz acustomd ennergy and sagascity.”

Sherloc Hoamz liscend withe cloazd ise and fin'ghertips tooghether too this remarcabel acount.

“The cace haz certainly sum points ov interest,” ced he, in hiz lan'gwid fashon. “Ma I aasc, in the ferst place, Mr. McFarlane, hou it iz dhat u ar stil at libberty, cins dhare apeerz too be enuf evvidens too justifi yor arest?”

“I liv at Torington Loj, Blac’heeth, withe mi parents, Mr. Hoamz, but laast nite, havving too doo biznes verry late withe Mr. Jonas Oaldaker, I stade at an hotel in Norwood, and came too mi biznes from dhare. I nu nuthhing ov this afare until I wauz in the trane, when I rede whaut u hav just herd. I at wuns sau the horibel dain’ger ov mi posishon, and I hurrede too poot the cace intoo yor handz. I hav no dout dhat I shood hav bene arested iather at mi citty office or at mi home. A man follode me from Lundon Brij Staishon, and I hav no dout—Grate hevven! whaut iz dhat?”

It wauz a clang ov the bel, follode instantly bi hevvy steps uppon the stare. A moment later, our oald frend Lestrade apeerd in the doerwa. Over hiz shoalder I caut a glimps ov wun or too uniformd poleesmen outside.

“Mr. Jon Hector McFarlane?” ced Lestrade.

Our unforchunate cliyent rose withe a gaastly face.

“I arest u for the wilfool merder ov Mr. Jonas Oaldaker, ov Lower Norwood.”

McFarlane ternd too us withe a geschure ov despare, and sanc intoo hiz chare wuns moer like wun whoo iz crusht.

“Wun moment, Lestrade,” ced Hoamz. “Haaf an our moer or les can make no differens too u, and the gentelman wauz about too ghiv us an acount ov this verry interesting afare, which mite ade us in clering it up.”

“I thhinc dhare wil be no difficulty in clering it up,” ced Lestrade, grimly.

“Nun the les, withe yor permishon, I shood be much interested too here hiz acount.”

“Wel, Mr. Hoamz, it iz difficult for me too refuse u ennithhing, for u hav bene ov uce too the foers wuns or twice in the paast, and we o u a good tern at Scotland Yard,” ced Lestrade. “At the same time I must remane withe mi prizzoner, and I am bound too worn him dhat ennithhing he ma sa wil apere in evvidens against him.”

“I wish nuthhing better,” ced our cliyent. “Aul I aasc iz dhat u shood here and reccognise the absolute trueth.”

Lestrade looct at hiz wauch. “Ile ghiv u haaf an our,” ced he.

“I must explane ferst,” ced McFarlane, “dhat I nu nuthhing ov Mr. Jonas Oaldaker. Hiz name wauz familleyar too me, for menny yeerz ago mi parents wer aqwainted withe him, but dha drifted apart. I wauz verry much cerpriazd dhaerfoer, when yesterda, about thre oacloc in the aafternoone, he wauct intoo mi office in the citty. But I wauz stil moer astonnisht when he toald me the obgett ov hiz vizsit. He had in hiz hand cevveral sheets ov a noatbooc, cuvverd withe scribbeld riting—here dha ar—and he lade them on mi tabel.

“‘Here iz mi wil,’ ced he. ‘I waunt u, Mr. McFarlane, too caast it intoo propper legal shape. I wil cit here while u doo so.’

“I cet micelf too copy it, and u can imadgine mi astonishment when I found dhat, withe sum reservaishonz, he had left aul hiz propperty too me. He wauz a strainj littel ferret-like man, withe white ilashez, and when I looct up at him I found hiz kene

gra ise fixt uppon me withe an amuezd expreshon. I cood hardly beleve mi one az I rede the termz ov the wil; but he explaind dhat he wauz a batchelor withe hardly enny livving relaishon, dhat he had none mi parents in hiz ueth, and dhat he had aulwase herd ov me az a verry deserving yung man, and wauz ashuerd dhat hiz munny wood be in werthy handz. Ov coers, I cood oanly stammer out mi thanx. The wil wauz july finnisht, ciand, and witnest bi mi clarc. This iz it on the blu paper, and these slips, az I hav explaind, ar the ruf draaft. Mr. Jonas Oaldaker then informd me dhat dhare wer a number ov documents—bilding lecez, titel-deedz, morgagez, scrip, and so foerth—which it wauz nescesary dhat I shood ce and understand. He ced dhat hiz miand wood not be esy until the whole thhing wauz cetteld, and he begd me too cum out too hiz hous at Norwood dhat nite, bringing the wil withe me, and too arainj matterz. ‘Remember, mi boi, not wun werd too yor parents about the afare until evverithhing iz cetteld. We wil kepe it az a littel cerprise for them.’ He wauz verry incistent uppon this point, and made me prommice it faithfooly.

“U can imadgine, Mr. Hoamz, dhat I wauz not in a humor too refuse him ennithhing dhat he mite aasc. He wauz mi bennefactor, and aul mi desire wauz too carry out hiz wishez in evvery particcular. I cent a tellegram home, dhaerfoer, too sa dhat I had important biznes on hand, and dhat it wauz imposcibel for me too sa hou late I mite be. Mr. Oaldaker had toald me dhat he wood like me too hav supper withe him at nine, az he mite not be home befoer dhat our. I had sum difficulty in fianding hiz hous, houwevver, and it wauz neerly haaf-paast befoer I reecht it. I found him——”

“Wun moment!” ced Hoamz. “Whoo opend the doer?”

“A middel-aijd woomman, whoo wauz, I supose, hiz houskeper.”

“And it wauz she, I prezhume, whoo menshond yor name?”

“Exactly,” ced McFarlane.

“Pra procede.”

McFarlane wiapt hiz damp brou, and then continnude hiz narrative:

“I wauz shone bi this woomman intoo a citting-roome, whare a frugal supper wauz lade out. Aafterwordz, Mr. Jonas Oaldaker led me intoo hiz bedroome, in which dhare stood a hevvy safe. This he opend and tooc out a mas ov documents, which we went over tooghether. It wauz betwene elevven and twelv when we finnisht. He remarct dhat we must not disterb the houskeper. He shode me out throo hiz one French windo, which had bene open aul this time.”

“Wauz the bliand doun?” aasct Hoamz.

“I wil not be shure, but I beleve dhat it wauz oonly haaf doun. Yes, I remember hou he poold it up in order too swing open the windo. I cood not fiand mi stic, and he ced, ‘Nevver miand, mi boi, I shal ce a good dele ov u nou, I hope, and I wil kepe yor stic until u cum bac too clame it.’ I left him dhare, the safe open, and the paperz made up in packets uppon the tabel. It wauz so late dhat I cood not ghet bac too Blac’heeth, so I spent the nite at the Anerly Armz, and I nu nuthhing moer until I rede ov this horibel afare in the morning.”

“Ennithhing moer dhat u wood like too aasc, Mr. Hoamz?” ced Lestrade, whose iabrouz had gon up wuns or twice juring this remarcabel explanaishon.

“Not until I hav bene too Blac’heeth.”

“U mene too Norwood,” ced Lestrade.

“O, yes, no dout dhat iz whaut I must hav ment,” ced Hoamz, withe hiz enigmattical smile. Lestrade had lernd bi moer expereyencez dhan he wood care too acnollej dhat dhat brane cood cut throo dhat which wauz impennetrabel too him. I sau him looc cureyously at mi companyon.

“I thhinc I shood like too hav a werd withe u prezsently, Mr. Sherloc Hoamz,” ced he. “Nou, Mr. McFarlane, too ov mi cunstabelz ar at the doer, and dhare iz a foer-wheler wating.” The retched yung man arose, and withe a laast beceching glaans at us wauct from the roome. The officerz conducted him too the cab, but Lestrade remaind.

Hoamz had pict up the pagez which formd the ruf draaft ov the wil, and wauz loocking at them withe the kenest interest uppon hiz face.

“Dhare ar sum points about dhat document, Lestrade, ar dhare not?” ced he, pooshing them over.

The ofishal looct at them withe a puzseld expreshon.

“I can rede the ferst fu lianz and these in the middel ov the cecond page, and wun or too at the end. Dhose ar az clere az print,” ced he, “but the riting in betwene iz verry bad, and dhare ar thre placez whare I canot rede it at aul.”

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

“Wel, whaut doo *u* make ov it?”

“Dhat it wauz ritten in a trane. The good riting represents staishonz, the bad riting muivment, and the verry bad riting paacing over points. A ciyentiffic expert wood pronouns at wuns dhat this wauz draun up on a suberban line, cins noawhare save in the imejate vicinnity ov a grate citty cood dhare be so qwic a suxeshon ov points. Graanting dhat hiz whole gerny wauz occupide in drauwing up the wil, then the trane wauz an expres, oanly stopping wuns betwene Norwood and Lundon Brij.”

Lestrade began too laaf.

“U ar too menny for me when u beghin too ghet on yor ththeyorese, Mr. Hoamz,” ced he. “Hou duz this bare on the cace?”

“Wel, it corobboraits the yung manz stoery too the extent dhat the wil wauz draun up bi Jonas Oaldaker in hiz gerny yesterda. It iz cureyous—iz it not?—dhat a man shood drau up so important a document in so haphazard a fashon. It sugests dhat he did not thhinc it wauz gowing too be ov much practical importans. If a man dru up a wil which he did not intend evver too be efective, he mite doo it so.”

“Wel, he dru up hiz one deth worant at the same time,” ced Lestrade.

“O, u thhinc so?”

“Doant u?”

“Wel, it iz qwite poscibel, but the cace iz not clere too me yet.”

“Not clere? Wel, if dhat iznt clere, whaut *cood* be clerer?”

Here iz a yung man whoo lernz suddenly dhat, if a certane oalder man dise, he wil suxede too a forchune. Whaut duz he doo? He cez nuthhing too enniwun, but he arain'gez dhat he shal go out on sum pretext too ce hiz cliyent dhat nite. He waits until the oarly uther person in the hous iz in bed, and then in the sollichude ov a manz roome he merderz him, bernz hiz boddy in the wood-pile, and departs too a naboring hotel. The blud-stainz in the roome and aulso on the stic ar verry slite. It iz probbabel dhat he imadgiand hiz crime too be a bludles wun, and hoapt dhat if the boddy wer conshuemd it wood hide aul tracez ov the method ov hiz deth—tracez which, for sum rezon, must hav pointed too him. Iz not aul this obveyous?"

"It striax me, mi good Lestrade, az beying just a trifel too obveyous," ced Hoamz. "U doo not ad imaginaishon too yor uther grate qwaulitese, but if u cood for wun moment poot yorcelf in the place ov this yung man, wood u chuse the verry nite aafter the wil had bene made too comit yor crime? Wood it not ceme dain'gerous too u too make so verry cloce a relaishon betwene the too incidents? Agane, wood u chuse an ocaizhon when u ar none too be in the hous, when a cervant haz let u in? And, finaly, wood u take the grate painz too concele the boddy, and yet leve yor one stic az a cine dhat u wer the crimminal? Confes, Lestrade, dhat aul this iz verry unliacly."

"Az too the stic, Mr. Hoamz, u no az wel az I doo dhat a crimminal iz often flurrede, and duz such thhingz, which a coole man wood avoid. He wauz verry liacly afrade too go bac too the roome. Ghiv me anuther ththeyory dhat wood fit the facts."

"I cood verry esily ghiv u haaf a duzsen," ced Hoamz. "Here for exaampel, iz a verry poscibel and even probbabel wun. I make u a fre prezsent ov it. The oalder man iz showing documents which ar ov evvident vallu. A paacing tramp cese them throo the

windo, the bliand ov which iz oanly haaf doun. Exit the soliscitor. Enter the tramp! He cesez a stic, which he observz dhare, kilz Oaldaker, and departs aafter barning the boddy."

"Whi shood the tramp bern the boddy?"

"For the matter ov dhat, whi shood McFarlane?"

"Too hide sum evvidens."

"Poscibly the tramp waunted too hide dhat enny merder at aul had bene comitted."

"And whi did the tramp take nuthhing?"

"Becauz dha wer paperz dhat he cood not negoasheyate."

Lestrade shooc hiz hed, dho it ceemd too me dhat hiz manner wauz les absolutly ashuerd dhan befoer.

"Wel, Mr. Sherloc Hoamz, u ma looc for yor tramp, and while u ar fianding him we wil hoald on too our man. The fuchure wil sho which iz rite. Just notice this point, Mr. Hoamz: dhat so far az we no, nun ov the paperz wer remuivd, and dhat the prizzoner iz the wun man in the werld whoo had no rezon for remooving them, cins he wauz are-at-lau, and wood cum intoo them in enny cace."

Mi frend ceemd struc bi this remarc.

"I doant mene too deni dhat the evvidens iz in sum wase verry strongly in favor ov yor ththeyory," ced he. "I oanly wish too point out dhat dhare ar uther ththeyorese poscibel. Az u sa, the fuchure wil decide. Good-morning! I dare sa dhat in the coers

ov the da I shal drop in at Norwood and ce hou u ar ghetting on."

When the detective departed, mi frend rose and made hiz preparaishonz for the dase werc withe the alert are ov a man whoo haz a con'geenyal taasc befoer him.

"Mi ferst muivment Wautson," ced he, az he busceld intoo hiz froccote, "must, az I ced, be in the direcshon ov Blac'heeth."

"And whi not Norwood?"

"Becauz we hav in this cace wun cin'gular incident cumming cloce too the heelz ov anuther cin'gular incident. The polece ar making the mistake ov concentrating dhare atenshon uppon the cecond, becauz it happenz too be the wun which iz acchuwaly crimminal. But it iz evvident too me dhat the lodgical wa too aproche the cace iz too beghin bi tryying too thro sum lite uppon the ferst incident—the cureyous wil, so suddenly made, and too so unexpected an are. It ma doo sumthhing too cimplifi whaut follode. No, mi dere fello, I doant thhinc u can help me. Dhare iz no prospect ov dain'ger, or I shood not dreame ov stuuring out widhout u. I trust dhat when I ce u in the evening, I wil be abel too repoert dhat I hav bene abel too doo sumthhing for this unforchunate yungster, whoo haz throne himcelf uppon mi protecshon."

It wauz late when mi frend reternd, and I cood ce, bi a glaans at hiz haggard and ancshous face, dhat the hi hoaps withe which he had started had not bene foolfild. For an our he droand awa uppon hiz viyolin, endeuvoring too suithe hiz one ruffeld spirrits. At laast he flung down the instrument, and plunjd intoo a detaild acount ov hiz misadvenchuerz.

"Its aul gowing rong, Wautson—aul az rong az it can go. I kept a

boald face befoer Lestrade, but, uppon mi sole, I beleve dhat for wuns the fello iz on the rite trac and we ar on the rong. Aul mi instincts ar wun wa, and aul the facts ar the uther, and I much fere dhat Brittish juresse hav not yet ataind dhat pich ov intelligens when dha wil ghiv the prefferens too mi ththeyorese over Lestradez facts.”

“Did u go too Blac’heeth?”

“Yes, Wautson, I went dhare, and I found verry qwicly dhat the late lamented Oaldaker wauz a pritty concidderabel blacgard. The faather wauz awa in cerch ov hiz sun. The muther wauz at home—a littel, fluffy, blu-ide person, in a tremmor ov fere and indignaishon. Ov coers, she wood not admit even the pocibillity ov hiz ghilt. But she wood not expres iather cerprise or regret over the fate ov Oaldaker. On the contrary, she spoke ov him withe such bitternes dhat she wauz unconshously concidderably strengthhenning the cace ov the polece for, ov coers, if her sun had herd her speke ov the man in this fashon, it wood predispose him toowordz haitred and viyolens. ‘He wauz moer like a malignant and cunning ape dhan a human beying,’ ced she, ‘and he aulwase wauz, evver cins he wauz a yung man.’

“‘U nu him at dhat time?’ ced I.

“‘Yes, I nu him wel, in fact, he wauz an oald sutor ov mine. Thanc hevven dhat I had the cens too tern awa from him and too marry a better, if poorer, man. I wauz en’gajjd too him, Mr. Hoamz, when I herd a shocking stoery ov hou he had ternd a cat looce in an aveyary, and I wauz so horifide at hiz brutal cruwelty dhat I wood hav nuthing moer too doo withe him.’ She rummaijd in a buro, and prezsently she projuest a fotograaf ov a woomman, shaimfooly defaist and mutilated withe a nife. ‘Dhat iz mi one fotograaf,’ she ced. ‘He cent it too me in dhat state, withe hiz

kers, uppon mi wedding morning.'

“‘Wel,’ ced I, ‘at leest he haz forghivven u nou, cins he haz left aul hiz propperty too yor sun.’

“‘Niather mi sun nor I waunt ennithhing from Jonas Oaldaker, ded or alive!’ she cride, withe a propper spirrit. ‘Dhare iz a God in hevven, Mr. Hoamz, and dhat same God whoo haz punnisht dhat wicked man wil sho, in Hiz one good time, dhat mi sunz handz ar ghiltles ov hiz blud.’

“Wel, I tride wun or too leedz, but cood ghet at nuthhing which wood help our hipothhecis, and cevveral points which wood make against it. I gave it up at laast and of I went too Norwood.

“This place, Depe Dene Hous, iz a big moddern villaa ov staring bric, standing bac in its one groundz, withe a lorel-clumpt laun in frunt ov it. Too the rite and sum distans bac from the rode wauz the timber-yard which had bene the cene ov the fire. Heerz a ruf plan on a lefe ov mi noatbooc. This windo on the left iz the wun which openz intoo Oaldakerz roome. U can looc intoo it from the rode, u ce. Dhat iz about the oanly bit ov consolaishon I hav had too-da. Lestrade wauz not dhare, but hiz hed cunstabel did the onnorz. Dha had just found a grate trezhure-trove. Dha had spent the morning raking among the ashez ov the bernd wood-pile, and beciadz the chard organnic remainz dha had cecuerd cevveral discullord mettal disx. I exammiand them withe care, and dhare wauz no dout dhat dha wer trouser buttonz. I even distin’gwisht dhat wun ov them wauz marct withe the name ov ‘Hiamz,’ whoo wauz Oaldakerz talor. I then werct the laun verry caerfooly for cianz and tracez, but this drount haz made evverithhing az hard az iarn. Nuthhing wauz too be cene save dhat sum boddy or bundel had bene dragd throo a lo privet hej which iz in a line withe the wood-pile. Aul dhat, ov coers, fits in

withe the ofishal ththeyory. I crauld about the laun withe an August sun on mi bac, but I got up at the end ov an our no wiser dhan befoer.

“Wel, aafter this feyasco I went intoo the bedroome and exammiand dhat aulso. The blud-stainz wer verry slite, mere smeerz and disculloraishonz, but undoutedly fresh. The stic had bene remuivd, but dhare aulso the marx wer slite. Dhare iz no dout about the stic belonging too our cliyent. He admits it. Footmarx ov boath men cood be made out on the carpet, but nun ov enny thherd person, which agane iz a tric for the uther cide. Dha wer piling up dhare scoer aul the time and we wer at a standstil.

“Oanly wun littel gleme ov hope did I ghet—and yet it amounted too nuthhing. I exammiand the contents ov the safe, moast ov which had bene taken out and left on the tabel. The paperz had bene made up intoo ceeld enveloaps, wun or too ov which had bene opend bi the polece. Dha wer not, so far az I cood juj, ov enny grate vallu, nor did the banc-booc sho dhat Mr. Oaldaker wauz in such verry afluent circumstaancez. But it ceemd too me dhat aul the paperz wer not dhare. Dhare wer aluezhonz too sum deedz—poscibly the moer vallubel—which I cood not fiand. This, ov coers, if we cood deffiniatly proove it, wood tern Lestraidz argument against himcelf, for whoo wood stele a thhing if he nu dhat he wood shortly inherrit it?

“Finally, havving draun evvery uther cuvver and pict up no cent, I tride mi luc withe the houskeper. Mrs. Lexington iz her name—a littel, darc, cilent person, withe suspishous and ciadlong ise. She cood tel us sumthhing if she wood—I am convinst ov it. But she wauz az cloce az wax. Yes, she had let Mr. McFarlane in at haaf-paast nine. She wisht her hand had witherd befoer she had dun so. She had gon too bed at haaf-paast ten. Her roome wauz

at the uther end ov the hous, and she cood here nuthhing ov whaut had paast. Mr. McFarlane had left hiz hat, and too the best ov her belefe hiz stic, in the haul. She had bene awakend bi the alarm ov fire. Her poor, dere maaster had certainly bene merderd. Had he enny ennemese? Wel, evvery man had ennemese, but Mr.

Oaldaker

kept himself verry much too himself, and oonly met pepel in the wa ov biznes. She had cene the buttonz, and wauz shure dhat dha belongd too the cloadhz which he had woern laast nite. The wood-pile wauz verry dri, for it had not rained for a munth. It bernd like tinder, and bi the time she reecht the spot, nuthhing cood be cene but flaimz. She and aul the fiarmen smeld the bernd flesh from incide it. She nu nuthhing ov the paperz, nor ov Mr. Oaldakerz private afaerz.

“So, mi dere Wautson, dhaerz mi repoert ov a falure. And yet—and yet—” he clencht hiz thhin handz in a parroxizm ov convicshon—“I *no* its aul rong. I fele it in mi boanz. Dhare iz sumthhing dhat haz not cum out, and dhat houskeper nose it. Dhare wauz a sort ov sulky defiyans in her ise, which oonly gose withe ghilty nollej. Houwevver, dhaerz no good tauking enny moer about it, Wautson; but unles sum lucky chaans cumz our wa I fere dhat the Norwood Disaperans Cace wil not figgure in dhat cronnikel ov our suxescez which I foercy dhat a paishent public wil sooner or later hav too enjure.”

“Shuerly,” ced I, “the manz aperans wood go far withe enny jury?”

“Dhat iz a dain’gerous argument mi dere Wautson. U remember dhat terribel merderer, Bert Stevenz, whoo waunted us too ghet him of in ’87? Wauz dhare evver a moer miald-mannerd, Sunda-scoole yung man?”

"It iz tru."

"Unles we suxede in establishing an aulternative ththeyory, this man iz lost. U can hardly fiand a flau in the cace which can nou be presented against him, and aul ferther investigaishon haz cervd too strengthnen it. Bi the wa, dhare iz wun cureyous littel point about dhose paperz which ma cerv us az the starting-point for an inqwiry. On loocking over the banc-booc I found dhat the lo state ov the ballans wauz principaly ju too larj chex which hav bene made out juring the laast yere too Mr. Corneleyus. I confes dhat I shood be interested too no whoo this Mr. Corneleyus ma be withe whoome a retiard bilder haz such verry larj traanzacshonz. Iz it poscibel dhat he haz had a hand in the afaire? Corneleyus mite be a broker, but we hav found no scrip too corespond withe these larj paments. Faling enny uther indicaishon, mi recerchez must nou take the direcshon ov an inqwiry at the banc for the gentelman whoo haz casht these chex. But I fere, mi dere fello, dhat our cace wil end in'gloreuously bi Lestrade hanging our cliyent, which wil certainly be a triyumf for Scotland Yard."

I doo not no hou far Sherloc Hoamz tooc enny slepe dhat nite, but when I came down too breccast I found him pale and harast, hiz brite ise the briter for the darc shaddose round them. The carpet round hiz chare wauz litterd withe ciggaret-endz and withe the erly edishonz ov the morning paperz. An open tellegram la uppon the tabel.

"Whaut doo u thhinc ov this, Wautson?" he aasct, toscing it acros.

It wauz from Norwood, and ran az follose:

Important fresh evvidens too hand. McFarlainz ghilt deffiniatly

establisht. Advise u too abandon cace.—LESTRADE.

“This soundz cereyous,” ced I.

“It iz Lestraidz littel coc-a-doodel ov victory,” Hoamz aancerd, withe a bitter smile. “And yet it ma be premachure too abandon the cace. Aafter aul, important fresh evvidens iz a too-ejd thhing, and ma poscibly cut in a verry different direcshon too dhat which Lestrade imadgianz. Take yor brecfast, Wautson, and we wil go out tooghether and ce whaut we can doo. I fele az if I shal nede yor cumpany and yor moral supoert tooda.”

Mi frend had no brecfast himcelf, for it wauz wun ov hiz peculeyarritese dhat in hiz moer intens moments he wood permit himcelf no foode, and I hav none him prezhume uppon hiz iarn strength until he haz fainted from pure inanishon. “At prezsent I canot spare ennergy and nerv foers for digeschon,” he wood sa in aancer too mi meddical remonstrancez. I wauz not cerpriazd, dhaerfoer, when this morning he left hiz untucht mele behiand him, and started withe me for Norwood. A croud ov morbid ciatceerz wer stil gatherd round Depe Dene Hous, which wauz just such a suberban villaa az I had picchuerd. Within the gaits Lestrade met us, hiz face flusht withe victory, hiz manner groasly triyumfant.

“Wel, Mr. Hoamz, hav u pruivd us too be rong yet? Hav u found yor tramp?” he cride.

“I hav formd no concluezhon whautevver,” mi companyon aancerd.

“But we formd ourz yesterda, and nou it pruivz too be corect, so u must acnollej dhat we hav bene a littel in frunt ov u this time, Mr. Hoamz.”

"U certainly hav the are ov sumthhing unnuezhuwal havving okerd," ced Hoamz.

Lestrade laaft loudly.

"U doant like beying beten enny moer dhan the rest ov us doo," ced he. "A man caant expect aulwase too hav it hiz one wa, can he, Dr. Wautson? Step this wa, if u plese, gentelmen, and I thhinc I can convins u wuns for aul dhat it wauz Jon McFarlane whoo did this crime."

He led us throo the passage and out intoo a darc haul beyond.

"This iz whare yung McFarlane must hav cum out too ghet hiz hat aafter the crime wauz dun," ced he. "Nou looc at this." Withe dramattic suddenes he struc a mach, and bi its lite expoazd a stane ov blud uppon the whiatwausht waul. Az he held the mach nerer, I sau dhat it wauz moer dhan a stane. It wauz the wel-marct print ov a thum.

"Looc at dhat withe yor magnifiying glaas, Mr. Hoamz."

"Yes, I am doowing so."

"U ar aware dhat no too thum-marx ar alike?"

"I hav herd sumthhing ov the kiand."

"Wel, then, wil u plese compare dhat print withe this wax impreshon ov yung McFarlainz rite thum, taken bi mi orderz this morning?"

Az he held the waxen print cloce too the blud-stane, it did not

take a magnifying glaas too ce dhat the too wer undoutedly from the same thum. It wauz evvident too me dhat our unforchunate cliyent wauz lost.

“Dhat iz final,” ced Lestrade.

“Yes, dhat iz final,” I involuntarily eccode.

“It iz final,” ced Hoamz.

Sumthhing in hiz tone caut mi ere, and I ternd too looc at him. An extrordnary chainj had cum over hiz face. It wauz riathing withe inword merriment. Hiz too ise wer shining like starz. It ceemd too me dhat he wauz making desperate efforts too restrane a convulcive atac ov laafter.

“Dere me! Dere me!” he ced at laast. “Wel, nou, whoo wood hav thaut it? And hou deceptive aperancez ma be, too be shure! Such a nice yung man too looc at! It iz a lesson too us not too trust our one jujment, iz it not, Lestrade?”

“Yes, sum ov us ar a littel too much incliand too be coc-shure, Mr. Hoamz,” ced Lestrade. The manz insolens wauz maddening, but we cood not resent it.

“Whaut a providenshal thhing dhat this yung man shood pres hiz rite thum against the waul in taking hiz hat from the peg! Such a verry natchural acshon, too, if u cum too thhinc ov it.” Hoamz wauz outwordly caalm, but hiz whole boddy gave a rigghel ov suprest exiatment az he spoke.

“Bi the wa, Lestrade, whoo made this remarcabel discuvvery?”

“It wauz the houskeper, Mrs. Lexington, whoo dru the nite

cunstabelz atenshon too it.”

“Whare wauz the nite cunstabel?”

“He remaind on gard in the bedroome whare the crime wauz comitted, so az too ce dhat nuthhing wauz tucht.”

“But whi didnt the polece ce this marc yesterda?”

“Wel, we had no particcular rezon too make a caerfool examinaishon ov the haul. Beciadz, its not in a verry promminent place, az u ce.”

“No, no—ov coers not. I supose dhare iz no dout dhat the marc wauz dhare yesterda?”

Lestrade looct at Hoamz az if he thaut he wauz gowing out ov hiz miand. I confes dhat I wauz micelf cerpriazd boath at hiz hilareyous manner and at hiz raather wiald observaishon.

“I doant no whether u thhinc dhat McFarlane came out ov jale in the ded ov the nite in order too strengthen the evvidens against himself,” ced Lestrade. “I leve it too enny expert in the werld whether dhat iz not the marc ov hiz thum.”

“It iz unqweschonably the marc ov hiz thum.”

“Dhare, dhats enuf,” ced Lestrade. “I am a practical man, Mr. Hoamz, and when I hav got mi evvidens I cum too mi concluezhonz. If u hav ennithhing too sa, u wil fiand me riting mi repoert in the citting-roome.”

Hoamz had recuverd hiz eqwanimmity, dho I stil ceemd too detect gleemz ov amuezment in hiz expreshon.

“Dere me, this iz a verry sad devellopment, Wautson, iz it not?”
ced he. “And yet dhare ar cin‘gular points about it which hoald
out sum hoaps for our cliyent.”

“I am delited too here it,” ced I, hartily. “I wauz afrade it
wauz aul up withe him.”

“I wood hardly go so far az too sa dhat, mi dere Wautson. The
fact iz dhat dhare iz wun reyaly cereyous flau in this evvidens too
which our frend atashase so much importans.”

“Indede, Hoamz! Whaut iz it?”

“Oanly this: dhat I *no* dhat dhat marc wauz not dhare when I
exammiand the haul yesterda. And nou, Wautson, let us hav a
littel strole round in the sunshine.”

Withe a confuezd brane, but withe a hart intoo which sum wormth ov
hope wauz reterning, I acumpanede mi frend in a wauc round the
garden. Hoamz tooc eche face ov the hous in tern, and exammiand
it withe grate interest. He then led the wa incide, and went over
the whole bilding from baisment too attic. Moast ov the ruimz wer
unfernisht, but nun the les Hoamz inspected them aul
minuetly. Finaly, on the top coridor, which ran outside thre
untennanted bedruimz, he agane wauz ceezd withe a spazm ov
merriment.

“Dhare ar reyaly sum verry uneke fechuerz about this cace,
Wautson,” ced he. “I thhinc it iz time nou dhat we tooc our frend
Lestrade intoo our confidens. He haz had hiz littel smile at our
expens, and perhaps we ma doo az much bi him, if mi reding ov
this problem pruiuz too be corect. Yes, yes, I thhinc I ce hou we

shood aproche it."

The Scotland Yard inspector wauz stil riting in the parlor when Hoamz interupted him.

"I understood dhat u wer riting a repoert ov this cace," ced he.

"So I am."

"Doant u thhinc it ma be a littel premachure? I caant help thhinking dhat yor evvidens iz not complete."

Lestrade nu mi frend too wel too disregard hiz werdz. He lade doun hiz pen and looct cureyously at him.

"Whaut doo u mene, Mr. Hoamz?"

"Oanly dhat dhare iz an important witnes whoome u hav not cene."

"Can u projuce him?"

"I thhinc I can."

"Then doo so."

"I wil doo mi best. Hou menny cunstabelz hav u?"

"Dhare ar thre within caul."

"Exelent!" ced Hoamz. "Ma I aasc if dha ar aul larj, abel-boddede men withe pouwerfool voicez?"

"I hav no dout dha ar, dho I fale too ce whaut dhare voicez

hav too doo withe it.”

“Perhaps I can help u too ce dhat and wun or too uther thhingz az wel,” ced Hoamz. “Kiandly summon yor men, and I wil tri.”

Five minnuets later, thre poleesmen had acembeld in the haul.

“In the out’hous u wil fiand a concidderabel qwauntity ov strau,” ced Hoamz. “I wil aasc u too carry in too bundelz ov it. I thhinc it wil be ov the gratest acistans in projucing the witnes whoome I reqwire. Thanc u verry much. I beleve u hav sum matchez in yor pocket Wautson. Nou, Mr. Lestrade, I wil aasc u aul too acumpany me too the top landing.”

Az I hav ced, dhare wauz a braud coridor dhare, which ran outside thre empty bedruimz. At wun end ov the coridor we wer aul marshald bi Sherloc Hoamz, the cunstabelz grinning and Lestrade staring at mi frend withe amaizment, expectaishon, and derizhon chacing eche uther acros hiz fechuerz. Hoamz stood befoer us withe the are ov a cunjurer whoo iz performing a tric.

“Wood u kiandly cend wun ov yor cunstabelz for too buckets ov wauter? Poot the strau on the floer here, fre from the waul on iather cide. Nou I thhinc dhat we ar aul reddy.”

Lestradez face had begun too gro red and an’gry. “I doant no whether u ar playing a game withe us, Mr. Sherloc Hoamz,” ced he. “If u no ennithhing, u can shuerly sa it widhout aul this tomfoolery.”

“I ashure u, mi good Lestrade, dhat I hav an exelent rezon for evverithhing dhat I doo. U ma poscibly remember dhat u chaaft me a littel, sum ourz ago, when the sun ceemd on yor cide ov the hej, so u must not gruj me a littel pomp and

ceremony nou. Mite I aasc u, Wautson, too open dhat windo, and then too poot a mach too the ej ov the strau?"

I did so, and drivven bi the draaft a coil ov gra smoke swerld doun the coridor, while the dri strau crackeld and flaimd.

"Nou we must ce if we can fiand this witnes for u, Lestrade. Mite I aasc u aul too join in the cri ov 'Fire!'? Nou then; wun, too, thre——"

"Fire!" we aul yeld.

"Thanc u. I wil trubbel u wuns agane."

"Fire!"

"Just wuns moer, gentelmen, and aul tooghether."

"Fire!" The shout must hav rung over Norwood.

It had hardly dide awa when an amasing thhing happend. A doer suddenly flu open out ov whaut apeerd too be sollid waul at the end ov the coridor, and a littel, wisend man darted out ov it, like a rabbit out ov its burro.

"Cappital!" ced Hoamz, caalmly. "Wautson, a bucket ov wauter over the strau. Dhat wil doo! Lestrade, alou me too present u withe yor principal miscing witnes, Mr. Jonas Oaldaker."

The detective staerd at the nucummer withe blanc amaizment. The latter wauz blinking in the brite lite ov the coridor, and pering at us and at the smoaldering fire. It wauz an ojous face—craafty, vishous, malignant, withe shifty, lite-gra ise and white lashez.

“Whauts this, then?” ced Lestrade, at laast. “Whaut hav u bene doowing aul this time, a?”

Oaldaker gave an unnesy laaf, shrinking bac from the fureyous red face ov the an’gry detective.

“I hav dun no harm.”

“No harm? U hav dun yor best too ghet an innocent man hangd. If it wauznt for this gentelman here, I am not shure dhat u wood not hav suxeded.”

The retched crechure began too whimper.

“I am shure, cer, it wauz oanly mi practical joke.”

“O! a joke, wauz it? U woant fiand the laaf on yor cide, I prommice u. Take him down, and kepe him in the citting-roome until I cum. Mr. Hoamz,” he continnude, when dha had gon, “I cood not speke befoer the cunstabelz, but I doant miand saying, in the prezsens ov Dr. Wautson, dhat this iz the britest thhing dhat u hav dun yet, dho it iz a mistery too me hou u did it. U hav saivd an innocent manz life, and u hav prevented a verry grave scandal, which wood hav ruwind mi reputaishon in the Foers.”

Hoamz smiald, and clapt Lestrade uppon the shoalder.

“Insted ov beying ruwind, mi good cer, u wil fiand dhat yor reputaishon haz bene enormously enhaanst. Just make a fu aultraishonz in dhat repoert which u wer riting, and dha wil understand hou hard it iz too thro dust in the ise ov Inspector Lestrade.”

“And u doant waunt yor name too apere?”

“Not at aul. The werc iz its one reword. Perhaps I shal ghet the creddit aulso at sum distant da, when I permit mi sellous histoereyan too la out hiz fuilscap wuns moer—a, Wautson? Wel, nou, let us ce whare this rat haz bene lerking.”

A laath-and-plaaster partishon had bene run acros the passage cix fete from the end, withe a doer cunningly conceeld in it. It wauz lit within bi slits under the eevz. A fu artikelz ov fernichure and a supli ov foode and wauter wer within, tooghether withe a number ov boox and paperz.

“Dhaerz the advaantage ov beying a bilder,” ced Hoamz, az we came out. “He wauz abel too fix up hiz one littel hiding-place widhout enny confedderate—save, ov coers, dhat preshous houskeper ov hiz, whoome I shood loose no time in adding too yor bag, Lestrade.”

“Ile take yor advice. But hou did u no ov this place, Mr. Hoamz?”

“I made up mi miand dhat the fello wauz in hiding in the hous. When I paist wun coridor and found it cix fete shorter dhan the coresponding wun belo, it wauz pritty clere whare he wauz. I thaut he had not the nerv too li qwiyet befoer an alarm ov fire. We cood, ov coers, hav gon in and taken him, but it amuezd me too make him revele himcelf. Beciadz, I ode u a littel mistificaishon, Lestrade, for yor chaaf in the morning.”

“Wel, cer, u certainly got eeqwal withe me on dhat. But hou in the werld did u no dhat he wauz in the hous at aul?”

“The thum-marc, Lestrade. U ced it wauz final; and so it wauz, in a verry different cens. I nu it had not bene dhare the da befoer. I pa a good dele ov atenshon too matterz ov detale, az u ma hav observd, and I had exammiand the haul, and wauz shure dhat the waul wauz clere. Dhaerfoer, it had bene poot on juring the nite.”

“But hou?”

“Verry cimply. When dhose packets wer ceeld up, Jonas Oaldaker got McFarlane too cecure wun ov the ceelz bi pootting hiz thum uppon the soft wax. It wood be dun so qwicly and so natchuraly, dhat I daersa the yung man himcelf haz no recolecshon ov it. Verry liacly it just so happend, and Oaldaker had himcelf no noashon ov the uce he wood poot it too. Brooding over the cace in dhat den ov hiz, it suddenly struc him whaut absolutly damming evvidens he cood make against McFarlane bi using dhat thum-marc. It wauz the cimplest thhing in the werld for him too take a wax impreshon from the cele, too moicen it in az much blud az he cood ghet from a pin-pric, and too poot the marc uppon the waul juring the nite, iather withe hiz one hand or withe dhat ov hiz houskeper. If u exammine amung dhose documents which he tooc withe him intoo hiz retrete, I wil la u a wager dhat u fiand the cele withe the thum-marc uppon it.”

“Wunderfool!” ced Lestrade. “Wunderfool! Its aul az clere az cristal, az u poot it. But whaut iz the obgect ov this depe decepshon, Mr. Hoamz?”

It wauz amusing too me too ce hou the detectiavz overbaring manner had chainjd suddenly too dhat ov a chiald aasking qweschonz ov its techer.

“Wel, I doant thhinc dhat iz verry hard too explane. A verry depe,

malishous, vindictive person iz the gentelman whoo iz nou wating us dounstaerz. U no dhat he wauz wuns refuezd bi McFarlainz muther? U doant! I toald u dhat u shood go too Blac'heeth ferst and Norwood aafterwordz. Wel, this injury, az he wood concidder it, haz rankeld in hiz wicked, skeming brane, and aul hiz life he haz longd for venjans, but nevver cene hiz chaans. Juring the laast yere or too, thhingz hav gon against him—ceecret speculaishon, I thhinc—and he fiandz himcelf in a bad wa. He determianz too swindel hiz credditorz, and for this perpoce he pase larj chex too a certane Mr. Corneleyus, whoo iz, I imadgine, himcelf under anuther name. I hav not traist these chex yet, but I hav no dout dhat dha wer banct under dhat name at sum provinshal toun whare Oaldaker from time too time led a dubbel existens. He intended too chainj hiz name aultooghether, drau this munny, and vannish, starting life agane elshware.”

“Wel, dhats liacly enuf.”

“It wood strike him dhat in disapering he mite thro aul persute of hiz trac, and at the same time hav an ampel and crushing revenj uppon hiz oald sweet'hart, if he cood ghiv the impreshon dhat he had bene merderd bi her oanly chiald. It wauz a maasterpece ov villany, and he carrede it out like a maaster. The ideyaa ov the wil, which wood ghiv an obveyous motive for the crime, the ceecret vizsit un'none too hiz one parents, the retenshon ov the stic, the blud, and the annimal remainz and buttonz in the wood-pile, aul wer admirabel. It wauz a net from which it ceemd too me, a fu ourz ago, dhat dhare wauz no poscibel escape. But he had not dhat supreme ghift ov the artist, the nollej ov when too stop. He wisht too improove dhat which wauz aulreddy perfect—too drau the rope titer yet round the nec ov hiz unforchunate victim—and so he ruwind aul. Let us decend, Lestrade. Dhare ar just wun or too qweschonz dhat I wood aasc him.”

The malignant creature wauz ceted in hiz one parlor, withe a poleesman uppon eche side ov him.

“It wauz a joke, mi good cer—a practical joke, nuthing moer,” he whiand incessantly. “I ashure u, cer, dhat I cimply conceeld micelf in order too ce the efect ov mi disaperans, and I am shure dhat u wood not be so unjust az too imadgine dhat I wood hav aloud enny harm too befaul poor yung Mr. McFarlane.”

“Dhats for a jury too decide,” ced Lestrade. “Ennihou, we shal hav u on a charj ov consperracy, if not for atempted merder.”

“And ule probbably fiand dhat yor credditorz wil impound the banking acount ov Mr. Corneleyus,” ced Hoamz.

The littel man started, and ternd hiz malignant ise uppon mi frend.

“I hav too thanc u for a good dele,” ced he. “Perhaps Ile pa mi det sum da.”

Hoamz smiald indulgently.

“I fancy dhat, for sum fu yeerz, u wil fiand yor time verry foolly occupide,” ced he. “Bi the wa, whaut wauz it u poot intoo the wood-pile beciadz yor oald trouserz? A ded dog, or rabbits, or whaut? U woant tel? Dere me, hou verry unkiand ov u! Wel, wel, I daersa dhat a cuppel ov rabbits wood acount boath for the blud and for the chard ashez. If evver u rite an acount, Wautson, u can make rabbits cerv yor tern.”

THE ADVENCHURE OV THE DAANCING MEN

Hoamz had bene ceted for sum ourz in cilens withe hiz long, thhin bac kervd over a kemmical vescel in which he wauz bruwing a particcularly maloddorous product. Hiz hed wauz sunc uppon hiz brest, and he looct from mi point ov vu like a strainj, lanc berd, withe dul gra plumage and a blac top-not.

“So, Wautson,” ced he, suddenly, “u doo not propose too invest in South African securitese?”

I gave a start ov astonishment. Acustomd az I wauz too Hoamsez cureyous faccultese, this sudden intruezhon intoo mi moast intimate thauts wauz utterly inexpliccabel.

“Hou on erth doo u no dhat?” I aasct.

He wheeld round uppon hiz stoole, withe a stemming test-chube in hiz hand, and a gleme ov amuezment in hiz depe-cet ise.

“Nou, Wautson, confes yorcelf utterly taken abac,” ced he.

“I am.”

“I aut too make u cine a paper too dhat efect.”

“Whi?”

“Becauz in five minnuets u wil sa dhat it iz aul so abcerdly cimpel.”

“I am shure dhat I shal sa nuthhing ov the kiand.”

“U ce, mi dere Wautson,”—he propt hiz test-chube in the rac, and began too lecchure withe the are ov a professor adrescing hiz claas—“it iz not reyaly difficult too construct a cerese ov

inferencez, eche dependent uppon its predecessor and eche cimpel in itself. If, aafter doowing so, wun cimply nox out aul the central inferencez and presents wunz augens withe the starting-point and the concluezhon, wun ma projuce a startling, dho poscibly a meretrishous, efect. Nou, it wauz not reyaly difficult, bi an inspecshon ov the groove betwene yor left foerfin'gher and thum, too fele shure dhat u did *not* propose too invest yor smaul cappital in the goald feeldz."

"I ce no conecshon."

"Verry liacly not; but I can qwicly sho u a cloce conecshon. Here ar the miscing linx ov the verry cimpel chane: 1. U had chauc betwene yor left fin'gher and thum when u reternd from the club laast nite. 2. U poot chauc dhare when u pla billeyardz, too stedly the cu. 3. U nevver pla billeyardz exept withe Thherston. 4. U toald me, foer weex ago, dhat Thherston had an opshon on sum South African propperty which wood expire in a munth, and which he desiard u too share withe him. 5. Yor chec booc iz loct in mi drauwer, and u hav not aasct for the ke. 6. U doo not propose too invest yor munny in this manner."

"Hou abcerdly cimpel!" I cride.

"Qwite so!" ced he, a littel netteld. "Evvery problem becumz verry chialdish when wuns it iz explaind too u. Here iz an unnexplaind wun. Ce whaut u can make ov dhat, frend Wautson." He tost a shete ov paper uppon the tabel, and ternd wuns moer too hiz kemmical anallicis.

I looct withe amaizment at the abcerd hiyerogliffix uppon the paper.

“Whi, Hoamz, it iz a chialdz drauwing,” I cride.

“O, dhats yor ideyaa!”

“Whaut els shood it be?”

“Dhat iz whaut Mr. Hilton Cubit, ov Riding Thorp Mannor, Norfoke, iz verry ancshous too no. This littel conundrum came bi the ferst poast, and he wauz too follo bi the next trane. Dhaerz a ring at the bel, Wautson. I shood not be verry much cerpriazd if this wer he.”

A hevvy step wauz herd uppon the staerz, and an instant later dhare enterd a taul, ruddy, clene-shaven gentelman, whose clere ise and florid cheex toald ov a life led far from the fogz ov Baker Strete. He ceemd too bring a whif ov hiz strong, fresh, bracing, eest-coast are withe him az he enterd. Havving shaken handz withe eche ov us, he wauz about too cit doun, when hiz i rested uppon the paper withe the cureyous markingz, which I had just exammiand and left uppon the tabel.

“Wel, Mr. Hoamz, whaut doo u make ov these?” he cride. “Dha toald me dhat u wer fond ov qwere misterese, and I doant thhinc u can fiand a qwerer wun dhan dhat. I cent the paper on ahed, so dhat u mite hav time too studdy it befoer I came.”

“It iz certainly raather a cureyous producshon,” ced Hoamz. “At ferst cite it wood apere too be sum chialdish pranc. It concists ov a number ov abcerd littel figguerz daancing acros the paper uppon which dha ar draun. Whi shood u atribbute enny importans too so grotesc an obgett?”

“I nevver shood, Mr. Hoamz. But mi wife duz. It iz fritening her too deth. She cez nuthhing, but I can ce terror in her ise.

Dhats whi I waunt too cift the matter too the bottom.”

Hoamz held up the paper so dhat the sunlite shon fool uppon it. It wauz a page toern from a noatbooc. The markingz wer dun in pencil, and ran in this wa:

AM-HERE-ABE-SLANY

Hoamz exammiand it for sum time, and then, foalding it caerfooly up, he plaist it in hiz pocketbooc.

“This prommicez too be a moast interesting and unnuezhuwal cace,”
ced

he. “U gave me a fu particcularz in yor letter, Mr. Hilton Cubit, but I shood be verry much obliajd if u wood kiandly go over it aul agane for the bennefit ov mi frend, Dr. Wautson.”

“Ime not much ov a stoery-teller,” ced our vizsitor, nervously claasping and unclaasping hiz grate, strong handz. “Ule just aasc me ennithhing dhat I doant make clere. Ile beghin at the time ov mi marrage laast yere, but I waunt too sa ferst ov aul dhat, dho Ime not a rich man, mi pepel hav bene at Riding Thorp for a matter ov five cenchurese, and dhare iz no better none fammily in the County ov Norfoke. Laast yere I came up too Lundon for the Jubily, and I stopt at a boerding-hous in Ruscel Sqware, becauz Parker, the viccar ov our parrish, wauz staying in it. Dhare wauz an Amerrican yung lady dhare—Patric wauz the name—Elcy Patric. In sum wa we became frendz, until befoer mi munth wauz up I wauz az much in luv az a man cood be. We wer qwiyetly marrede at a registry office, and we reternd too Norfoke a wedded cuppel. Ule thhinc it verry mad, Mr. Hoamz, dhat a man ov a good oald fammily shood marry a wife in this fashon, nowing nuthhing ov her paast or ov her pepel, but if u sau her and nu her, it wood help u too understand.

“She wauz verry strate about it, wauz Elcy. I caant sa dhat she did not ghiv me evvery chaans ov ghetting out ov it if I wisht too doo so. ‘I hav had sum verry disagreyabel asoasheyaishonz in mi life,’ ced she, ‘I wish too forghet aul about them. I wood raather nevver alude too the paast, for it iz verry painfool too me. If u take me, Hilton, u wil take a woomman whoo haz nuthhing dhat she nede be personaly ashaimd ov, but u wil hav too be content withe mi werd for it, and too alou me too be cilent az too aul dhat paast up too the time when I became yorz. If these condishonz ar too hard, then go bac too Norfoke, and leve me too the loanly life in which u found me.’ It wauz oonly the da befoer our wedding dhat she ced dhose verry werdz too me. I toald her dhat I wauz content too take her on her one termz, and I hav bene az good az mi werd.

“Wel we hav bene marrede nou for a yere, and verry happy we hav bene. But about a munth ago, at the end ov June, I sau for the ferst time cianz ov trubbel. Wun da mi wife receevd a letter from Amerricaa. I sau the Amerrican stamp. She ternd dedly white, red the letter, and thru it intoo the fire. She made no aluezhon too it aafterwordz, and I made nun, for a prommice iz a prommice, but she haz nevver none an esy our from dhat moment. Dhare iz aulwase a looc ov fere uppon her face—a looc az if she wer wating and expecting. She wood doo better too trust me. She wood fiand dhat I wauz her best frend. But until she speex, I can sa nuthhing. Miand u, she iz a truethfool woomman, Mr. Hoamz, and whautevver trubbel dhare ma hav bene in her paast life it haz bene no fault ov herz. I am oonly a cimpel Norfoke sqwire, but dhare iz not a man in In’gland whoo ranx hiz fammily onnor moer hily dhan I doo. She nose it wel, and she nu it wel befoer she marrede me. She wood nevver bring enny stane uppon it—ov dhat I am shure.

“Wel, nou I cum too the qwere part ov mi stoery. About a weke

ago—it wauz the Chuezda ov laast weke—I found on wun ov the windo-cilz a number ov abcerd littel daancing figguerz like these uppon the paper. Dha wer scrauld withe chauc. I thaut dhat it wauz the stabel-boi whoo had draun them, but the lad swoer he nu nuthhing about it. Ennihou, dha had cum dhare juring the nite. I had them wausht out, and I oanly menshond the matter too mi wife aafterwordz. Too mi cerprise, she tooc it verry cereyously, and begd me if enny moer came too let her ce them. Nun did cum for a weke, and then yesterda morning I found this paper liying on the sundiyal in the garden. I shode it too Elcy, and doun she dropt in a ded faint. Cins then she haz looct like a woomman in a dreme, haaf daizd, and withe terror aulwase lerking in her ise. It wauz then dhat I rote and cent the paper too u, Mr. Hoamz. It wauz not a thhing dhat I cood take too the polece, for dha wood hav laaft at me, but u wil tel me whaut too doo. I am not a rich man, but if dhare iz enny dain'ger threttening mi littel woomman, I wood spend mi laast copper too sheeld her.”

He wauz a fine crechure, this man ov the oald In'glish soil—cimpel, strate, and gentel, withe hiz grate, earnest blu ise and braud, cumly face. Hiz luv for hiz wife and hiz trust in her shon in hiz fechuerz. Hoamz had liscend too hiz stoery withe the utmoast atenshon, and nou he sat for sum time in cilent thaut.

“Doant u thhinc, Mr. Cubit,” ced he, at laast, “dhat yor best plan wood be too make a direct apele too yor wife, and too aasc her too share her ceecret withe u?”

Hilton Cubit shooc hiz mascive hed.

“A prommice iz a prommice, Mr. Hoamz. If Elcy wisht too tel me she wood. If not, it iz not for me too foers her confidens. But I am justifide in taking mi one line—and I wil.”

"Then I wil help u withe aul mi hart. In the ferst place, hav u herd ov enny strain'gerz beying cene in yor naborhood?"

"No."

"I prezume dhat it iz a verry qwiyet place. Enny fresh face wood cauz comment?"

"In the imejate naborhood, yes. But we hav cevveral smaul wautering-placez not verry far awa. And the farmerz take in lodgerz."

"These hiyerogliffix hav evvidently a mening. If it iz a puerly arbitrary wun, it ma be imposcibel for us too solv it. If, on the uther hand, it iz cistemattic, I hav no dout dhat we shal ghet too the bottom ov it. But this particcular saampel iz so short dhat I can doo nuthhing, and the facts which u hav braut me ar so indeffinite dhat we hav no baxis for an investigaishon. I wood sugest dhat u retern too Norfoke, dhat u kepe a kene loocout, and dhat u take an exact cobby ov enny fresh daancing men which ma apere. It iz a thousand pittese dhat we hav not a reproducshon ov dhose which wer dun in chauc uppon the windo-cil. Make a discrete inqwiry aulso az too enny strain'gerz in the naborhood. When u hav colected sum fresh evvidens, cum too me agane. Dhat iz the best advice which I can ghiv u, Mr. Hilton Cubit. If dhare ar enny prescing fresh devellopments, I shal be aulwase reddy too run doun and ce u in yor Norfoke home."

The intervuu left Sherloc Hoamz verry thautfool, and cevveral tiamz in the next fu dase I sau him take hiz slip ov paper from hiz noatbooc and looc long and earnestly at the cureyous figguerz inscriabd uppon it. He made no aluezhon too the afare, houwevver, until wun aafternoone a fortnite or so later. I wauz gowing out when

he cauld me bac.

“U had better sta here, Wautson.”

“Whi?”

“Becauz I had a wire from Hilton Cubit this morning. U remember Hilton Cubit, ov the daancing men? He wauz too reche Livverpoole Strete at wun-twenty. He ma be here at enny moment. I gather from hiz wire dhat dhare hav bene sum nu incidents ov importans.”

We had not long too wate, for our Norfoke sqwire came strate from the staishon az faast az a hansom cood bring him. He wauz loocking wurrede and deprest, withe tiard ise and a liand foerhed.

“Its ghetting on mi nervz, this biznes, Mr. Hoamz,” ced he, az he sanc, like a werede man, intoo an armchare. “Its bad enuf too fele dhat u ar surrounded bi uncene, un’none foke, whoo hav sum kiand ov desine uppon u, but when, in adishon too dhat, u no dhat it iz just killing yor wife bi inchez, then it becumz az much az flesh and blud can enjure. Shese waring awa under it—just waring awa befoer mi ise.”

“Haz she ced ennithhing yet?”

“No, Mr. Hoamz, she haz not. And yet dhare hav bene tiamz when the poor gherl haz waunted too speke, and yet cood not qwite bring hercelf too take the plunj. I hav tride too help her, but I daersa I did it clumsily, and scaerd her from it. She haz spoken about mi oald fammily, and our reputaishon in the county, and our pride in our unsullede onnor, and I aulwase felt it wauz leding too the point, but sumhou it ternd of befoer we got dhare.”

“But u hav found out sumthhing for yorself?”

“A good dele, Mr. Hoamz. I hav cevveral fresh daancing-men picchuerz for u too exammine, and, whaut iz moer important, I hav cene the fello.”

“Whaut, the man whoo drauz them?”

“Yes, I sau him at hiz werc. But I wil tel u evverithhing in order. When I got bac aafter mi vizsit too u, the verry ferst thhing I sau next morning wauz a fresh crop ov daancing men. Dha had bene draun in chauc uppon the blac wooden doer ov the toole-hous, which standz becide the laun in fool vu ov the frunt windose. I tooc an exact cobby, and here it iz.” He unfoalded a paper and lade it uppon the tabel. Here iz a cobby ov the hyerogliffix:

AT-ELRIGEZ

“Exelent!” ced Hoamz. “Exelent! Pra continnu.”

“When I had taken the cobby, I rubd out the marx, but, too morningz later, a fresh inscripshon had apeerd. I hav a cobby ov it here:”

CUM-ELCY

Hoamz rubd hiz handz and chuckeld withe delite.

“Our matereyal iz rappidly acumulating,” ced he.

“Thre dase later a message wauz left scrauld uppon paper, and plaist under a pebbel uppon the sundiyal. Here it iz. The

carracterz ar, az u ce, exactly the same az the laast wun. Aafter dhat I determiand too li in wate, so I got out mi revolver and I sat up in mi studdy, which overlook the laun and garden. About too in the morning I wauz ceted bi the windo, aul beying darc save for the muinlite outside, when I herd steps behiand me, and dhare wauz mi wife in her drescing-goun. She imploerd me too cum too bed. I toald her francly dhat I wisht too ce whoo it wauz whoo plade such abcerd trix uppon us. She aancerd dhat it wauz sum censles practical joke, and dhat I shood not take enny notice ov it.

“If it reyaly anoiz u, Hilton, we mite go and travel, u and I, and so avoid this nusans.’

“Whaut, be drivven out ov our one hous bi a practical joker?’ ced I. ‘Whi, we shood hav the whole county laafing at us.’

“Wel, cum too bed,’ ced she, ‘and we can discus it in the morning.’

“Suddenly, az she spoke, I sau her white face gro whiter yet in the muinlite, and her hand titend uppon mi shoalder. Sumthhing wauz mooving in the shaddo ov the toole-hous. I sau a darc, creping figgure which crauld round the corner and sqwauted in frunt ov the doer. Cesing mi pistol, I wauz rushing out, when mi wife thru her armz round me and held me withe convulcive strength. I tride too thro her of, but she clung too me moast desperaitly. At laast I got clere, but bi the time I had opend the doer and reecht the hous the crechure wauz gon. He had left a trace ov hiz prezsens, houwevver, for dhare on the doer wauz the verry same arainjment ov daancing men which had aulreddy twice apeerd, and which I hav coppede on dhat paper. Dhare wauz no uther cine ov the fello enniwhare, dho I ran aul over the groundz. And yet the amasing thhing iz dhat he must hav bene

dhare aul the time, for when I exammiand the doer agane in the morning, he had scrauld sum moer ov hiz picchuerz under the line which I had aulreddy cene.”

“Hav u dhat fresh drauwing?”

“Yes, it iz verry short, but I made a cobby ov it, and here it iz.”

Agane he projuest a paper. The nu daans wauz in this form:

NEVVER

“Tel me,” ced Hoamz—and I cood ce bi hiz ise dhat he wauz much exited—“wauz this a mere adishon too the ferst or did it apere too be entiarly cepparate?”

“It wauz on a different pannel ov the doer.”

“Exelent! This iz far the moast important ov aul for our perpoce. It filz me withe hoaps. Nou, Mr. Hilton Cubit, plese continnu yor moast interesting staitment.”

“I hav nuthhing moer too sa, Mr. Hoamz, exept dhat I wauz an’gry withe mi wife dhat nite for havving held me bac when I mite hav caut the sculking raascal. She ced dhat she feerd dhat I mite cum too harm. For an instant it had crost mi miand dhat perhaps whaut she reyaly feerd wauz dhat *he* mite cum too harm, for I cood not dout dhat she nu whoo this man wauz, and whaut he ment bi these strainj cignalz. But dhare iz a tone in mi wiafs vois, Mr. Hoamz, and a looc in her ise which forbid dout, and I am shure dhat it wauz indede mi one saifty dhat wauz in her miand. Dhaerz the whole cace, and nou I waunt yor advice az too whaut I aut too doo. Mi one inclinaishon iz too poot haaf a duzen ov mi farm

ladz in the shrubbery, and when this fello cumz agane too ghiv him such a hiding dhat he wil leve us in pece for the fuchure."

"I fere it iz too depe a cace for such cimpel remmedese," ced Hoamz. "Hou long can u sta in Lundon?"

"I must go bac too-da. I wood not leve mi wife alone aul nite for ennithhing. She iz verry nervous, and begd me too cum bac."

"I daersa u ar rite. But if u cood hav stopt, I mite poscibly hav bene abel too retern withe u in a da or too. Meenwhile u wil leve me these paperz, and I thhinc dhat it iz verry liacly dhat I shal be abel too pa u a vizsit shortly and too thro sum lite uppon yor cace."

Sherloc Hoamz preservd hiz caalm profeshonal manner until our vizsitor had left us, auldho it wauz esy for me, whoo nu him so wel, too ce dhat he wauz profoundly exited. The moment dhat Hilton Cubits braud bac had disapeerd throo the doer mi comrade rusht too the tabel, lade out aul the slips ov paper contaning daancing men in frunt ov him, and thru himcelf intoo an intricate and elabborate calculaishon. For too ourz I waucht him az he cuvverd shete aafter shete ov paper withe figguerz and letterz, so compleetly abzorbd in hiz taasc dhat he had evvidently forgotten mi prezsens. Sumtiamz he wauz making proagres and whisceld and sang at hiz werc; sumtiamz he wauz puzseld, and wood cit for long spelz withe a furrode brou and a vacant i. Finaly he sprang from hiz chare withe a cri ov satisfacshon, and wauct up and doun the roome rubbing hiz handz tooggether. Then he rote a long tellegram uppon a cabel form. "If mi aancer too this iz az I hope, u wil hav a verry pritty cace too ad too yor colecshon, Wautson," ced he. "I expect dhat we shal be abel too go doun too Norfoke toomoro, and too take our frend sum verry deffinite nuse az too the ceecret ov hiz anoiyans."

I confes dhat I wauz fild withe cureyosity, but I wauz aware dhat Hoamz liact too make hiz discloazhuerz at hiz one time and in hiz one wa, so I wated until it shood sute him too take me intoo hiz confidens.

But dhare wauz a dela in dhat aancering tellegram, and too dase ov impaishens follode, juring which Hoamz prict up hiz eerz at evvery ring ov the bel. On the evening ov the cecond dhare came a letter from Hilton Cubit. Aul wauz qwiyet withe him, save dhat a long inscripshon had apeerd dhat morning uppon the peddestal ov the sundiyal. He incloazd a cobby ov it, which iz here reprojest:

ELCY-PREPARE-TOO-METE-THI-GOD

Hoamz bent over this grotesc frese for sum minnuets, and then suddenly sprang too hiz fete withe an exclamaishon ov cerprise and disma. Hiz face wauz haggard withe anxiyety.

“We hav let this afare go far enuf,” ced he. “Iz dhare a trane too North Waulsham too-nite?”

I ternd up the time-tabel. The laast had just gon.

“Then we shal brecfast erly and take the verry ferst in the morning,” ced Hoamz. “Our prezsens iz moast ergently neded. Aa! here iz our expected cabelgram. Wun moment, Mrs. Hudson, dhare ma be an aancer. No, dhat iz qwite az I expected. This message maix it even moer ecenshal dhat we shood not loose an our in letting Hilton Cubit no hou matterz stand, for it iz a cin’gular and a dain’gerous web in which our cimpel Norfoke sqwire iz entan’gheld.”

So, indede, it pruid, and az I cum too the darc concluezhon ov a

stoery which had ceemd too me too be oonly chialdish and bizar, I expereyens wuns agane the disma and horror withe which I wauz fild. Wood dhat I had sum briter ending too comunicate too mi rederz, but these ar the cronnikelz ov fact, and I must follo too dhare darc cricis the strainj chane ov events which for sum dase made Riding Thorp Mannor a hous'hoald werd throo the length and bredth ov In'gland.

We had hardly alited at North Waulsham, and menshond the name ov our destinaishon, when the staishon-maaster hurrede toowordz us. "I supose dhat u ar the detectiavz from Lundon?" ced he.

A looc ov anoiyans paast over Hoamsez face.

"Whaut maix u thhinc such a thhing?"

"Becauz Inspector Martin from Norich haz just paast throo. But maby u ar the cerjonz. Shese not ded—or wauznt bi laast acounts. U ma be in time too save her yet—dho it be for the gallose."

Hoamsez brou wauz darc withe anxiety.

"We ar gowing too Riding Thorp Mannor," ced he, "but we hav herd nuthing ov whaut haz paast dhare."

"Its a terribel biznes," ced the staishonmaaster. "Dha ar shot, boath Mr. Hilton Cubit and hiz wife. She shot him and then hercelf—so the cervants sa. Hese ded and her life iz despaerd ov. Dere, dere, wun ov the oaldest fammilese in the county ov Norfoke, and wun ov the moast onnord."

Without a werd Hoamz hurrede too a carrage, and juring the long cevven mialz' drive he nevver opend hiz mouth. Celdom hav I cene

him so utterly despondent. He had bene unnesy juring aul our gerny from toun, and I had observd dhat he had ternd over the morning paperz withe ancshous atenshon, but nou this sudden reyalizaishon ov hiz werst feerz left him in a blanc mellancoly. He leend bac in hiz cete, lost in gloomy speculaishon. Yet dhare wauz much around too interest us, for we wer paacing throo az cin'gular a cuntricide az enny in In'gland, whare a fu scatterd cottagez represented the populaishon ov too-da, while on evvery hand enormous sqware-touwerd cherchez brisceld up from the flat grene landscape and toald ov the gloery and prosperrity ov oald Eest An'gleyaa. At laast the viyolet rim ov the German Oashan apeerd over the grene ej ov the Norfoke coast, and the driver pointed withe hiz whip too too oald bric and timber gabelz which proected from a grove ov trese. "Dhats Riding Thorp Mannor," ced he.

Az we drove up too the porticode frunt doer, I observd in frunt ov it, becide the tennis laun, the blac toole-hous and the peddestald sundiyal withe which we had such strainj asoasheyaishonz. A dapper littel man, withe a qwic, alert manner and a waxt moostaash, had just decended from a hi dog-cart. He introjuest himcelf az Inspector Martin, ov the Norfoke Constabbulary, and he wauz concidderably astonnisht when he herd the name ov mi companyon.

"Whi, Mr. Hoamz, the crime wauz oonly comitted at thre this morning. Hou cood u here ov it in Lunden and ghet too the spot az soone az I?"

"I antiscipated it. I came in the hope ov preventing it."

"Then u must hav important evvidens, ov which we ar ignorant, for dha wer ced too be a moast united cappel."

"I hav oonly the evvidens ov the daancing men," ced Hoamz. "I

wil explane the matter too u later. Meenwhile, cins it iz too late too prevent this tradgedy, I am verry ancshous dhat I shood use the nollej which I poses in order too inshure dhat justice be dun. Wil u asoasheyate me in yor investigaishon, or wil u prefer dhat I shood act independently?"

"I shood be proud too fele dhat we wer acting tooggether, Mr. Hoamz," ced the inspector, earnestly.

"In dhat cace I shood be glad too here the evvidens and too exammine the premmicez widhout an instant ov un'nescesary dela."

Inspector Martin had the good cens too alou mi frend too doo thhingz in hiz one fashon, and contented himcelf withe caerfooly noting the rezults. The local cerjon, an oald, white-haerd man, had just cum down from Mrs. Hilton Cubits roome, and he repoerted dhat her injurese wer cereyous, but not necesarily fatal. The boollet had paast throo the frunt ov her brane, and it wood probbably be sum time befoer she cood regane consmousnes. On the qweschon ov whether she had bene shot or had shot hercelf, he wood not venchure too expres enny decided opinyon. Certainly the boollet had bene discharjd at verry cloce qworterz. Dhare wauz oanly the wun pistol found in the roome, too barrelz ov which had bene empte. Mr. Hilton Cubit had bene shot throo the hart. It wauz eeqwaly concevabel dhat he had shot her and then himcelf, or dhat she had bene the crimminal, for the revolver la uppon the floer midwa betwene them.

"Haz he bene muivd?" aasct Hoamz.

"We hav muivd nuthhing exept the lady. We cood not leve her liying wuinded uppon the floer."

"Hou long hav u bene here, Doctor?"

"Cins foer oacloc."

"Enniwun els?"

"Yes, the cunstabel here."

"And u hav tucht nuthhing?"

"Nuthhing."

"U hav acted withe grate discredhon. Whoo cent for u?"

"The housmade, Saunderz."

"Wauz it she whoo gave the alarm?"

"She and Mrs. King, the cooc."

"Whare ar dha nou?"

"In the kitchen, I beleve."

"Then I thhinc we had better here dhare stoery at wuns."

The oald haul, oke-pannel and hi-windode, had bene ternd intoo a coert ov investigaishon. Hoamz sat in a grate, oald-fashond chare, hiz inexorable ise gleaming out ov hiz haggard face. I cood rede in them a cet perpoce too devote hiz life too this qwest until the cliyent whoome he had faild too save shood at laast be avenjd. The trim Inspector Martin, the oald, gra-hedded cuntry doctor, micelf, and a stollid village polesman made up the rest ov dhat strainj cumpany.

The too wimmen toald dhare stoery cleerly enuf. Dha had bene arouzd from dhare slepe bi the sound ov an exploazhon, which had bene follode a minnute later bi a cecond wun. Dha slept in ajoining ruimz, and Mrs. King had rusht in too Saunderz. Tooghether dha had decended the staerz. The doer ov the studdy wauz open, and a candel wauz barning uppon the tabel. Dhare maaster la uppon hiz face in the center ov the roome. He wauz qwite ded. Nere the windo hiz wife wauz crouching, her hed lening against the waul. She wauz horibly wuinded, and the cide ov her face wauz red withe blud. She breedhd hevvily, but wauz incapabel ov saying ennithhing. The passage, az wel az the roome, wauz fool ov smoke and the smel ov pouder. The windo wauz certainly shut and faacend uppon the incide. Boath wimmen wer pozsitive uppon the point. Dha had at wuns cent for the doctor and for the cunstabel. Then, withe the ade ov the groome and the stabel-boi, dha had convade dhare injuerd mistres too her roome. Boath she and her huzband had occupide the bed. She wauz clad in her dres—he in hiz drescing-goun, over hiz nite-cloadhz. Nuthhing had bene muivd in the studdy. So far az dha nu, dhare had nevver bene enny qworel betwene huzband and wife. Dha had aulwase looct uppon them az a verry united cuppel.

These wer the mane points ov the cervants' evvidens. In aancer too Inspector Martin, dha wer clere dhat evvery doer wauz faacend uppon the incide, and dhat no wun cood hav escaipt from the hous. In aancer too Hoamz, dha boath rememberd dhat dha wer conshous ov the smel ov pouder from the moment dhat dha ran out ov dhare ruimz uppon the top floer. "I comend dhat fact verry caerfooly too yor atenshon," ced Hoamz too hiz profeshonal colleghe. "And nou I thhinc dhat we ar in a posishon too undertake a thurro examinaishon ov the roome."

The studdy pruivd too be a smaul chaimber, liand on thre ciadz withe boox, and withe a riting-tabel facing an ordinary windo, which

looct out uppon the garden. Our ferst atenshon wauz ghivven too the boddy ov the unforchunate sqwire, whoose huge frame la strecht acros the roome. Hiz disorderd dres shode dhat he had bene haistily arouzd from slepe. The boollet had bene fiard at him from the frunt, and had remaind in hiz boddy, aafter pennetrating the hart. Hiz deth had certainly bene instantainyous and painles. Dhare wauz no pouder-marking iather uppon hiz drescing-goun or on hiz handz. Acording too the cuntry cerjon, the lady had stainz uppon her face, but nun uppon her hand.

“The abcens ov the latter meenz nuthhing, dho its prezsens ma mene evverithing,” ced Hoamz. “Unles the pouder from a badly fitting cartrij happenz too spert baqword, wun ma fire menny shots widhout leving a cine. I wood sugest dhat Mr. Cubits boddy ma nou be remuivd. I supose, Doctor, u hav not recuvverd the boollet which wuinded the lady?”

“A cereyous operaishon wil be nescenary befoer dhat can be dun. But dhare ar stil foer cartrigez in the revolver. Too hav bene fiard and too wuindz inflicted, so dhat eche boollet can be acounted for.”

“So it wood ceme,” ced Hoamz. “Perhaps u can acount aulso for the boollet which haz so obveyously struc the ej ov the windo?”

He had ternd suddenly, and hiz long, thhin fin'gher wauz pointing too a hole which had bene drild rite throo the lower windo-sash, about an inch abuv the bottom.

“Bi Jorj!” cride the inspector. “Hou evver did u ce dhat?”

“Becauz I looct for it.”

"Wunderfool!" ced the cuntry doctor. "U ar certainly rite, cer. Then a thherd shot haz bene fiard, and dhaerfoer a thherd person must hav bene prezsent. But whoo cood dhat hav bene, and hou cood he hav got awa?"

"Dhat iz the problem which we ar nou about too solv," ced Sherlock Hoamz. "U remember, Inspector Martin, when the cervants ced dhat on leving dhare roome dha wer at wuns conshous ov a smel ov pouder, I remarct dhat the point wauz an extreemly important wun?"

"Yes, cer; but I confes I did not qwite follo u."

"It sugested dhat at the time ov the firing, the windo az wel az the doer ov the roome had bene open. Utherwise the fuemz ov pouder cood not hav bene blone so rappidly throo the hous. A draaft in the roome wauz nescenary for dhat. Boath doer and windo wer oonly open for a verry short time, houwevver."

"Hou doo u proove dhat?"

"Becauz the candel wauz not gutterd."

"Cappital!" cride the inspector. "Cappital!"

"Feling shure dhat the windo had bene open at the time ov the tradgedy, I conceevd dhat dhare mite hav bene a thherd person in the afare, whoo stood outside this opening and fiard throo it. Enny shot directed at this person mite hit the sash. I looct, and dhare, shure enuf, wauz the boollet marc!"

"But hou came the windo too be shut and faacend?"

"The woommanz ferst instinct wood be too shut and faacen the

windo. But, hallo! Whaut iz this?"

It wauz a ladese hand-bag which stood uppon the studdy tabel—a trim littel handbag ov croccodile-skin and cilver. Hoamz opend it and ternd the contents out. Dhare wer twenty fifty-pound noats ov the Banc ov In' gland, held tooghether bi an injaa-rubber band—nuthhing els.

"This must be preservd, for it wil figgure in the triyal," ced Hoamz, az he handed the bag withe its contents too the inspector. "It iz nou nescesary dhat we shood tri too thro sum lite uppon this thherd boollet, which haz cleerly, from the splintering ov the wood, bene fiard from incide the roome. I shood like too ce Mrs. King, the cooc, agane. U ced, Mrs. King, dhat u wer awakend bi a *loud* exploazhon. When u ced dhat, did u mene dhat it ceemd too u too be louder dhan the cecond wun?"

"Wel, cer, it wakend me from mi slepe, so it iz hard too juj. But it did ceme verry loud."

"U doant thhinc dhat it mite hav bene too shots fiard aulmoast at the same instant?"

"I am shure I coodnt sa, cer."

"I beleve dhat it wauz undoutedly so. I raather thhinc, Inspector Martin, dhat we hav nou exausted aul dhat this roome can teche us. If u wil kiandly step round withe me, we shal ce whaut fresh evvidens the garden haz too offer."

A flouwer-bed extended up too the studdy windo, and we aul broke intoo an exclamaishon az we aproacht it. The flouwerz wer trampeld doun, and the soft soil wauz imprinted aul over withe

footmarx. Larj, masculine fete dha wer, withe peculeyarily long, sharp tose. Hoamz hunted about among the graas and leevz like a retriever aafter a wuinded berd. Then, withe a cri ov satisfacshon, he bent forword and pict up a littel brasen cillinder.

“I thaut so,” ced he, “the revolver had an egector, and here iz the thherd cartrij. I reyaly thhinc, Inspector Martin, dhat our cace iz aulmoast complete.”

The cuntry inspectorz face had shone hiz intens amaizment at the rappid and maasterfool proagres ov Hoamsez investigaishon. At ferst he had shone sum disposishon too acert hiz one posishon, but nou he wauz overcum withe admiraishon, and reddy too follo without qweschon wharevver Hoamz led.

“Whoome doo u suspect?” he aasct.

“Ile go intoo dhat later. Dhare ar cevveral points in this problem which I hav not bene abel too explane too u yet. Nou dhat I hav got so far, I had best procede on mi one lianz, and then clere the whole matter up wuns and for aul.”

“Just az u wish, Mr. Hoamz, so long az we ghet our man.”

“I hav no desire too make misterese, but it iz imoscibel at the moment ov acshon too enter intoo long and complex explanaishonz. I hav the thredz ov this afare aul in mi hand. Even if this lady shood nevver recuvver consmousnes, we can stil reconstruct the events ov laast nite and inshure dhat justice be dun. Ferst ov aul, I wish too no whether dhare iz enny in in this naborhood none az ‘Elrigez’?”

The cervants wer cros-qweschond, but nun ov them had herd ov such a place. The stabel-boi thru a lite uppon the matter bi

remembering dhat a farmer ov dhat name livd sum mialz of, in the direcshon ov Eest Ruston.

“Iz it a loanly farm?”

“Verry loanly, cer.”

“Perhaps dha hav not herd yet ov aul dhat happend here juring the nite?”

“Maby not, cer.”

Hoamz thaut for a littel, and then a cureyous smile plade over hiz face.

“Saddel a hors, mi lad,” ced he. “I shal wish u too take a note too Elrigez Farm.”

He tooc from hiz pocket the vareyous slips ov the daancing men. Withe these in frunt ov him, he werct for sum time at the studdy-tabel. Finaly he handed a note too the boi, withe direcshonz too poot it intoo the handz ov the person too whoome it wauz adrest, and espeshaly too aancer no qweschonz ov enny sort which mite be poot too him. I sau the outside ov the note, adrest in stragling, ireggular carracterz, verry unlike Hoamsez uezhuwal precice hand. It wauz conciand too Mr. Abe Slany, Elrigez Farm, Eest Ruston, Norfoke.

“I thhinc, Inspector,” Hoamz remarct, “dhat u wood doo wel too tellegraaf for an escort, az, if mi calculaishonz proove too be corect, u ma hav a particularly dain’gerous prizzoner too conva too the county jale. The boi whoo taix this note cood no dout forword yor tellegram. If dhare iz an aafternoone trane too toun, Wautson, I thhinc we shood doo wel too take it, az I hav a

kemmical anallicis ov sum interest too finnish, and this investigaishon drauz rappidly too a close."

When the ueth had bene dispacht withe the note, Sherloc Hoamz gave hiz instrucshonz too the cervants. If enny vizsitor wer too caul aasking for Mrs. Hilton Cubit, no informaishon shood be ghivven az too her condishon, but he wauz too be shone at wuns intoo the drauwng-roome. He imprest these points uppon them withe the utmoast ernestnes. Finaly he led the wa intoo the drauwng-roome, withe the remarc dhat the biznes wauz nou out ov our handz, and dhat we must while awa the time az best we mite until we cood ce whaut wauz in stoer for us. The doctor had departed too hiz paishents, and oanly the inspector and micelf remaind.

"I thhinc dhat I can help u too paas an our in an interesting and proffitabel manner," ced Hoamz, drauwng hiz chare up too the tabel, and spredding out in frunt ov him the vareyouz paperz uppon which wer recorded the antix ov the daancing men. "Az too u, frend Wautson, I o u evvery atoanment for havving aloud yor natchural cureyosity too remane so long unsattisfide. Too u, Inspector, the whole incident ma apele az a remarcabel profeshonal studdy. I must tel u, ferst ov aul, the interesting cercumstaancez conected withe the preveyous consultaishonz which Mr. Hilton Cubit haz had withe me in Baker Strete." He then shortly recapitchulated the facts which hav aulreddy bene recorded. "I hav here in frunt ov me these cin'gular producshonz, at which wun mite smile, had dha not pruivd themcelvz too be the foerunnerz ov so terribel a tradgedy. I am faerly familleyar withe aul formz ov ceecret ritingz, and am micelf the author ov a triafling monnograaf uppon the subject, in which I annalise wun hundred and cixty cepparate ciferz, but I confes dhat this iz entiarly nu too me. The obgect ov dhose whoo invented the cistem haz aparrently bene too concele dhat these carracterz conva a message, and too ghiv the ideyaa dhat dha ar the mere

random sketches of children.

“Having wuns reccogniazd, houwevver, dhat the cimbolz stood for letterz, and havving aplide the ruelz which ghide us in aul formz ov ceecret ritingz, the solueshon wauz esy enuf. The ferst message submitted too me wauz so short dhat it wauz imposcibel for me too doo moer dhan too sa, withe sum confidens, dhat the cimbol XXX stood for E. Az u ar aware, E iz the moast common letter in the In’glissh alfabet, and it predomminaits too so marct an extent dhat even in a short centens wun wood expect too fiand it moast often. Out ov fiftene cimbolz in the ferst message, foer wer the same, so it wauz rezonabel too cet this doun az E. It iz tru dhat in sum cacez the figgure wauz baring a flag, and in sum cacez not, but it wauz probbabel, from the wa in which the flagz wer distribbuted, dhat dha wer uest too brake the centens up intoo werdz. I axepted this az a hipothhecis, and noted dhat E wauz represented bi

E

“But nou came the reyal difficulty ov the inqwiry. The order ov the In’glissh letterz aafter E iz bi no meenz wel marct, and enny preponderans which ma be shone in an avverage ov a printed shete ma be reverst in a cin’ghel short centens. Speking rufly, T, A, O, I, N, S, H, R, D, and L ar the numerrical order in which letterz oker, but T, A, O, and I ar verry neerly abrest ov eche uther, and it wood be an endles taasc too tri eche combinaishon until a mening wauz ariavd at. I dhaerfoer wated for fresh matereyal. In mi cecond intervuu withe Mr. Hilton Cubit he wauz abel too ghiv me too uther short centencez and wun message, which apeerd—cins dhare wauz no flag—too be a cin’ghel werd. Here ar the cimbolz. Nou, in the cin’ghel werd I hav aulreddy got the too E'z cumming cecond and foerth in a werd ov five letterz. It mite be ‘cevver,’ or ‘lever,’ or ‘nevver.’ Dhare can be no qweschon dhat

the latter az a repli too an apele iz far the moast probbabel, and the circumstaancez pointed too its beying a repli ritten bi the lady. Acepting it az corect, we ar nou abel too sa dhat the cimbolz stand respectiavly for N, V, and R.

N-V-R

“Even nou I wauz in concidderabel difficulty, but a happy thaut poot me in poseshon ov cevveral uther letterz. It okerd too me dhat if these apeelz came, az I expected, from sumwun whoo had bene intimate withe the lady in her erly life, a combinaishon which containd too E'z withe thre letterz betwene mite verry wel stand for the name 'ELCY.' On examinaishon I found dhat such a combinaishon formd the terminaishon ov the message which wauz thre tiamz repeted. It wauz certainly sum apele too 'Elcy.' In this wa I had got mi L, S, and I. But whaut apele cood it be? Dhare wer only foer letterz in the werd which preceded 'Elcy,' and it ended in E. Shuerly the werd must be 'CUM.' I tride aul uther foer letterz ending in E, but cood fiand nun too fit the cace. So nou I wauz in poseshon ov C, O, and M, and I wauz in a posishon too atac the ferst message wuns moer, dividing it intoo werdz and pooting dots for eche cimbol which wauz stil un'none. So treted, it werct out in this fashon:

.M .ARE ..E SL.NE.

“Nou the ferst letter *can* only be A, which iz a moast uesfool discuvvery, cins it okerz no fuwer dhan thre tiamz in this short centens, and the H iz aulso aparrent in the cecond werd. Nou it becumz:

AM HERE A.E SLANE.

Or, filling in the obveyous vacancese in the name:

AM HERE ABE SLANY.

I had so menny letterz nou dhat I cood procede withe concidderabel confidens too the cecond message, which werct out in this fashon:

A. ELRY. ESE.

Here I cood oanly make cens bi pootting T and G for the miscing letterz, and suposing dhat the name wauz dhat ov sum hous or in at which the riter wauz staying."

Inspector Martin and I had liscend withe the utmoast interest too the fool and clere acount ov hou mi frend had projuest rezults which had led too so complete a comaand over our difficultese.

"Whaut did u doo then, cer?" aasct the inspector.

"I had evvery rezon too suppose dhat this Abe Slany wauz an Amerrican, cins Abe iz an Amerrican contracshon, and cins a letter from Amerricaa had bene the starting-point ov aul the trubbel. I had aulso evvery cauz too thhinc dhat dhare wauz sum crimminal ceecret in the matter. The ladese aluezhonz too her paast, and her refuzal too take her huzband intoo her confidens, boath pointed in dhat direcshon. I dhaerfoer cabeld too mi frend, Wilson Hargreve, ov the Nu Yorc Polece Buro, whoo haz moer dhan wuns made uce ov mi nollej ov Lundon crime. I aasct him whether the name ov Abe Slany wauz none too him. Here iz hiz repli: 'The moast dain'gerous crooc in Shicaago.' On the verry evening uppon which I had hiz aancer, Hilton Cubit cent me the laast message from Slany. Werking withe none letterz, it tooc this form:

ELCY .RE.ÂRE TOO METE THI GO.

The adishon ov a P and a D completed a message which shode me dhat the raascal wauz proceding from perswaizhon too threts, and mi nollej ov the croox ov Shicaago prepaerd me too fiand dhat he mite verry rappidly poot hiz werdz intoo acshon. I at wuns came too Norfoke withe mi frend and colleghe, Dr. Wautson, but, unhappily, oonly in time too fiand dhat the werst had aulreddy okerd."

"It iz a privvilege too be asoasheyated withe u in the handling ov a cace," ced the inspector, wormly. "U wil excuse me, houwevver, if I speke francly too u. U ar oonly aancerabel too yorcelf, but I hav too aancer too mi supereyorz. If this Abe Slany, livving at Elrigez, iz indede the merderer, and if he haz made hiz escape while I am ceted here, I shood certainly ghet intoo cereyous trubbel."

"U nede not be unnesy. He wil not tri too escape."

"Hou doo u no?"

"Too fli wood be a confeshon ov ghilt."

"Then let us go arest him."

"I expect him here evvery instant."

"But whi shood he cum."

"Becauz I hav ritten and aasct him."

"But this iz increddibel, Mr. Hoamz! Whi shood he cum becauz u hav aasct him? Wood not such a reqwest raather rouz hiz

suspishonz and cauz him too fli?"

"I thhinc I hav none hou too frame the letter," ced Sherloc Hoamz. "In fact, if I am not verry much mistaken, here iz the gentelman himcelf cumming up the drive."

A man wauz striding up the paath which led too the doer. He wauz a taul, handsum, sworthy fello, clad in a sute ov gra flannel, withe a Pannamaa hat, a brisling blac beard, and a grate, agrescive hooct nose, and flurrishing a cane az he wauct. He swaggherd up a paath az if the place belongd too him, and we herd hiz loud, confident pele at the bel.

"I thhinc, gentelmen," ced Hoamz, qwiyetly, "dhat we had best take up our posishon behiand the doer. Evvery precaushon iz nescesary when deling withe such a fello. U wil nede yor handcufs, Inspector. U can leve the tauking too me."

We wated in cilens for a minnute—wun ov dhose minnuets which wun can nevver forghet. Then the doer open and the man stept in. In an instant Hoamz clapt a pistol too hiz hed, and Martin slipt the handcufs over hiz rists. It wauz aul dun so swiftly and deftly dhat the fello wauz helpes befoer he nu dhat he wauz atact. He glaerd from wun too the uther ov us withe a pare ov blasing blac ise. Then he berst intoo a bitter laaf.

"Wel, gentelmen, u hav the drop on me this time. I ceme too hav noct up against sumthhing hard. But I came here in aancer too a letter from Mrs. Hilton Cubit. Doant tel me dhat she iz in this? Doant tel me dhat she helpt too cet a trap for me?"

"Mrs. Hilton Cubit wauz cereyously injuerd, and iz at deths doer."

The man gave a hoers cri ov grefe, which rang throo the hous.

“Yor crasy!” he cride, feersly. “It wauz he dhat wauz hert, not she. Whoo wood hav hert littel Elcy? I ma hav threttend her—God forghiv me!—but I wood not hav tucht a hare ov her pritty hed. Take it bac—u! Sa dhat she iz not hert!”

“She wauz found badly wuinded, bi the cide ov her ded huzband.”

He sanc withe a depe grone on the cetty and berrede hiz face in hiz mannakeld handz. For five minnuets he wauz cilent. Then he raizd hiz face wuns moer, and spoke withe the coald compoazhure ov despare.

“I hav nuthhing too hide from u, gentelmen,” ced he. “If I shot the man he had hiz shot at me, and dhaerz no merder in dhat. But if u thhinc I cood hav hert dhat woomman, then u doant no iather me or her. I tel u, dhare wauz nevver a man in this werld luvd a woomman moer dhan I luvd her. I had a rite too her. She wauz plejd too me yeerz ago. Whoo wauz this In’glisshman dhat he shood cum betwene us? I tel u dhat I had the ferst rite too her, and dhat I wauz oanly claming mi one.

“She broke awa from yor influwens when she found the man dhat u ar,” ced Hoamz, sternly. “She fled from Amerricaa too avoid u, and she marrede an onnorabel gentelman in In’gland. U dogd her and follode her and made her life a mizsery too her, in order too injuce her too abandon the huzband whoome she luvd and respected in order too fli withe u, whoome she feerd and hated. U hav ended bi bringing about the deth ov a nobel man and driving hiz wife too suwicide. Dhat iz yor reccord in this biznes, Mr. Abe Slany, and u wil aancer for it too the lau.”

“If Elcy dise, I care nuthhing whaut becumz ov me,” ced the

American. He opened wun ov hiz handz, and looct at a note crumpeld up in hiz paalm. "Ce here, mister! he cride, withe a gleme ov suspishon in hiz ise, "yor not triying too scare me over this, ar u? If the lady iz hert az bad az u sa, whoo wauz it dhat rote this note?" He tost it forword on too the tabel.

"I rote it, too bring u here."

"U rote it? Dhare wauz no wun on erth outside the Joint whoo nu the ceecret ov the daancing men. Hou came u too rite it?"

"Whaut wun man can invent anuther can discuver," ced Hoamz. Dhare iz a cab cumming too conva u too Norich, Mr. Slany. But meenwhile, u hav time too make sum smaul reparaishon for the injury u hav raut. Ar u aware dhat Mrs. Hilton Cubit haz hercelf lane under grave suspishon ov the merder ov her huzband, and dhat it wauz oonly mi prezsens here, and the nollej which I happend too poses, which haz saivd her from the acuzaishon? The leest dhat u o her iz too make it clere too the whole werld dhat she wauz in no wa, directly or indirectly, responcibel for hiz tradgic end."

"I aasc nuthhing better," ced the American. "I ghes the verry best cace I can make for micelf iz the absolute naked trueth."

"It iz mi juty too worn u dhat it wil be uezd against u," cride the inspector, withe the magnificent fare pla ov the Brittish crimminal lau.

Slany shrugd hiz shoalderz.

"Ile chaans dhat," ced he. "Ferst ov aul, I waunt u gentelmen too understand dhat I hav none this lady cins she wauz a chiald.

Dhare wer cevven ov us in a gang in Shicaago, and Elcese faather wauz the bos ov the Joint. He wauz a clevver man, wauz oald Patric. It wauz he whoo invented dhat riting, which wood paas az a chialdz scraul unles u just happend too hav the ke too it. Wel, Elcy lernd sum ov our wase, but she coodnt stand the biznes, and she had a bit ov onnest munny ov her one, so she gave us aul the slip and got awa too Lunden. She had bene en'gaijd too me, and she wood hav marrede me, I beleve, if I had taken over anuther profeshon, but she wood hav nuthhing too doo withe ennithhing on the cros. It wauz oonly aafter her marrage too this In'GLISHMAN dhat I wauz abel too fiand out whare she wauz. I rote too her, but got no aancer. Aafter dhat I came over, and, az letterz wer no uce, I poot mi messagez whare she cood rede them.

“Wel, I hav bene here a munth nou. I livd in dhat farm, whare I had a roome doun belo, and cood ghet in and out evvery nite, and no wun the wiser. I tride aul I cood too coax Elcy awa. I nu dhat she red the messagez, for wuns she rote an aancer under wun ov them. Then mi temper got the better ov me, and I began too thretten her. She cent me a letter then, imploering me too go awa, and saying dhat it wood brake her hart if enny scandal shood cum uppon her huzband. She ced dhat she wood cum doun when her huzband wauz aslepe at thre in the morning, and speke withe me throo the end windo, if I wood go awa aafterwordz and leve her in pece. She came doun and braut munny withe her, triying too bribe me too go. This made me mad, and I caut her arm and tride too pool her throo the windo. At dhat moment in rusht the huzband withe hiz revolver in hiz hand. Elcy had sunc doun uppon the floer, and we wer face too face. I wauz heeld aulso, and I held up mi gun too scare him of and let me ghet awa. He fiard and mist me. I poold of aulmoast at the same instant, and doun he dropt. I made awa acros the garden, and az I went I herd the windo shut behiand me. Dhats Godz trueth, gentelmen, evvery werd ov it, and I herd no moer about it until dhat lad

came riding up with a note which made me wauk in here, like a ja, and ghiv micelf intoo yor handz."

A cab had drivven up whialst the Amerrican had bene tauking. Too uniformd poleesmen sat incide. Inspector Martin rose and tucht hiz prizzoner on the shoalder.

"It iz time for us too go."

"Can I ce her ferst?"

"No, she iz not conshous. Mr. Sherloc Hoamz, I oanly hope dhat if evver agane I hav an important cace, I shal hav the good forchune too hav u bi mi cide."

We stood at the windo and waucht the cab drive awa. Az I ternd bac, mi i caut the pellet ov paper which the prizzoner had tost uppon the tabel. It wauz the note with the which Hoamz had decoid him.

"Ce if u can rede it, Wautson," ced he, with a smile.

It containd no werd, but this littel line ov daancing men:

CUM-HERE-AT-WUNS

"If u use the code which I hav explaind," ced Hoamz, "u wil fiand dhat it cimply meenz 'Cum here at wuns.' I wauz convinst dhat it wauz an invitaishon which he wood not refuse, cins he cood nevver imadgine dhat it cood cum from enniwun but the lady. And so, mi dere Wautson, we hav ended bi terning the daancing men too good when dha hav so often bene the agents ov evil, and I thhinc dhat I hav foolfild mi prommice ov ghivving u sumthhing unnuezhuwal for yor noatbooc. Thre-forty iz our trane,

and I fancy we shood be bac in Baker Strete for dinner.”

Oonly wun werd ov eppilog. The Amerrican, Abe Slany, wauz condemd too deth at the winter acisez at Norich, but hiz pennalty wauz chainjd too penal cervichude in concideraishon ov mittigating circumstaancez, and the certainty dhat Hilton Cubit had fiard the ferst shot. Ov Mrs. Hilton Cubit I oonly no dhat I hav herd she recuverd entiarly, and dhat she stil remainz a widdo, devoting her whole life too the care ov the poor and too the administraishon ov her huzbandz estate.

THE ADVENCHURE OV THE SOLLITARY CIACLIST

From the yeerz 1894 too 1901 inclucive, Mr. Sherloc Hoamz wauz a verry bizsy man. It iz safe too sa dhat dhare wauz no public cace ov enny difficulty in which he wauz not consulted juring dhose ate yeerz, and dhare wer hundredz ov private cacez, sum ov them ov the moast intricate and extrordinary carracter, in which he plade a promminent part. Menny startling suxescez and a fu unnavoidabel faluerz wer the outcum ov this long pereyod ov continnuwous werc. Az I hav preservd verry fool noats ov aul these cacez, and wauz micelf personaly en'gaijd in menny ov them, it ma be imadgiand dhat it iz no esy taasc too no which I shood celect too la befoer the public. I shal, houwevver, preserv mi former rule, and ghiv the prefferens too dhose cacez which derive dhare interest not so much from the brutallity ov the crime az from the in'genuwity and dramattic qwaulity ov the solueshon. For this rezon I wil nou la befoer the reder the facts conected withe Mis Viyolet Smith, the sollitary ciaclist ov Charlington, and the cureyous ceeqwel ov our investigaishon, which culminated in unexpected tradgedy. It iz tru dhat the circumstaans did not admit ov enny striking ilustraishon ov dhose pouwerz for which mi frend wauz famous, but dhare wer sum points about the cace which made it stand out in dhose long reccordz ov crime from which

I gather the materiyal for these littel narratiavz.

On refuuring too mi noatbooc for the yere 1895, I fiand dhat it wauz uppon Satterda, the 23rd ov Aipril, dhat we ferst herd ov Mis Viyolet Smith. Her vizsit wauz, I remember, extreemly unwelcum too Hoamz, for he wauz imerst at the moment in a verry abstruce and complicated problem concerning the peculeyar percecueshon too which Jon Vincent Harden, the wel-none tobacco milleyonare, had bene subgected. Mi frend, whoo luvd abuv aul thhingz precizhon and concentraishon ov thaut, resented ennithhing which distracted hiz atenshon from the matter in hand. And yet, widhout a harshnes which wauz forane too hiz nachure, it wauz imposcibel too refuse too liscen too the stoery ov the yung and butifool woomman, taul, graisfool, and qweenly, whoo presented hercelf at Baker Strete late in the evening, and imploerd hiz acistans and advice. It wauz vane too erj dhat hiz time wauz aulreddy foolly occupide, for the yung lady had cum withe the determinaishon too tel her stoery, and it wauz evvident dhat nuthhing short ov foers cood ghet her out ov the roome until she had dun so. Withe a resiand are and a sumwhaut wery smile, Hoamz begd the butifool intruder too take a cete, and too inform us whaut it wauz dhat wauz trubling her.

“At leest it canot be yor helth,” ced he, az hiz kene ise darterd over her, “so ardent a biciclist must be fool ov ennergy.”

She glaanst doun in cerprise at her one fete, and I observd the slite ruffening ov the cide ov the sole cauzd bi the fricshon ov the ej ov the peddal.

“Yes, I bicikel a good dele, Mr. Hoamz, and dhat haz sumthhing too doo withe mi vizsit too u too-da.”

Mi frend tooc the ladese un‘gluud hand, and exammiand it withe az cloce an atenshon and az littel centiment az a ciyentist wood

sho too a spescimen.

“U wil excuse me, I am shure. It iz mi biznes,” ced he, az he dropt it. “I neerly fel intoo the error ov suposing dhat u wer tiapriting. Ov coers, it iz obveyous dhat it iz music. U observ the spachulate fin’gher-endz, Wautson, which iz common too boath profeshonz? Dhare iz a spirichuwallity about the face, houwevver”—she gently ternd it toowordz the lite—“which the tiapriter duz not gennerate. This lady iz a musishan.”

“Yes, Mr. Hoamz, I teche music.”

“In the cuntry, I prezhume, from yor complecshon.”

“Yes, cer, nere Farnam, on the borderz ov Surry.”

“A butifool naborhood, and fool ov the moast interesting asoasheyaishonz. U remember, Wautson, dhat it wauz nere dhare dhat we tooc Archy Stamford, the foerger. Nou, Mis Viyolet, whaut haz happend too u, nere Farnam, on the borderz ov Surry?”

The yung lady, withe grate cleernes and compoazhure, made the following cureyous staitment:

“Mi faather iz ded, Mr. Hoamz. He wauz Jaimz Smith, whoo conducted the orkestraa at the oald Impereyal Thheyater. Mi muther and I wer left widhout a relaishon in the werld exept wun unkel, Ralf Smith, whoo went too Africaa twenty-five yeeرز ago, and we hav nevver had a werd from him cins. When faather dide, we wer left verry poor, but wun da we wer toald dhat dhare wauz an advertiazment in *The Tiamz*, inqwiring for our wharabouts. U can imadgine hou exited we wer, for we thaut dhat sumwun had left us a forchune. We went at wuns too the lauyer whoose name wauz

ghivven in the paper. Dhare we met too gentelmen, Mr. Carrutherz and Mr. Woodly, whoo wer home on a vizsit from South Africaa. Dha ced dhat mi unkel wauz a frend ov dhaerz, dhat he had dide sum munths befoer in grate povverty in Johannezberg, and dhat he had aasct them withe hiz laast breth too hunt up hiz relaishonz, and ce dhat dha wer in no waunt. It ceemd strainj too us dhat Unkel Ralf, whoo tooc no notice ov us when he wauz alive, shood be so caerfool too looc aafter us when he wauz ded, but Mr. Carrutherz explaind dhat the rezon wauz dhat mi unkel had just herd ov the deth ov hiz bruther, and so felt responcebel for our fate.”

“Excuse me,” ced Hoamz. “When wauz this intervuv?”

“Laast December—foer munths ago.”

“Pra procede.”

“Mr. Woodly ceemd too me too be a moast ojous person. He wauz for evver making ise at me—a coers, puffy-faist, red-moostaasht yung man, withe hiz hare plaasterd down on eche cide ov hiz foerhed. I thaut dhat he wauz perfectly haitfool—and I wauz shure dhat Cirril wood not wish me too no such a person.”

“O, Cirril iz hiz name!” ced Hoamz, smiling.

The yung lady blusht and laaft.

“Yes, Mr. Hoamz, Cirril Morton, an electrical en‘ginere, and we hope too be marrede at the end ov the summer. Dere me, hou *did* I ghet tauking about him? Whaut I wisht too sa wauz dhat Mr. Woodly wauz perfectly ojous, but dhat Mr. Carrutherz, whoo wauz a much oalder man, wauz moer agreyabel. He wauz a darc, sallo, clene-shaven, cilent person, but he had polite mannerz and a

plezzant smile. He inqwiard hou we wer left, and on fianding dhat we wer verry poor, he sugested dhat I shood cum and teche music too hiz oonly dauter, aijd ten. I ced dhat I did not like too leve mi muther, on which he sugested dhat I shood go home too her evvery weke-end, and he offerd me a hundred a yere, which wauz certainly splendid pa. So it ended bi mi axepting, and I went down too Chiltern Grainj, about cix mialz from Farnam. Mr. Carrutherz wauz a widdower, but he had en'gaijd a lady houskeper, a verry respectabel, elderly person, cauld Mrs. Dixon, too looc aafter hiz establishment. The chiald wauz a dere, and evverithhing prommiast wel. Mr. Carrutherz wauz verry kiand and verry musical, and we had moast plezzant eveningz tooghether. Evvery weke-end I went home too mi muther in toun.

“The ferst flau in mi happines wauz the arival ov the red-moostaast Mr. Woody. He came for a vizsit ov a weke, and o! it ceemd thre munths too me. He wauz a dredfool person—a boolly too evveriwun els, but too me sumthhing infiniatly wers. He made oious luv too me, boasted ov hiz welth, ced dhat if I marrede him I cood hav the finest dimondz in Lundon, and finaly, when I wood hav nuthhing too doo withe him, he ceezd me in hiz armz wun da aafter dinner—he wauz hidjously strong—and swoer dhat he wood not let me go until I had kist him. Mr. Carrutherz came in and toer him from me, on which he ternd uppon hiz one hoast, nocking him down and cutting hiz face open. Dhat wauz the end ov hiz vizsit, az u can imadgine. Mr. Carrutherz apollogiazd too me next da, and ashuerd me dhat I shood nevver be expoazd too such an insult agane. I hav not cene Mr. Woody cins.

“And nou, Mr. Hoamz, I cum at laast too the speshal thhing which haz cauzd me too aasc yor advice too-da. U must no dhat evvery Satterda foernoone I ride on mi bicikel too Farnam Staishon, in

order too ghet the 12:22 too toun. The rode from Chiltern Grainj iz a loanly wun, and at wun spot it iz particcularly so, for it lise for over a mile betwene Charlinton Heeth uppon wun cide and the woodz which li round Charlinton Haul uppon the uther. U cood not fiand a moer loanly tract ov rode enniwhare, and it iz qwite rare too mete so much az a cart, or a pezzant, until u reche the hi rode nere Crooxbury Hil. Too weex ago I wauz paacing this place, when I chaanst too looc bac over mi shoalder, and about too hundred yardz behiand me I sau a man, aulso on a bicikel. He ceemd too be a middel-aijd man, withe a short, darc beard. I looct bac befoer I reecht Farnam, but the man wauz gon, so I thaut no moer about it. But u can imadgine hou cerpriazd I wauz, Mr. Hoamz, when, on mi retern on the Munda, I sau the same man on the same strech ov rode. Mi astonishment wauz increest when the incident okerd agane, exactly az befoer, on the following Satterda and Munda. He aulwase kept hiz distans and did not molest me in enny wa, but stil it certainly wauz verry od. I menshond it too Mr. Carrutherz, whoo ceemd interested in whaut I ced, and toald me dhat he had orderd a hors and trap, so dhat in fuchure I shood not paas over these loanly roadz widhout sum companyon.

“The hors and trap wer too hav cum this weke, but for sum rezon dha wer not delivverd, and agane I had too cikel too the staishon. Dhat wauz this morning. U can thhinc dhat I looct out when I came too Charlinton Heeth, and dhare, shure enuf, wauz the man, exactly az he had bene the too weex befoer. He aulwase kept so far from me dhat I cood not cleerly ce hiz face, but it wauz certainly sumwun whoome I did not no. He wauz drest in a darc sute withe a cloth cap. The oonly thhing about hiz face dhat I cood cleerly ce wauz hiz darc beard. Too-da I wauz not alarmd, but I wauz fild withe cureyosity, and I determiand too fiand out whoo he wauz and whaut he waunted. I slode doun mi mashene, but he slode doun hiz. Then I stopt aultooghether, but he stopt aulso. Then I

lade a trap for him. Dhare iz a sharp tarning ov the rode, and I peddald verry qwicly round this, and then I stopt and wated. I expected him too shoote round and paas me befoer he cood stop. But he nevver apeerd. Then I went bac and looct round the corner. I cood ce a mile ov rode, but he wauz not on it. Too make it the moer extraordinary, dhare wauz no cide rode at this point doun which he cood hav gon."

Hoamz chuckeld and rubd hiz handz. "This cace certainly presents sum fechuerz ov its one," ced he. "Hou much time elapst betwene yor tarning the corner and yor discuvvery dhat the rode wauz clere?"

"Too or thre minnuets."

"Then he cood not hav retretd doun the rode, and u sa dhat dhare ar no cide roadz?"

"Nun."

"Then he certainly tooc a footpaath on wun cide or the uther."

"It cood not hav bene on the cide ov the heeth, or I shood hav cene him."

"So, bi the proces ov excluezhon, we arive at the fact dhat he made hiz wa tooword Charlington Haul, which, az I understand, iz citchuwated in its one groundz on wun cide ov the rode. Ennithhing els?"

"Nuthhing, Mr. Hoamz, save dhat I wauz so perplext dhat I felt I shood not be happy until I had cene u and had yor advice."

Hoamz sat in cilens for sum littel time.

“Whare iz the gentelman too whoome u ar en’gajd?” he aasct at laast.

“He iz in the Midland Electrical Cumpany, at Cuvventry.”

“He wood not pa u a cerprise vizsit?”

“O, Mr. Hoamz! Az if I shood not no him!”

“Hav u had enny uther admirerz?”

“Cevveral befoer I nu Cirril.”

“And cins?”

“Dhare wauz this dredfool man, Woodly, if u can caul him an admirer.”

“No wun els?”

Our fare cliyent ceemd a littel confuezd.

“Whoo wauz he?” aasct Hoamz.

“O, it ma be a mere fancy ov mine; but it had ceemd too me sumtiamz dhat mi employer, Mr. Carrutherz, taix a grate dele ov interest in me. We ar throne raather tooghether. I pla hiz acumpaniments in the evening. He haz nevver ced ennithhing. He iz a perfect gentelman. But a gherl aulwase nose.”

“Haa!” Hoamz looct grave. “Whaut duz he doo for a livving?”

“He iz a rich man.”

“No carragez or horcez?”

“Wel, at leest he iz faerly wel-too-doo. But he gose intoo the citty too or thre tiamz a weke. He iz deeply interested in South African goald shaerz.”

“U wil let me no enny fresh devellopment, Mis Smith. I am verry bizsy just nou, but I wil fiand time too make sum inqwirse intoo yor cace. In the meentime, take no step widhout letting me no. Good-bi, and I trust dhat we shal hav nuthhing but good nuse from u.”

“It iz part ov the cetteld order ov Nachure dhat such a gherl shood hav followerz,” ced Hoamz, he poold at hiz medditative pipe, “but for chois not on bicikelz in loanly cuntry roadz. Sum ceecretive luvver, beyond aul dout. But dhare ar cureyous and sugestive detailz about the cace, Wautson.”

“Dhat he shood apere oanly at dhat point?”

“Exactly. Our ferst effort must be too fiand whoo ar the tennants ov Charlington Haul. Then, agane, hou about the conecshon betwene Carrutherz and Woodly, cins dha apere too be men ov such a different tipe? Hou came dha *boath* too be so kene uppon loocking up Ralf Smiths relaishonz? Wun moer point. Whaut sort ov a *ménage* iz it which pase dubbel the market price for a guvvernes but duz not kepe a hors, auldho cix mialz from the staishon? Od, Wautson—verry od!”

“U wil go doun?”

“No, mi dere fello, *u* wil go doun. This ma be sum

triafling intreghe, and I canot brake mi uther important recerch for the sake ov it. On Munda u wil arive erly at Farnam; u wil concele yorself nere Charlington Heeth; u wil observ these facts for yorself, and act az yor one jujment advisez. Then, havving inqwiard az too the occupants ov the Haul, u wil cum bac too me and repoert. And nou, Wautson, not anuther werd ov the matter until we hav a fu sollid stepping-stoanz on which we ma hope too ghet acros too our solueshon.”

We had ascertaind from the lady dhat she went down upon the Munda bi the trane which leevz Wauterloo at 9:50, so I started erly and caut the 9:13. At Farnam Staishon I had no difficulty in beyng directed too Charlington Heeth. It wauz imposcibel too mistake the cene ov the yung ladese advenchure, for the rode runz betwene the open heeth on wun cide and an oald u hej upon the uther, surrounding a parc which iz studded withe magnifficent trese. Dhare wauz a mane gaitwa ov litchen-studded stone, eche cide pillar cermounted bi moaldering heraldic emblemz, but beciadz this central carrage drive I observd cevveral points whare dhare wer gaps in the hej and paaths leding throo them. The hous wauz invizsibel from the rode, but the surroundingz aul spoke ov gloome and deca.

The heeth wauz cuvverd withe goalden patchez ov flouwering gors, gleming magnifficently in the lite ov the brite spring sunshine. Behiand wun ov these clumps I tooc up mi posishon, so az too comaand boath the gaitwa ov the Haul and a long strech ov the rode upon iather cide. It had bene deserted when I left it, but nou I sau a ciaclist riding down it from the opposite direcshon too dhat in which I had cum. He wauz clad in a darc sute, and I sau dhat he had a blac beard. On reching the end ov the Charlington groundz, he sprang from hiz mashene and led it throo a gap in the hej, disapering from mi vu.

A qworter ov an our paast, and then a cecond ciaclist apeerd. This time it wauz the yung lady cumming from the staishon. I sau her looc about her az she came too the Charlington hej. An instant later the man emerjd from hiz hiding-place, sprang uppon hiz cikel, and follode her. In aul the braud landscape dhose wer the oonly mooving figguerz, the graisfool gherl citting verry strate uppon her mashene, and the man behiand her bending lo over hiz handel-bar withe a cureyously fertive sugeschon in evvery muivment. She looct bac at him and slode her pace. He slode aulso. She stopt. He at wuns stopt, too, keping too hundred yardz behiand her. Her next muivment wauz az unexpected az it wauz

spirrited. She suddenly whisct her wheelz round and dasht strate at him. He wauz az qwic az she, houwevver, and darted of in desperate flite. Prezsently she came bac up the rode agane, her hed hautily in the are, not daning too take enny ferther notice ov her cilent atendant. He had ternd aulso, and stil kept hiz distans until the kerv ov the rode hid them from mi cite.

I remaind in mi hiding-place, and it wauz wel dhat I did so, for prezsently the man reyapeerd, ciacling sloly bac. He ternd in at the Haul gaits, and dismounted from hiz mashene. For sum minnuets I cood ce him standing amung the trese. Hiz handz wer raizd, and he ceemd too be cetling hiz necti. Then he mounted hiz cikel, and rode awa from me down the drive toowordz the Haul. I ran acros the heeth and peerd throo the trese. Far awa I cood cach glimpcez ov the oald gra bilding withe its brisling Chudor chimnese, but the drive ran throo a dens shrubbery, and I sau no moer ov mi man.

Houwevver, it ceemd too me dhat I had dun a faerly good morningz werc, and I wauct bac in hi spirrits too Farnam. The local hous agent cood tel me nuthhing about Charlington Haul, and

referd me too a wel-none ferm in Pal Mal. Dhare I haulted on mi wa home, and met withe kertecy from the representative. No, I cood not hav Charlinton Haul for the summer. I wauz just too late. It had bene let about a munth ago. Mr. Willeyamson wauz the name ov the tennant. He wauz a respectabel, elderly gentelman. The polite agent wauz afrade he cood sa no moer, az the afaerz ov hiz cliyents wer not matterz which he cood discus.

Mr. Sherloc Hoamz liscend withe atenshon too the long repoert which I wauz abel too present too him dhat evening, but it did not eliscit dhat werd ov kert prase which I had hoapt for and shood hav vallude. On the contrary, hiz austere face wauz even moer cevere dhan uezhuwal az he commented uppon the thhingz dhat I had dun and the thhingz dhat I had not.

“Yor hiding-place, mi dere Wautson, wauz verry faulty. U shood hav bene behiand the hej, then u wood hav had a cloce vu ov this interesting person. Az it iz, u wer sum hundredz ov yardz awa and can tel me even les dhan Mis Smith. She thhinx she duz not no the man; I am convinst she duz. Whi, urtherwise, shood he be so desperaitly ancshous dhat she shood not ghet so nere him az too ce hiz fechuerz? U describe him az bending over the handel-bar. Conceelment agane, u ce. U reyaly hav dun remarcably badly. He reternz too the hous, and u waunt too fiand out whoo he iz. U cum too a Lundon hous agent!”

“Whaut shood I hav dun?” I cride, withe sum hete.

“Gon too the nerest public-hous. Dhat iz the center ov cuntry goscip. Dha wood hav toald u evvery name, from the maaster too the scullery-made. Willeyamson? It convase nuthhing too mi miand. If he iz an elderly man he iz not this active ciaclist whoo sprints

awa from dhat yung ladese athlettic persute. Whaut hav we gaind bi yor expedishon? The nollej dhat the gherlz stoery iz tru. I nevver doutd it. Dhat dhare iz a conecshon betwene the ciaclit and the Haul. I nevver doutd dhat iather. Dhat the Haul iz tennanted bi Willeyamson. Whoose the better for dhat? Wel, wel, mi dere cer, doant looc so deprest. We can doo littel moer until next Satterda, and in the meentime I ma make wun or too inqwires micelf."

Next morning, we had a note from Mis Smith, recounting shortly and accuraitly the verry incidents which I had cene, but the pith ov the letter la in the poastscript:

"I am shure dhat u wil respect mi confidens, Mr. Hoamz, when I tel u dhat mi place here haz becum difficult, owing too the fact dhat mi employer haz propoazd marrage too me. I am convinst dhat hiz felingz ar moast depe and moast onnorabel. At the same time, mi prommice iz ov coers ghivven. He tooc mi refuzal verry cereyously, but aulso verry gently. U can understand, houwevver, dhat the cichuwaishon iz a littel straind."

"Our yung frend ceemz too be ghetting intoo depe wauterz," ced Hoamz, thautfooly, az he finnisht the letter. "The cace certainly presents moer fechuerz ov interest and moer pocibillity ov devellopment dhan I had oridginaly thaut. I shood be nun the wers for a qwiyet, peesfool da in the cuntry, and I am incliand too run down this aafternoone and test wun or too ththeyorese which I hav formd."

Hoamsez qwiyet da in the cuntry had a cin'gular terminaishon, for he ariavd at Baker Strete late in the evening, withe a cut lip and a discullord lump uppon hiz foerhed, beciadz a genneral are ov dicipaishon which wood hav made hiz one person the fitting obgett ov a Scotland Yard investigaishon. He wauz imensly tickeld

bi hiz one advenchuerz and laaft hartily az he recounted them.

“I ghet so littel active exercise dhat it iz aulwase a trete,” ced he. “U ar aware dhat I hav sum profishency in the good oald Brittish spoert ov boxing. Ocaizhonaly, it iz ov cervice, too-da, for exaampel, I shood hav cum too verry ignominyous grefe widhout it.”

I begd him too tel me whaut had okerd.

“I found dhat cuntry pub which I had aulreddy recomended too yor notice, and dhare I made mi discrete inqwires. I wauz in the bar, and a garrulous landlord wauz ghivving me aul dhat I waunted. Willeyamson iz a white-beerded man, and he livz alone withe a smaul staaf ov cervants at the Haul. Dhare iz sum rumor dhat he iz or haz bene a clergiman, but wun or too incidents ov hiz short rezsidens at the Haul struc me az peculeyarly unnecleseyastical. I hav aulreddy made sum inqwires at a clerrical agency, and dha tel me dhat dhare *wauz* a man ov dhat name in orderz, whoose carere haz bene a cin’gularly darc wun. The landlord ferther informd me dhat dhare ar uezhuwaly weke-end vizsitorz—‘a worm lot, cer’—at the Haul, and espeshaly wun gentelman withe a red moostaash, Mr. Woodly bi name, whoo wauz aulwase dhare. We had got

az far az this, when whoo shood wauc in but the gentelman himcelf, whoo had bene drinking hiz bere in the tap-roome and had herd the whole conversaishon. Whoo wauz I? Whaut did I waunt?

Whaut

did I mene bi aasking qweschonz? He had a fine flo ov lan’gwage, and hiz adjectiavz wer verry viggorous. He ended a string ov abuce bi a vishous bac’hander, which I faild too entiarly avoid. The next fu minnuets wer delishous. It wauz a strate left against a slogghing ruffeyan. I emerjd az u ce me. Mr. Woodly went home

in a cart. So ended mi cuntry trip, and it must be confest dhat, houwevver enjoiyabel, mi da on the Surry border haz not bene much moer proffitabel dhan yor one."

The Thherzda braut us anuther letter from our cliyent.

U wil not be cerpriazd, Mr. Hoamz (ced she), too here dhat I am leving Mr. Carruthersez employment. Even the hi pa canot reconcile me too the discumforts ov mi cichuwaishon. On Satterda I cum up too toun, and I doo not intend too retern. Mr. Carrutherz haz got a trap, and so the dain'gerz ov the loanly rode, if dhare evver wer enny dain'gerz, ar nou over. Az too the speshal cauz ov mi leving, it iz not meerly the straind cichuwaishon withe Mr. Carrutherz, but it iz the reyaperans ov dhat ojous man, Mr. Woodly. He wauz aulwase hidjous, but he loox moer aufool dhan evver nou, for he apeerz too hav had an axident and he iz much disfigguerd. I sau him out ov the windo, but I am glad too sa I did not mete him. He had a long tauc withe Mr. Carrutherz, whoo ceemd much exited aafterwordz. Woodly must be staying in the naborhood, for he did not slepe here, and yet I caut a glimps ov him agane this morning, slinking about in the shrubbery. I wood sooner hav a savvage wiald annimal looce about the place. I loathe and fere him moer dhan I can sa. Hou *can* Mr. Carrutherz enjure such a crechure for a moment? Houwevver, aul mi trubbelz wil be over on Satterda.

"So I trust, Wautson, so I trust," ced Hoamz, graivly. "Dhare iz sum depe intreghe gowing on round dhat littel woomman, and it iz our juty too ce dhat no wun molests her uppon dhat laast gerny. I thhinc, Wautson, dhat we must spare time too run doun tooghether on Satterda morning and make shure dhat this cureyous and inclucive investigaishon haz no untooword ending."

I confes dhat I had not up too nou taken a verry cereyous vu ov the cace, which had ceemd too me raather grotesc and bizar dhan dain'gerous. Dhat a man shood li in wate for and follo a verry handsum woomman iz no unherd-ov thhing, and if he haz so littel audascity dhat he not oanly daerd not adres her, but even fled from her aproche, he wauz not a verry formiddabel asalant. The ruffeyan Woodly wauz a verry different person, but, exept on wun ocaizhon, he had not molested our cliyent, and nou he vizsited the hous ov Carrutherz widhout intruding uppon her prezsens. The man on the bicikel wauz doutles a member ov dhose weke-end partese at the Haul ov which the publican had spoken, but whoo he wauz, or whaut he waunted, wauz az obscure az ever. It wauz the ceverrity ov Hoamsez manner and the fact dhat he slipt a revolver intoo hiz pocket befoer leving our ruimz which imprest me withe the feling dhat tradgedy mite proove too lerc behiand this cureyous trane ov events.

A rany nite had bene follode bi a gloereyous morning, and the heeth-cuverd cuntricide, withe the glowing clumps ov flouwering gors, ceemd aul the moer butifool too ise which wer wery ov the dunz and drabz and slate grase ov Lundon. Hoamz and I wauct along the braud, sandy rode inhaling the fresh morning are and rejoicing in the music ov the berdz and the fresh breth ov the spring. From a rise ov the rode on the shoalder ov Crooxbury Hil, we cood ce the grim Haul brisling out from amidst the ainshent oax, which, oald az dha wer, wer stil yun'gher dhan the bilding which dha surounded. Hoamz pointed down the long tract ov rode which wound, a reddish yello band, betwene the broun ov the heeth and the budding grene ov the woodz. Far awa, a blac dot, we cood ce a veyikel mooving in our direcshon. Hoamz gave an exclamaishon ov impaishens.

"I hav ghivven a margin ov haaf an our," ced he. "If dhat iz her

trap, she must be making for the erleyer trane. I fere, Wautson, dhat she wil be paast Charlington befoer we can poscibly mete her.”

From the instant dhat we paast the rise, we cood no lon'gher ce the veyikel, but we hacend onword at such a pace dhat mi ceddentary life began too tel uppon me, and I wauz compeld too faul behiand. Hoamz, houwevver, wauz aulwase in traning, for he had inexhaustibel stoerz ov nervous ennergy uppon which too drau. Hiz springy step nevver slode until suddenly, when he wauz a hundred yardz in frunt ov me, he halted, and I sau him thro up hiz hand withe a geschure ov grefe and despare. At the same instant an empty dog-cart, the hors cantering, the rainz traling, apeerd round the kerv ov the rode and ratteld swiftly toowordz us.

“Too late, Wautson, too late!” cride Hoamz, az I ran panting too hiz side. “Foole dhat I wauz not too alou for dhat erleyer trane! Its abducshon, Wautson—abducshon! Merder! Hevven nose whaut! Bloc the rode! Stop the hors! Dhats rite. Nou, jump in, and let us ce if I can repara the conceqwencez ov mi one blunder.”

We had sprung intoo the dog-cart, and Hoamz, aafter terning the hors, gave it a sharp cut withe the whip, and we flu bac along the rode. Az we ternd the kerv, the whole strech ov rode betwene the Haul and the heeth wauz opend up. I graaspt Hoamsez arm.

“Dhats the man!” I gaaspt.

A sollitary ciaclist wauz cumming toowordz us. Hiz hed wauz doun and

hiz shoalderz rounded, az he poot evvery ouns ov ennergy dhat he posest on too the peddalz. He wauz fliying like a racer. Suddenly he raizd hiz beereded face, sau us cloce too him, and poold up,

springing from hiz mashene. Dhat cole-blac beard wauz in cin'gular contraast too the pallor ov hiz face, and hiz ise wer az brite az if he had a fever. He staerd at us and at the dog-cart. Then a looc ov amaizment came over hiz face.

"Hallo! Stop dhare!" he shouted, hoalding hiz bicikel too bloc our rode. "Whare did u ghet dhat dog-cart? Pool up, man!" he yeld, drauwing a pistol from hiz cide pocket. "Pool up, I sa, or, bi Jorj, Ile poot a boollet intoo yor hors."

Hoamz thru the rainz intoo mi lap and sprang doun from the cart.

"Yor the man we waunt too ce. Whare iz Mis Violet Smith?" he ced, in hiz qwic, clere wa.

"Dhats whaut Ime aasking u. Yor in her dog-cart. U aut too no whare she iz."

"We met the dog-cart on the rode. Dhare wauz no wun in it. We drove bac too help the yung lady."

"Good Lord! Good Lord! Whaut shal I doo?" cride the strain'ger, in an extacy ov despare. "Dhave got her, dhat hel-hound Woodly and the blacgard parson. Cum, man, cum, if u reyaly ar her frend. Stand bi me and wele save her, if I hav too leve mi carcas in Charlington Wood."

He ran distractedly, hiz pistol in hiz hand, toowordz a gap in the hej. Hoamz follode him, and I, leving the hors grasing becide the rode, follode Hoamz.

"This iz whare dha came throo," ced he, pointing too the marx ov cevveral fete uppon the muddy paath. "Hallo! Stop a minnute! Whoose this in the boosh?"

It wauz a yung fello about cevventene, drest like an osler, withe lether cordz and gaterz. He la uppon hiz bac, hiz nese draun up, a terribel cut uppon hiz hed. He wauz incencibel, but alive. A glaans at hiz wuind toald me dhat it had not pennetrated the bone.

“Dhats Peter, the groome,” cride the strain’ger. “He drove her. The beests hav poold him of and clubd him. Let him li; we caant doo him enny good, but we ma save her from the werst fate dhat can befaul a woomman.”

We ran frantically doun the paath, which wound among the trese. We had reecht the shrubbery which surounded the hous when Hoamz poold up.

“Dha didnt go too the hous. Here ar dhare marx on the left—here, beside the lorel booshez. Aa! I ced so.”

Az he spoke, a woommanz shril screme—a screme which viabrated withe a frensy ov horror—berst from the thhic, grene clump ov booshez in frunt ov us. It ended suddenly on its hiyest note withe a choke and a gherghel.

“This wa! This wa! Dha ar in the boling-ally,” cride the strain’ger, darting throo the booshez. “Aa, the couwardly dogz! Follo me, gentelmen! Too late! too late! bi the livving Gin’go!”

We had broken suddenly intoo a luvly glade ov greensword surounded bi ainshent trese. On the farther cide ov it, under the shaddo ov a mity oke, dhare stood a cin’gular groope ov thre pepel. Wun wauz a woomman, our cliyent, drooping and faint, a hankerchefe round her mouth. Opposite her stood a brutal,

hevvv-faist, red-moostaasht yung man, hiz gaterd legz parted wide, wun arm akimbo, the uther waving a riding crop, hiz whole attichude sugestive ov triyumfant bravaado. Betwene them an elderly, gra-beerded man, waring a short cerplice over a lite twede sute, had evvidently just completed the wedding cervice, for he pocketed hiz prare-booc az we apeerd, and slapt the cinnister briadgroome uppon the bac in joveyal con'grachulaishon.

"Dhare marrede!" I gaaspt.

"Cum on!" cride our ghide, "cum on!" He rusht acros the glade, Hoamz and I at hiz heelz. Az we aproacht, the lady staggherd against the trunc ov the tre for supoert. Willeyamson, the ex-clergiman, boud too us withe moc poliatnes, and the boolly, Woodly, advaanst withe a shout ov brutal and exultant laafter.

"U can take yor beard of, Bob," ced he. "I no u, rite enuf. Wel, u and yor palz hav just cum in time for me too be abel too introjuce u too Mrs. Woodly."

Our ghiadz aancer wauz a cin'gular wun. He snacht of the darc beard which had disghiazd him and thru it on the ground, disclosing a long, sallo, clene-shaven face belo it. Then he raizd hiz revolver and cuvverd the yung ruffeyan, whoo wauz advaaning uppon him withe hiz dain'gerous riding-crop swinging in hiz hand.

"Yes," ced our alli, "I *am* Bob Carrutherz, and Ile ce this woomman rited, if I hav too swing for it. I toald u whaut Ide doo if u molested her, and, bi the Lord! Ile be az good az mi werd."

"Yor too late. Shese mi wife."

"No, shese yor widdo."

Hiz revolver cract, and I sau the blud spert from the frunt ov Woodlese waistcote. He spun round withe a screme and fel uppon hiz bac, hiz hidjous red face terning suddenly too a dredfool motteld pallor. The oald man, stil clad in hiz cerplice, berst intoo such a string ov foul oaths az I hav nevver herd, and poold out a revolver ov hiz one, but, befoer he cood rase it, he wauz loocking doun the barrel ov Hoamsez weppon.

"Enuf ov this," ced mi frend, coaldly. "Drop dhat pistol! Wautson, pic it up! Hoald it too hiz hed. Thanc u. U, Carrutherz, ghiv me dhat revolver. Wele hav no moer viyolens. Cum, hand it over!"

"Whoo ar u, then?"

"Mi name iz Sherloc Hoamz."

"Good Lord!"

"U hav herd ov me, I ce. I wil represent the ofishal polece until dhare arival. Here, u!" he shouted too a fritend groome, whoo had apeerd at the ej ov the glade.

"Cum here. Take this note az hard az u can ride too Farnam." He scribbeld a fu werdz uppon a lefe from hiz noatbooc. "Ghiv it too the superintendent at the polece-staishon. Until he cumz, I must detane u aul under mi personal custody."

The strong, maasterfool personallity ov Hoamz domminated the tradgic cene, and aul wer eeqwaly puppets in hiz handz. Willeyamson and

Carrutherz found themcelvz carreying the wuinded Woodly intoo the hous, and I gave mi arm too the fritend gherl. The injuerd man wauz lade on hiz bed, and at Hoamsez reqwest I exammiand him. I carrede mi repoert too whare he sat in the oald tappestry-hung dining-roome withe hiz too prizzonerz befoer him.

“He wil liv,” ced I.

“Whaut!” cride Carrutherz, springing out ov hiz chare. “Ile go upstaerz and finnish him ferst. Doo u tel me dhat dhat ain’gel, iz too be tide too Roering Jac Woodly for life?”

“U nede not concern yorcelf about dhat,” ced Hoamz. “Dhare ar too verry good rezonz whi she shood, under no cercumstaancez, be hiz wife. In the ferst place, we ar verry safe in qweschoning Mr. Willeyamsonz rite too sollemnise a marrage.”

“I hav bene ordaind,” cride the oald raascal.

“And aulso unfroct.”

“Wuns a clergiman, aulwase a clergiman.”

“I thhinc not. Hou about the licens?”

“We had a licens for the marrage. I hav it here in mi pocket.”

“Then u got it bi tric. But, in enny cace a foerst marrage iz no marrage, but it iz a verry cereyous felony, az u wil discuvver befoer u hav finnisht. Ule hav time too thhinc the point out juring the next ten yeeرز or so, unles I am mistaken. Az too u, Carrutherz, u wood hav dun better too kepe yor pistol in yor pocket.”

“I beghin too thhinc so, Mr. Hoamz, but when I thaut ov aul the precaushon I had taken too sheeld this gherl—for I luvd her, Mr. Hoamz, and it iz the oonly time dhat evver I nu whaut luv wauz—it faerly drove me mad too thhinc dhat she wauz in the pouwer ov the gratest brute and boolly in South Africaa—a man whoose name iz a holy terror from Kimberly too Johannezberg. Whi, Mr. Hoamz, ule hardly beleve it, but evver cins dhat gherl haz bene in mi employment I nevver wuns let her go paast this hous, whare I nu the raascalz wer lerking, widhout following her on mi bicikel, just too ce dhat she came too no harm. I kept mi distans from her, and I woer a beard, so dhat she shood not reccognise me, for she iz a good and hi-spirrited gherl, and she woodnt hav stade in mi employment long if she had thaut dhat I wauz following her about the cuntry roadz.”

“Whi didnt u tel her ov her dain‘ger?”

“Becauz then, agane, she wood hav left me, and I coodnt bare too face dhat. Even if she coodnt luv me, it wauz a grate dele too me just too ce her dainty form about the hous, and too here the sound ov her vois.”

“Wel,” ced I, “u caul dhat luv, Mr. Carrutherz, but I shood caul it celfishnes.”

“Maby the too thhingz go tooghether. Ennihou, I coodnt let her go. Beciadz, withe this croud about, it wauz wel dhat she shood hav sumwun nere too looc aafter her. Then, when the cabel came, I nu dha wer bound too make a moove.”

“Whaut cabel?”

Carrutherz tooc a tellegram from hiz pocket.

“Dhats it,” ced he.

It wauz short and concice:

The oald man iz ded.

“Hum!” ced Hoamz. “I thhinc I ce hou thhingz werct, and I can understand hou this message wood, az u sa, bring them too a hed. But while u wate, u mite tel me whaut u can.”

The oald reprobate withe the cerplice berst intoo a volly ov bad lan’gwage.

“Bi hevven!” ced he, “if u sqwele on us, Bob Carrutherz, Ile cerv u az u cervd Jac Woodly. U can blete about the gherl too yor harts content, for dhats yor one afare, but if u round on yor palz too this plane-cloadhz copper, it wil be the werst dase werc dhat evver u did.”

“Yor revverens nede not be exited,” ced Hoamz, liting a ciggaret. “The cace iz clere enuf against u, and aul I aasc iz a fu detailz for mi private cureyosity. Houwevver, if dhaerz enny difficulty in yor telling me, Ile doo the tauking, and then u wil ce hou far u hav a chaans ov hoalding bac yor ceecrets. In the ferst place, thre ov u came from South Africaa on this game—u Willeyamson, u Carrutherz, and Woodly.”

“Li number wun,” ced the oald man; “I nevver sau iather ov them until too munths ago, and I hav nevver bene in Africaa in mi life, so u can poot dhat in yor pipe and smoke it, Mr. Bizsibody Hoamz!”

“Whaut he cez iz tru,” ced Carrutherz.

“Wel, wel, too ov u came over. Hiz revverens iz our one homemade artikel. U had none Ralf Smith in South Africaa. U had rezon too beleve he wood not liv long. U found out dhat hiz nece wood inherrit hiz forchune. Houz dhat—a?”

Carrutherz nodded and Willeyamson swoer.

“She wauz next ov kin, no dout, and u wer aware dhat the oald fello wood make no wil.”

“Coodnt rede or rite,” ced Carrutherz.

“So u came over, the too ov u, and hunted up the gherl. The ideyaa wauz dhat wun ov u wauz too marry her, and the uther hav a share ov the plunder. For sum rezon, Woodly wauz chosen az the huzband. Whi wauz dhat?”

“We plade cardz for her on the voiyage. He wun.”

“I ce. U got the yung lady intoo yor cervice, and dhare Woodly wauz too doo the coerting. She reccogniazd the drunken brute dhat he wauz, and wood hav nuthhing too doo withe him. Meenwhile, yor arainjment wauz raather upcet bi the fact dhat u had yorcelf faulen in luv withe the lady. U cood no lon’gher bare the ideyaa ov this ruffeyan oning her?”

“No, bi Jorj, I coodnt!”

“Dhare wauz a qworel betwene u. He left u in a rage, and began too make hiz one planz independently ov u.”

“It striax me, Willeyamson, dhare iznt verry much dhat we can tel this gentelman,” cride Carrutherz, withe a bitter laaf.

“Yes, we qworeld, and he noct me down. I am levvel withe him

on dhat, ennihou. Then I lost cite ov him. Dhat wauz when he pict up withe this outcaast paadra here. I found dhat dha had cet up houskeping tooghether at this place on the line dhat she had too paas for the staishon. I kept mi i on her aafter dhat, for I nu dhare wauz sum devvilry in the wind. I sau them from time too time, for I wauz ancshous too no whaut dha wer aafter. Too dase ago Woodly came up too mi hous withe this cabel, which shode dhat Ralf Smith wauz ded. He aasct me if I wood stand bi the bargane. I ced I wood not. He aasct me if I wood marry the gherl micelf and ghiv him a share. I ced I wood willingly doo so, but dhat she wood not hav me. He ced, 'Let us ghet her marrede ferst and aafter a weke or too she ma ce thhingz a bit different.' I ced I wood hav nuthhing too doo withe viyolens. So he went of kercing, like the foul-moutht blacgard dhat he wauz, and swaring dhat he wood hav her yet. She wauz leving me this weke-end, and I had got a trap too take her too the staishon, but I wauz so unnesy in mi miand dhat I follode her on mi bicikel. She had got a start, houwevver, and befoer I cood cach her, the mischefe wauz dun. The ferst thhing I nu about it wauz when I sau u too gentelmen driving bac in her dog-cart."

Hoamz rose and tost the end ov hiz ciggaret intoo the grate. "I hav bene verry obchuce, Wautson," ced he. "When in yor repoert u ced dhat u had cene the ciaclist az u thaut arainj hiz necti in the shrubbery, dhat alone shood hav toald me aul. Houwevver, we ma con'gratchulate ourcelvz uppon a cureyous and, in sum respects, a uneke cace. I perceve thre ov the county constabulary in the drive, and I am glad too ce dhat the littel osler iz Abel too kepe pace withe them, so it iz liacly dhat niather he nor the interesting briadgroom will be permanently dammaid bi dhare morningz advenchuerz. I thhinc, Wautson, dhat in yor meddical capascity, u mite wate uppon Mis Smith and tel her dhat if she iz sufishmently recuverd, we shal be happy too escort her too her mutherz home. If she iz not qwite convalescent

u wil fiand dhat a hint dhat we wer about too tellegraaf too a yung electrishan in the Midlandz wood probbably complete the cure. Az too u, Mr. Carrutherz, I thhinc dhat u hav dun whaut u cood too make amendz for yor share in an evil plot. Dhare iz mi card, cer, and if mi evvidens can be ov help in yor triyal, it shal be at yor dispozal."

In the wherl ov our incessant activvity, it haz often bene difficult for me, az the reder haz probbably observd, too round of mi narratiavz, and too ghiv dhose final detailz which the cureyous mite expect. Eche cace haz bene the prelude too anuther, and the cricis wuns over, the actorz hav paast for evver out ov our bizsy liavz. I fiand, houwevver, a short note at the end ov mi mannuscript deling withe this cace, in which I hav poot it uppon reccord dhat Mis Violet Smith did indede inherrit a larj forchune, and dhat she iz nou the wife ov Cirril Morton, the ceenyor partner ov Morton & Kennedy, the famous Westminster electrishanz. Willeyamson and Woodly wer boath tride for abducshon and asault, the former ghetting cevven yeeرز the latter ten. Ov the fate ov Carrutherz, I hav no reccord, but I am shure dhat hiz asault wauz not vude verry gravily bi the coert, cins Woodly had the reputaishon ov beying a moast dain'gerous ruffeyan, and I thhinc dhat a fu munths wer sufishent too sattisfi the demaandz ov justice.

THE ADVENCHURE OV THE PRIYORY SCOOLE

We hav had sum dramattic entrancez and exits uppon our smaul stage at Baker Strete, but I canot recolect ennithing moer sudden and startling dhan the ferst aperans ov Thornicroft Huxtabel, M.A., Ph.D., etc. Hiz card, which ceemd too smaul too carry the wate ov hiz academmic distincshonz, preceded him bi a fu cecondz, and then he enterd himself—so larj, so pompous, and so dignifide dhat he wauz the verry emboddiment ov

celf-poseshon and soliddity. And yet hiz ferst acshon, when the doer had cloazd behiand him, wauz too staggher against the tabel, whens he slipt doun uppon the floer, and dhare wauz dhat magestic figgure prostrate and incencibel uppon our baerskin harth-rug.

We had sprung too our fete, and for a fu moments we staerd in cilent amaizment at this ponderous pece ov reccage, which toald ov sum sudden and fatal storm far out on the oashan ov life. Then Hoamz hurrede withe a cooshon for hiz hed, and I withe brandy for hiz lips. The hevvy, white face wauz ceemd withe lianz ov trubbel, the hanging pouchez under the cloazd ise wer ledden in cullor, the looce mouth druipt dollorously at the cornerz, the roling chinz wer unshaven. Collar and shert boer the grime ov a long gerny, and the hare brisceld unkempt from the wel-shaipt hed. It wauz a soerly stricken man whoo la befoer us.

“Whaut iz it, Wautson?” aasct Hoamz.

“Absolute exauschon—poscibly mere hun’gher and fateghe,” ced I, withe mi fin’gher on the thredy puls, whare the streme ov life trickeld thhin and smaul.

“Retern ticket from Mackelton, in the north ov In’gland,” ced Hoamz, drauwing it from the wauch-pocket. “It iz not twelv oacloc yet. He haz certainly bene an erly starter.”

The puckerd ilidz had begun too qwivver, and nou a pare ov vacant gra ise looct up at us. An instant later the man had scambeld on too hiz fete, hiz face crimzon withe shame.

“Forghiv this weecnes, Mr. Hoamz, I hav bene a littel overaut. Thanc u, if I mite hav a glaas ov milc and a biskit, I hav no dout dhat I shood be better. I came

personaly, Mr. Hoamz, in order too inshure dhat u wood retern withe me. I feerd dhat no tellegram wood convins u ov the absolute ergency ov the cace.”

“When u ar qwite restoerd——”

“I am qwite wel agane. I canot imadgine hou I came too be so weke. I wish u, Mr. Hoamz, too cum too Mackelton withe me bi the next trane.”

Mi frend shooc hiz hed.

“Mi colleghe, Dr. Wautson, cood tel u dhat we ar verry bizsy at prezsent. I am retaind in this cace ov the Ferrerz Documents, and the Abergavenny merder iz cumming up for triyal. Oonly a verry important ishu cood caul me from Lundon at prezsent.”

“Important!” Our vizsitor thru up hiz handz. “Hav u herd nuthhing ov the abducshon ov the oonly sun ov the Juke ov Hoaldernes?”

“Whaut! the late Cabbinet Minnister?”

“Exactly. We had tride too kepe it out ov the paperz, but dhare wauz sum rumor in the *Globe* laast nite. I thaut it mite hav reecht yor eerz.”

Hoamz shot out hiz long, thhin arm and pict out Vollume “H” in hiz enciaclopejaa ov refferens.

“‘Hoaldernes, 6th Juke, K.G., P.C.’—haaf the alfabet! ‘Barron Bevverly, Erl ov Carston’—dere me, whaut a list! ‘Lord Leftennant ov Hallamshire cins 1900. Marrede Edith, dauter ov Cer Charlz

Appeldor, 1888. Are and oonly chiald, Lord Saltire. Oanz about too hundred and fifty thouzand akerz. Minneralz in Lancaashire and Wailz. Adres: Carlton Hous Terrace; Hoaldernes Haul, Hallamshire; Carston Caacel, Ban'gor, Wailz. Lord ov the Admiralty, 1872; Chefe Cecretary ov State for——' Wel, wel, this man iz certainly wun ov the gratest subjects ov the Croun!"

"The gratest and perhaps the welthheyest. I am aware, Mr. Hoamz, dhat u take a verry hi line in profeshonal matterz, and dhat u ar prepaerd too werc for the werx sake. I ma tel u, houwevver, dhat hiz Grace haz aulreddy intimated dhat a chec for five thousand poundz wil be handed over too the person whoo can tel him whare hiz sun iz, and anuther thousand too him whoo can name the man or men whoo hav taken him."

"It iz a prinsly offer," ced Hoamz. "Wautson, I thhinc dhat we shal acumpany Dr. Huxtabel bac too the north ov In'gland. And nou, Dr. Huxtabel, when u hav conshuemd dhat milc, u wil kiandy tel me whaut haz happend, when it happend, hou it happend, and, finaly, whaut Dr. Thornicroft Huxtabel, ov the Priyory Scoole, nere Mackelton, haz too doo withe the matter, and whi he cumz thre dase aafter an event—the state ov yor chin ghivz the date—too aasc for mi humbel cervicez."

Our vizsitor had conshuemd hiz milc and biskits. The lite had cum bac too hiz ise and the cullor too hiz cheex, az he cet himcelf withe grate viggor and luciddity too explane the cichuwaishon.

"I must inform u, gentelmen, dhat the Priyory iz a preparatoery scoole, ov which I am the founder and principal. *Huxtabelz Ciadliats on Horace* ma poscibly recaul mi name too yor memmorese. The Priyory iz, widhout exepshon, the best and moast celect preparatoery scoole in In'gland. Lord Leverstoke, the Erl

ov Blaqwauter, Cer Cathcart Soamz—dha aul hav intrusted dhare sunz too me. But I felt dhat mi scoole had reecht its sennith when, weex ago, the Juke ov Hoaldernes cent Mr. Jaimz Wialder, hiz cecretary, withe intimaishon dhat yung Lord Saltire, ten yeerz oald, hiz oonly sun and are, wauz about too be comitted too mi charj. Littel did I thhinc dhat this wood be the prelude too the moast crushing misforchune ov mi life.

“On Ma 1st the boi ariavd, dhat beying the beghinning ov the summer term. He wauz a charming ueth, and he soone fel intoo our wase. I ma tel u—I trust dhat I am not indiscrete, but haaf-confidencenz ar abcerd in such a cace—dhat he wauz not entiarly happy at home. It iz an open ceecret dhat the Juex marrede life had not bene a peesfool wun, and the matter had ended in a ceparashon bi muchuwal concent, the Dutches taking up her rezsidens in the south ov Fraans. This had okerd verry shortly befoer, and the boiz cimpathhese ar none too hav bene strongly withe hiz muther. He moapt aafter her deparchure from Hoaldernes Haul, and it wauz for this rezon dhat the Juke desiard too cend him too mi establishment. In a fortnite the boi wauz qwite at home withe us and wauz aparrently absoluetly happy.

“He wauz laast cene on the nite ov Ma 13th—dhat iz, the nite ov laast Munda. Hiz roome wauz on the cecond floer and wauz aproacht throo anuther larger roome, in which too boiz wer sleping. These boiz sau and herd nuthhing, so dhat it iz certane dhat yung Saltire did not paas out dhat wa. Hiz windo wauz open, and dhare iz a stout ivy plaant leding too the ground. We cood trace no footmarx belo, but it iz shure dhat this iz the oonly poscibel exit.

“Hiz abcens wauz discuvverd at cevven oacloc on Chuezda morning. Hiz bed had bene slept in. He had drest himcelf foolly, befoer gowing of, in hiz uezhual scoole sute ov blac Eton jacket and darc

gra trouserz. Dhare wer no cianz dhat enniwun had enterd the roome, and it iz qwite certane dhat ennithhing in the nachure ov crise or a strugghel wood hav bene herd, cins Caunter, the elder boi in the inner roome, iz a verry lite sleper.

“When Lord Saltiarz disaperans wauz discuvverd, I at wuns cauld a role ov the whole establishment—boiz, maasterz, and cervants. It wauz then dhat we ascertaind dhat Lord Saltire had not bene alone in hiz flite. Hideggher, the German maaster, wauz miscing. Hiz roome wauz on the cecond floer, at the farther end ov the bilding, facing the same wa az Lord Saltiarz. Hiz bed had aulso bene slept in, but he had aparrently gon awa partly drest, cins hiz shert and sox wer liying on the floer. He had undoutedly let himcelf doun bi the ivy, for we cood ce the marx ov hiz fete whare he had landed on the laun. Hiz bicikel wauz kept in a smaul shed becide this laun, and it aulso wauz gon.

“He had bene withe me for too yeerz, and came withe the best refferencez, but he wauz a cilent, moroce man, not verry poppular iather withe maasterz or boiz. No trace cood be found ov the fugitiavz, and nou, on Thherzda morning, we ar az ignorant az we wer on Chuezda. Inqwiry wauz, ov coers, made at wuns at Hoaldernes Haul. It iz oonly a fu mialz awa, and we imadgiand dhat, in sum sudden atac ov hoamcicnes, he had gon bac too hiz faather, but nuthhing had bene herd ov him. The Juke iz graitley adgitated, and, az too me, u hav cene yorcelvz the state ov nervous prostraishon too which the suspens and the responcibillity hav rejuest me. Mr. Hoamz, if evver u poot forword yor fool pouwerz, I imploer u too doo so nou, for nevver in yor life cood u hav a cace which iz moer werthy ov them.”

Sherloc Hoamz had liscend withe the utmoast intentnes too the staitment ov the unhappy scuilmaaster. Hiz draun brouz and the depe furro betwene them shode dhat he neded no exortaishon too

concentrate aul hiz atenshon uppon a problem which, apart from the tremendous interests involvd must apele so directly too hiz luv ov the complex and the unnuezhual. He nou dru out hiz noatbooc and jotted doun wun or too memorandaa.

“U hav bene verry remis in not cumming too me sooner,” ced he, ceveerly. “U start me on mi investigaishon withe a verry cereyous handicap. It iz inconcevable, for exaampel, dhat this ivy and this laun wood hav yeilded nuthhing too an expert observer.”

“I am not too blame, Mr. Hoamz. Hiz Grace wauz extreemly desirous too avoid aul public scandal. He wauz afrade ov hiz fammily unhappines beying dragd befor the werld. He haz a depe horror ov ennithhing ov the kiand.”

“But dhare haz bene sum ofishal investigaishon?”

“Yes, cer, and it haz pruid moast disapointing. An aparrent clu wauz at wuns obtaind, cins a boi and a yung man wer repoerted too hav bene cene leving a naboring staishon bi an erly trane. Oonly laast nite we had nuse dhat the cuppel had bene hunted doun in Livverpoole, and dha proove too hav no conecshon whautevver withe the matter in hand. Then it wauz dhat in mi despare and disapointment, aafter a sleeples nite, I came strate too u bi the erly trane.”

“I supose the local investigaishon wauz relaxt while this fauls clu wauz beying follode up?”

“It wauz entiarly dropt.”

“So dhat thre dase hav bene waisted. The afare haz bene moast deplorably handeld.”

"I fele it and admit it."

"And yet the problem shoold be capabel ov ultimate solueshon. I shal be verry happy too looc intoo it. Hav u bene abel too trace enny conecshon betwene the miscing boi and this German maaster?"

"Nun at aul."

"Wauz he in the maasterz claas?"

"No, he nevver exchainjd a werd withe him, so far az I no."

"Dhat iz certainly verry cin'gular. Had the boi a bicikel?"

"No."

"Wauz enny uther bicikel miscing?"

"No."

"Iz dhat certane?"

"Qwite."

"Wel, nou, u doo not mene too cereyously sugest dhat this German rode of uppon a bicikel in the ded ov the nite, baring the boi in hiz armz?"

"Certainly not."

"Then whaut iz the ththeyory in yor miand?"

"The bicikel ma hav bene a bliand. It ma hav bene hidden sumwhare, and the pare gon of on foot."

"Qwite so, but it ceemz raather an abcerd bliand, duz it not? Wer dhare uther bicikelz in this shed?"

"Cevveral."

"Wood he not hav hidden *a cappel*, had he desiard too ghiv the ideyaa dhat dha had gon of uppon them?"

"I supose he wood."

"Ov coers he wood. The bliand ththeyory woant doo. But the incident iz an admirabel starting-point for an investigaishon. Aafter aul, a bicikel iz not an esy thhing too concele or too destroi. Wun uther qweschon. Did enniwun caul too ce the boi on the da befoer he disapeerd?"

"No."

"Did he ghet enny letterz?"

"Yes, wun letter."

"From whoome?"

"From hiz faather."

"Doo u open the boiz' letterz?"

"No."

"Hou doo u no it wauz from the faather?"

“The cote ov armz wauz on the envelope, and it wauz adrest in the Juex peculeyar stif hand. Beciadz, the Juke rememberz havving ritten.”

“When had he a letter befoer dhat?”

“Not for cevveral dase.”

“Had he evver wun from Fraans?”

“No, nevver.

“U ce the point ov mi qweschonz, ov coers. Iather the boi wauz carrede of bi foers or he went ov hiz one fre wil. In the latter cace, u wood expect dhat sum prompting from outside wood be neded too make so yung a lad doo such a thhing. If he haz had no vizsitorz, dhat prompting must hav cum in letterz; hens I tri too fiand out whoo wer hiz corespondents.”

“I fere I canot help u much. Hiz oanly corespondent, so far az I no, wauz hiz one faather.”

“Whoo rote too him on the verry da ov hiz disaperans. Wer the relaishonz betwene faather and sun verry frendly?”

“Hiz Grace iz nevver verry frendly withe enniwun. He iz compleetly imerst in larj public qweschonz, and iz raather inaxescibel too aul ordinary emoashonz. But he wauz aulwase kiand too the boi in hiz one wa.”

“But the cimpathese ov the latter wer withe the muther?”

“Yes.”

“Did he sa so?”

“No.”

“The Juke, then?”

“Good Hevvenz, no!”

“Then hou cood u no?”

“I hav had sum confidenshal taux withe Mr. Jaimz Wialder, hiz Gracez cecretary. It wauz he whoo gave me the informaishon about Lord Saltiarz felingz.”

“I ce. Bi the wa, dhat laast letter ov the Juex—wauz it found in the boiz roome aafter he wauz gon?”

“No, he had taken it withe him. I thhinc, Mr. Hoamz, it iz time dhat we wer leving for Ueston.”

“I wil order a foer-wheler. In a qworter ov an our, we shal be at yor cervice. If u ar tellegraafing home, Mr. Huxtabel, it wood be wel too alou the pepel in yor naborhood too imadgine dhat the inqwiry iz stil gowing on in Livverpoole, or wharevver els dhat red herring led yor pac. In the meentime I wil doo a littel qwiyet werc at yor one doerz, and perhaps the cent iz not so coald but dhat too oald houndz like Wautson and micelf ma ghet a snif ov it.”

Dhat evening found us in the coald, bracing atmosfere ov the Peke cuntry, in which Dr. Huxtabelz famous scoole iz citchuwated. It wauz aulreddy darc when we reecht it. A card wauz liying on the haul tabel, and the butler whisperd sumthhing too hiz maaster, whoo ternd too us withe agitaishon in evvery hevvy fechure.

“The Juke iz here,” ced he. “The Juke and Mr. Wialder ar in the studdy. Cum, gentelmen, and I wil introjuce u.”

I wauz, ov coers, familleyar withe the picchuerz ov the famous staitzman, but the man himcelf wauz verry different from hiz representaishon. He wauz a taul and staitly person, scrupulously drest, withe a draun, thhin face, and a nose which wauz grotescly kervd and long. Hiz complecshon wauz ov a ded pallor, which wauz moer startling bi contraast withe a long, dwindling beard ov vivid red, which flode doun over hiz white waistcote withe hiz wauch-chane gleeming throo its frinj. Such wauz the staitly prezsens whoo looct stonily at us from the center ov Dr. Huxtabelz harthrug. Beside him stood a verry yung man, whoome I understood too be Wialder, the private cecretary. He wauz smaull, nervous, alert withe intelligent lite-blu ise and mobile fechuerz. It wauz he whoo at wuns, in an incicive and pozsitive tone, opend the conversaishon.

“I cauld this morning, Dr. Huxtabel, too late too prevent u from starting for Lunden. I lernd dhat yor obgett wauz too invite Mr. Sherloc Hoamz too undertake the conduct ov this cace. Hiz Grace iz cerpriazd, Dr. Huxtabel, dhat u shood hav taken such a step widhout consulting him.”

“When I lernd dhat the polece had faild——”

“Hiz Grace iz bi no meenz convinst dhat the polece hav faild.”

“But shuerly, Mr. Wialder——”

“U ar wel aware, Dr. Huxtabel, dhat hiz Grace iz particullarly ancshous too avoid aul public scandal. He preferz too take az fu pepel az poscibel intoo hiz confidens.”

"The matter can be esily remmedede," ced the brou-beten doctor;
"Mr. Sherloc Hoamz can retern too Lundon bi the morning trane."

"Hardly dhat, Doctor, hardly dhat," ced Hoamz, in hiz blandest
vois. "This northern are iz inviggorating and plezzant, so I
propose too spend a fu dase uppon yor moorz, and too occupi mi
miand az best I ma. Whether I hav the shelter ov yor roofe or ov
the village in iz, ov coers, for u too decide."

I cood ce dhat the unforchunate doctor wauz in the laast stage ov
indecizhon, from which he wauz rescude bi the depe, sonnorous vois
ov the red-beerded Juke, which buimd out like a dinner-gong.

"I agry withe Mr. Wialder, Dr. Huxtabel, dhat u wood hav dun
wiazly too consult me. But cins Mr. Hoamz haz aulreddy bene taken
intoo yor confidens, it wood indede be abcerd dhat we shood
not avale ourcelvz ov hiz cervicez. Far from gowing too the in,
Mr. Hoamz, I shood be pleezd if u wood cum and sta withe
me at Hoaldernes Haul."

"I thanc yor Grace. For the perpocez ov mi investigaishon, I
thhinc dhat it wood be wiser for me too remane at the cene ov the
mistry."

"Just az u like, Mr. Hoamz. Enny informaishon which Mr. Wialder
or I can ghiv u iz, ov coers, at yor dispozal."

"It wil probbably be nescenary for me too ce u at the Haul,"
ced Hoamz. "I wood oanly aasc u nou, cer, whether u hav
formd enny explanaishon in yor one miand az too the mistereyous
disaperans ov yor sun?"

"No, cer, I hav not."

"Excuse me if I alude too dhat which iz painfool too u, but I hav no aulternative. Doo u thhinc dhat the Dutches had ennithhing too doo withe the matter?"

The grate minnister shode perceptibel hesitaishon.

"I doo not thhinc so," he ced, at laast.

"The uther moast obveyous explanaishon iz dhat the chiald haz bene kidnapt for the perpoce ov levveying ransom. U hav not had enny demaand ov the sort?"

"No, cer."

"Wun moer qweschon, yor Grace. I understand dhat u rote too yor sun uppon the da when this incident okerd."

"No, I rote uppon the da befoer."

"Exactly. But he receevd it on dhat da?"

"Yes."

"Wauz dhare ennithhing in yor letter which mite hav unballanst him or injuest him too take such a step?"

"No, cer, certainly not."

"Did u poast dhat letter yorcelf?"

The nobelmanz repli wauz interupted bi hiz cecretary, whoo broke in withe sum hete.

“Hiz Grace iz not in the habbit ov poasting letterz himcelf,” ced he. “This letter wauz lade withe utherz uppon the studdy tabel, and I micelf poot them in the poast-bag.”

“U ar shure this wun wauz among them?”

“Yes, I observd it.”

“Hou menny letterz did yor Grace rite dhat da?”

“Twenty or thherty. I hav a larj corespondens. But shuerly this iz sumwhaut irellevant?”

“Not entiarly,” ced Hoamz.

“For mi one part,” the Juke continnude, “I hav adviazd the polece too tern dhare atenshon too the south ov Fraans. I hav aulreddy ced dhat I doo not beleve dhat the Dutches wood encurrage so monstrous an acshon, but the lad had the moast rong-hedded opinyonz, and it iz poscibel dhat he ma hav fled too her, aded and abetted bi this German. I thhinc, Dr. Huxtabel, dhat we wil nou retern too the Haul.”

I cood ce dhat dhare wer uther qweschonz which Hoamz wood hav wisht too poot, but the nobelmanz abrupt manner shode dhat the intervuwauz at an end. It wauz evvident dhat too hiz intensely aristocrattic nachure this discushon ov hiz intimate fammily afaerz withe a strain'ger wauz moast abhorent, and dhat he feerd lest evvery fresh qweschon wood thro a feercer lite intoo the discreetly shaddode cornerz ov hiz jucal history.

When the nobelman and hiz cecretary had left, mi frend flung himcelf at wuns withe characteristic eghernes intoo the investigashon.

The boiz chaimber wauz caerfooly exammiand, and yeelded nuthhing save the absolute convicshon dhat it wauz oonly throo the windo dhat he cood hav escaipt. The German maasterz roome and efects gave no ferther clu. In hiz cace a traler ov ivy had ghivven wa under hiz wate, and we sau bi the lite ov a lantern the marc on the laun whare hiz heelz had cum down. Dhat wun dint in the short, grene graas wauz the oonly matereyal witnes left ov this inexpliccabel nocternal flite.

Sherloc Hoamz left the hous alone, and oonly reternd aafter elevven. He had obtaind a larj ordnans map ov the naborhood, and this he braut intoo mi roome, whare he lade it out on the bed, and, havving ballanst the lamp in the middel ov it, he began too smoke over it, and ocaizhonaly too point out obgects ov interest withe the reking amber ov hiz pipe.

“This cace grose uppon me, Wautson,” ced he. “Dhare ar decidedly sum points ov interest in conecshon withe it. In this erly stage, I waunt u too reyalise dhose geyograffical fechuerz which ma hav a good dele too doo withe our investigaishon.

Hoamz-map

HOAMZ' MAP OV THE NABORHOOD OV THE SCOOLE.

“Looc at this map. This darc sqware iz the Priyory Scoole. Ile poot a pin in it. Nou, this line iz the mane rode. U ce dhat it runz eest and west paast the scoole, and u ce aulso dhat dhare iz no cide rode for a mile iather wa. If these too foke paast awa bi rode, it wauz *this* rode.”

“Exactly.”

“Bi a cin’gular and happy chaans, we ar abel too sum extent too chec whaut paast along this rode juring the nite in qweschon. At this point, whare mi pipe iz nou resting, a county cunstabel wauz on juty from twelv too cix. It iz, az u perceve, the ferst cros-rode on the eest cide. This man declaerz dhat he wauz not abcent from hiz poast for an instant, and he iz pozsitive dhat niather boi nor man cood hav gon dhat wa uncene. I hav spoken withe this poleesman too-nite and he apeerz too me too be a perfectly reliyabel person. Dhat blox this end. We hav nou too dele withe the uther. Dhare iz an in here, the Red Bool, the landlady ov which wauz il. She had cent too Mackelton for a doctor, but he did not arive until morning, beying abcent at anuther cace. The pepel at the in wer alert aul nite, awating hiz cumming, and wun or uther ov them ceemz too hav continuwaly had an i uppon the rode. Dha declare dhat no wun paast. If dhare evvidens iz good, then we ar forchunate enuf too be abel too bloc the west, and aulso too be abel too sa dhat the fugitiavz did *not* use the rode at aul.”

“But the bicikel?” I objected.

“Qwite so. We wil cum too the bicikel prezently. Too continnu our rezoning: if these pepel did not go bi the rode, dha must hav traverst the cuntry too the north ov the hous or too the south ov the hous. Dhat iz certane. Let us wa the wun against the uther. On the south ov the hous iz, az u perceve, a larj district ov arrabel land, cut up intoo smaual feeldz, withe stone waulz betwene them. Dhare, I admit dhat a bicikel iz imposcibel. We can dismis the ideyaa. We tern too the cuntry on the north. Here dhare lise a grove ov trese, marct az the ‘Ragghed Shau,’ and on the farther cide stretchez a grate roling moor, Lower Ghil Moor, extending for ten mialz and sloping gradjuwaly upword.

Here, at wun cide ov this wildernes, iz Hoaldernes Haul, ten mialz bi rode, but oonly cix acros the moor. It iz a peculeyarily dezzolate plane. A fu moor farmerz hav smaual hoaldingz, whare dha rere shepe and cattel. Exept these, the pluvver and the kerlu ar the oonly inhabbitants until u cum too the Chesterfeeld hi rode. Dhare iz a chersch dhare, u ce, a fu cottagez, and an in. Beyond dhat the hilz becum precippitous. Shuerly it iz here too the north dhat our qwest must li."

"But the bicikel?" I percisted.

"Wel, wel!" ced Hoamz, impaishently. "A good ciaclist duz not nede a hi rode. The moor iz intercedted withe paaths, and the moone wauz at the fool. Hallo! whaut iz this?"

Dhare wauz an adgitated noc at the doer, and an instant aafterwordz Dr. Huxtabel wauz in the roome. In hiz hand he held a blu cricket-cap withe a white chevron on the peke.

"At laast we hav a clu!" he cride. "Thanc hevven! at laast we ar on the dere boiz trac! It iz hiz cap."

"Whare wauz it found?"

"In the van ov the gipcese whoo campt on the moor. Dha left on Chueзда. Too-da the polece traist them doun and exammiand dhare carravan. This wauz found."

"Hou doo dha acount for it?"

"Dha shuffeld and lide—ced dhat dha found it on the moor on Chueзда morning. Dha no whare he iz, the raascalz! Thanc goodnes, dha ar aul safe under loc and ke. Iather the fere ov the lau or the Juex pers wil certainly ghet out ov them aul

dhat dha no.”

“So far, so good,” ced Hoamz, when the doctor had at laast left the roome. “It at leest baerz out the ththeyory dhat it iz on the cide ov the Lower Ghil Moor dhat we must hope for rezults. The polece hav reyaly dun nuthhing localy, save the arest ov these gipcese. Looc here, Wautson! Dhare iz a wautercoers acros the moor. U ce it marct here in the map. In sum parts it widenz intoo a moras. This iz particcularly so in the rejon betwene Hoaldernes Haul and the scoole. It iz vane too looc elshware for trax in this dri wether, but at *dhat* point dhare iz certainly a chaans ov sum reccord beying left. I wil caul u erly too-moro morning, and u and I wil tri if we can thro sum littel lite uppon the mistery.”

The da wauz just braking when I woke too fiand the long, thhin form ov Hoamz bi mi bedcide. He wauz folly drest, and had aparrently aulreddy bene out.

“I hav dun the laun and the bicikel shed,” ced he. “I hav aulso had a rumbel throo the Ragghed Shau. Nou, Wautson, dhare iz coco reddy in the next roome. I must beg u too hurry, for we hav a grate da befoer us.”

Hiz ise shon, and hiz cheke wauz flusht withe the exilaraishon ov the maaster wercman whoo cese hiz werc li reddy befoer him. A verry different Hoamz, this active, alert man, from the introspective and pallid dremer ov Baker Strete. I felt, az I looct uppon dhat suppel figgure, alive withe nervous ennergy, dhat it wauz indede a strennuwous da dhat awated us.

And yet it opend in the blackest disapointment. Withe hi hoaps we struc acros the pety, ruscet moor, intercected withe a

thouzand shepe paaths, until we came too the braud, lite-grene belt which marct the moras betwene us and Hoaldernes. Certainly, if the lad had gon hoamword, he must hav paast this, and he cood not paas it widhout leving hiz tracez. But no cine ov him or the German cood be cene. Withe a darkening face mi frend strode along the margin, egherly observant ov evvery muddy stane uppon the moscy cerface. Shepe-marx dhare wer in profuezhon, and at wun place, sum mialz doun, couz had left dhare trax. Nuthhing moer.

“Chec number wun,” ced Hoamz, loocking gloomily over the roling expans ov the moor. “Dhare iz anuther moras doun yonder, and a narro nec betwene. Hallo! hallo! hallo! whaut hav we here?”

We had cum on a smaul blac ribbon ov paathwa. In the middel ov it, cleerly marct on the sodden soil, wauz the trac ov a bicikel.

“Huraa!” I cride. “We hav it.”

But Hoamz wauz shaking hiz hed, and hiz face wauz puzseld and expectant raather dhan joiyous.

“A bicikel, certainly, but not *the* bicikel,” ced he. “I am familleyar withe forty-too different impreshonz left bi tiarz. This, az u perceve, iz a Dunlop, withe a pach uppon the outer cuvver. Hideggherz tiarz wer Paalmerz, leving lon’gichudinal striaps. Avelling, the mathhemattical maaster, wauz shure uppon the point. Dhaerfoer, it iz not Hideggherz trac.”

“The boiz, then?”

“Poscibly, if we cood proove a bicikel too hav bene in hiz poseshon. But this we hav utterly faild too doo. This trac, az u perceve, wauz made bi a rider whoo wauz gowing from the direcshon ov the scoole.”

“Or toowordz it?”

“No, no, mi dere Wautson. The moer deeply sunc impreshon iz, ov coers, the hiand whele, uppon which the wate rests. U perceve cevveral placez whare it haz paast acros and oblitterated the moer shallo marc ov the frunt wun. It wauz undoutedly hedding awa from the scoole. It ma or ma not be conected withe our inqwiry, but we wil follo it baqwordz befoer we go enny farther.”

We did so, and at the end ov a fu hundred yardz lost the trax az we emerjd from the bogghy porshon ov the moor. Following the paath baqwordz, we pict out anuther spot, whare a spring trickeld acros it. Here, wuns agane, wauz the marc ov the bicikel, dho neerly oblitterated bi the huifs ov couz. Aafter dhat dhare wauz no cine, but the paath ran rite on intoo Ragghed Shau, the wood which bact on too the scoole. From this wood the cikel must hav emerjd. Hoamz sat down on a boalder and rested hiz chin in hiz handz. I had smoact too ciggarets befoer he muivd.

“Wel, wel,” ced he, at laast. “It iz, ov coers, poscibel dhat a cunning man mite chainj the tiarz ov hiz bicikel in order too leve unfamilleyar trax. A crimminal whoo wauz capabel ov such a thaut iz a man whoome I shood be proud too doo biznes withe. We wil leve this qweschon undecided and harc bac too our moras agane, for we hav left a good dele unnexplord.”

We continnude our cistemattic cerva ov the ej ov the sodden

porshon ov the moor, and soone our perceverans wauz gloeriously reworded. Rite acros the lower part ov the bog la a miry paath. Hoamz gave a cri ov delite az he aproacht it. An impreshon like a fine bundel ov tellegraaf wiarz ran doun the center ov it. It wauz the Paalmer tiarz.

“Here iz Her Hideggher, shure enuf!” cride Hoamz, exultantly.
“Mi rezoning ceemz too hav bene pritty sound, Wautson.”

“I con‘gratchulate u.”

“But we hav a long wa stil too go. Kiandly wauc clere ov the paath. Nou let us follo the trale. I fere dhat it wil not lede verry far.”

We found, houwevver, az we advaanst dhat this porshon ov the moor iz interceded withe soft patchez, and, dho we freeqwently lost cite ov the trac, we aulwase suxeded in picking it up wuns moer.

“Doo u observ,” ced Hoamz, “dhat the rider iz nou undoutedly foercing the pace? Dhare can be no dout ov it. Looc at this impreshon, whare u ghet boath tiarz clere. The wun iz az depe az the uther. Dhat can oanly mene dhat the rider iz throwing hiz wate on too the handel-bar, az a man duz when he iz sprinting. Bi Jove! he haz had a faul.”

Dhare wauz a braud, ireggular smuj cuvvering sum yardz ov the trac. Then dhare wer a fu footmarx, and the tire reyapeerd wuns moer.

“A cide-slip,” I sugested.

Hoamz held up a crumpeld braanch ov flouwering gors. Too mi horror

I perceevd dhat the yello blossomz wer aul dabbeld withe crimzon. On the paath, too, and among the hether wer darc stainz ov clotted blud.

“Bad!” ced Hoamz. “Bad! Stand clere, Wautson! Not an un’nescesary footstep! Whaut doo I rede here? He fel wuinded—he stood up—he remounted—he proceded. But dhare iz no uther trac. Cattel on this cide paath. He wauz shuerly not gord bi a bool? Imposcibel! But I ce no tracez ov enniwun els. We must poosh on, Wautson. Shuerly, withe stainz az wel az the trac too ghide us, he canot escape us nou.”

Our cerch wauz not a verry long wun. The trax ov the tire began too kerv fantasticaly uppon the wet and shining paath. Suddenly, az I looct ahed, the gleme ov mettal caut mi i from amid the thhic gors-booshez. Out ov them we dragd a bicikel, Paalmer-tiard, wun peddal bent, and the whole frunt ov it horribly smeerd and slobberd withe blud. On the uther cide ov the booshez a shoo wauz progecting. We ran round, and dhare la the unforchunate rider. He wauz a taul man, fool-beerded, withe spektakelz, wun glaas ov which had bene noct out. The cauz ov hiz deth wauz a friatfool blo uppon the hed, which had crusht in part ov hiz scul. Dhat he cood hav gon on aafter receving such an injury ced much for the vitallity and currage ov the man. He woer shoose, but no sox, and hiz open cote discloazd a niatshert beneeth it. It wauz undoutedly the German maaster.

Hoamz ternd the boddy over reverently, and exammiand it withe grate atenshon. He then sat in depe thaut for a time, and I cood ce bi hiz ruffeld brou dhat this grim discuvvery had not, in hiz opinyon, advaanst us much in our inqwiry.

“It iz a littel difficult too no whaut too doo, Wautson,” ced he, at laast. “Mi one inclinaishonz ar too poosh this inqwiry on, for we

hav aulreddy lost so much time dhat we canot afoerd too waist anuther our. On the uthher hand, we ar bound too inform the polece ov the discuvvery, and too ce dhat this poor fellose boddy iz looct aafter."

"I cood take a note bac."

"But I nede yor cumpany and acistans. Wate a bit! Dhare iz a fello cutting pete up yonder. Bring him over here, and he wil ghide the polece."

I braut the pezzant acros, and Hoamz dispacht the fritend man withe a note too Dr. Huxtabel.

"Nou, Wautson," ced he, "we hav pict up too cluse this morning. Wun iz the bicikel withe the Paalmer tire, and we ce whaut dhat haz led too. The uthher iz the bicikel withe the pacht Dunlop. Befoer we start too investigate dhat, let us tri too reyalise whaut we *doo* no, so az too make the moast ov it, and too cepparate the ecenshal from the axidental."

"Ferst ov aul, I wish too impres uppon u dhat the boi certainly left ov hiz one fre-wil. He got doun from hiz windo and he went of, iather alone or withe sumwun. Dhat iz shure."

I acented.

"Wel, nou, let us tern too this unforchunate German maaster. The boi wauz foolly drest when he fled. Dhaerfoer, he foersau whaut he wood doo. But the German went widhout hiz sox. He certainly acted on verry short notice."

"Undoutedly."

“Whi did he go? Becauz, from hiz bedroome windo, he sau the flite ov the boi, becauz he wisht too overtake him and bring him bac. He ceezd hiz bicikel, pershude the lad, and in pershuwing him met hiz deth.”

“So it wood ceme.”

“Nou I cum too the crittical part ov mi argument. The natchural acshon ov a man in pershuwing a littel boi wood be too run aafter him. He wood no dhat he cood overtake him. But the German duz not doo so. He ternz too hiz bicikel. I am toald dhat he wauz an exelent ciaclist. He wood not doo this, if he did not ce dhat the boi had sum swift meenz ov escape.”

“The uther bicikel.”

“Let us continnu our reconstrucshon. He meets hiz deth five mialz from the scoole—not bi a boollet, marc u, which even a lad mite concevably discharj, but bi a savvage blo delt bi a viggorous arm. The lad, then, *had* a companyon in hiz flite. And the flite wauz a swift wun, cins it tooc five mialz befoer an expert ciaclist cood overtake them. Yet we cerva the ground round the cene ov the tradgedy. Whaut doo we fiand? A fu cattel-trax, nuthhing moer. I tooc a wide swepe round, and dhare iz no paath within fifty yardz. Anuther ciaclist cood hav had nuthhing too doo withe the acchuwal merder, nor wer dhare enny human foot-marx.”

“Hoamz,” I cride, “this iz imposcibel.”

“Admirabel!” he ced. “A moast iluminating remarc. It iz

imposcibel az I state it, and dhaerfoer I must in sum respect hav stated it rong. Yet u sau for yorcelf. Can u sugest enny fallacy?"

"He cood not hav fracchuerd hiz scul in a faul?"

"In a moras, Wautson?"

"I am at mi wits' end."

"Tut, tut, we hav solvd sum wers problemz. At leest we hav plenty ov matereyal, if we can oanly use it. Cum, then, and, havving exhausted the Paalmer, let us ce whaut the Dunlop withe the pacht cuvver haz too offer us."

We pict up the trac and follode it onword for sum distans, but soone the moor rose intoo a long, hether-tufted kerv, and we left the wautercoers behiand us. No ferther help from trax cood be hoapt for. At the spot whare we sau the laast ov the Dunlop tire it mite eeqwaly hav led too Hoaldernes Haul, the staitly touwerz ov which rose sum mialz too our left, or too a lo, gra village which la in frunt ov us and marct the posishon ov the Chesterfeeld hi rode.

Az we aproacht the forbidding and sqwaulid in, withe the cine ov a game-coc abuv the doer, Hoamz gave a sudden grone, and clucht me bi the shoalder too save himcelf from fauling. He had had wun ov dhose viyolent strainz ov the ankel which leve a man helples. Withe difficulty he limpt up too the doer, whare a sqwaut, darc, elderly man wauz smoking a blac cla pipe.

"Hou ar u, Mr. Ruben Hase?" ced Hoamz.

"Whoo ar u, and hou doo u ghet mi name so pat?" the cuntriman

aancerd, withe a suspishous flash ov a pare ov cunning ise.

“Wel, its printed on the boerd abuv yor hed. Its esy too
ce a man whoo iz maaster ov hiz one hous. I supose u havnt
such a thhing az a carrage in yor stabelz?”

“No, I hav not.”

“I can hardly poot mi foot too the ground.”

“Doant poot it too the ground.”

“But I caant wauc.”

“Wel, then hop.”

Mr. Ruben Hasez manner wauz far from graishous, but Hoamz tooc
it withe admirabel good-humor.

“Looc here, mi man,” ced he. “This iz reyaly raather an auqword
fix for me. I doant miand hou I ghet on.”

“Niather doo I,” ced the moroce landlord.

“The matter iz verry important. I wood offer u a sovverane for
the uce ov a bicikel.”

The landlord prict up hiz eerz.

“Whare doo u waunt too go?”

“Too Hoaldernes Haul.”

“Palz ov the Dooc, I supose?” ced the landlord, cervaying our

mud-staind garments withe ironnical ise.

Hoamz laaft good-nachuerdly.

“Hele be glad too ce us, ennihou.”

“Whi?”

“Becauz we bring him nuse ov hiz lost sun.”

The landlord gave a verry vizsibel start.

“Whaut, yor on hiz trac?”

“He haz bene herd ov in Livverpoole. Dha expect too ghet him evvery our.”

Agane a swift chainj paast over the hevvy, unshaven face. Hiz manner wauz suddenly geenyal.

“Ive les rezon too wish the Dooc wel dhan moast men,” ced he, “for I wauz hed coachman wuns, and cruwel bad he treted me. It wauz him dhat sact me widhout a carracter on the werd ov a liying corn-chaandler. But Ime glad too here dhat the yung lord wauz herd ov in Livverpoole, and Ile help u too take the nuse too the Haul.”

“Thanc u,” ced Hoamz. “Wele hav sum foode ferst. Then u can bring round the bicikel.”

“I havnt got a bicikel.”

Hoamz held up a sovverane.

“I tel u, man, dhat I havnt got wun. Ile let u hav too

horcez az far az the Haul."

"Wel, wel," ced Hoamz, "wele tauc about it when weve had sumthhing too ete."

When we wer left alone in the stone-flagd kitchen, it wauz astonnishing hou rappidly dhat spraind ankel recuvverd. It wauz neerly niatfaul, and we had eten nuthhing cins erly morning, so dhat we spent sum time over our mele. Hoamz wauz lost in thaut, and wuns or twice he wauct over too the windo and staerd earnestly out. It opend on too a sqwaulid coertyard. In the far corner wauz a smithy, whare a grimy lad wauz at werc. On the uther cide wer the stabelz. Hoamz had sat doun agane aafter wun ov these exkerzhonz, when he suddenly sprang out ov hiz chare withe a loud exclamaishon.

"Bi hevven, Wautson, I beleve dhat Ive got it!" he cride. "Yes, yes, it must be so. Wautson, doo u remember ceying enny cou-trax too-da?"

"Yes, cevveral."

"Whare?"

"Wel, evveriwheare. Dha wer at the moras, and agane on the paath, and agane nere whare poor Hideggher met hiz deth."

"Exactly. Wel, nou, Wautson, hou menny couz did u ce on the moor?"

"I doant remember ceying enny."

"Strainj, Wautson, dhat we shood ce trax aul along our line, but nevver a cou on the whole moor. Verry strainj, Wautson, a?"

“Yes, it iz strainj.”

“Nou, Wautson, make an effort, thro yor miand bac. Can u ce dhose trax uppon the paath?”

“Yes, I can.”

“Can u recaul dhat the trax wer sumtiamz like dhat, Wautson,”—he arainjd a number ov breedcrumz in this fashon—: : :—“and sumtiamz like this”—: . . . : .—“and ocaizhonaly like this”—. “Can u remember dhat?”

“No, I canot.”

“But I can. I cood sware too it. Houwevver, we wil go bac at our lezhure and verrifi it. Whaut a bliand betel I hav bene, not too drau mi concluezhon.”

“And whaut iz yor concluezhon?”

“Oanly dhat it iz a remarcabel cou which waux, canterz, and gallops. Bi Jorj! Wautson, it wauz no brane ov a cuntry publican dhat thaut out such a bliand az dhat. The coast ceemz too be clere, save for dhat lad in the smithy. Let us slip out and ce whaut we can ce.”

Dhare wer too ruf-haerd, unkempt horcez in the tumbel-doun stabel. Hoamz raizd the hiand leg ov wun ov them and laaft aloud.

“Oald shoose, but nuly shod—oald shoose, but nu nailz. This cace deservz too be a clascic. Let us go acros too the smithy.”

The lad continnude hiz werc widhout regarding us. I sau Hoamsez i darting too rite and left among the litter ov iarn and wood which wauz scatterd about the floer. Suddenly, houwevver, we herd a step behiand us, and dhare wauz the landlord, hiz hevvy iabrouz draun over hiz savvage ise, hiz sworthy fechuerz convulst withe pashon. He held a short, mettal-hedded stic in hiz hand, and he advaanst in so mennacing a fashon dhat I wauz rite glad too fele the revolver in mi pocket.

“U infernal spise!” the man cride. “Whaut ar u doowing dhare?”

“Whi, Mr. Ruben Hase,” ced Hoamz, cooly, “wun mite thhinc dhat u wer afrade ov our fianding sumthhing out.”

The man maasterd himcelf withe a viyolent effort, and hiz grim mouth loocend intoo a fauls laaf, which wauz moer mennacing dhan hiz froun.

“Yor welcum too aul u can fiand out in mi smithy,” ced he.

“But looc here, mister, I doant care for foke poking about mi place widhout mi leve, so the sooner u pa yor scoer and ghet out ov this the better I shal be pleezd.”

“Aul rite, Mr. Hase, no harm ment,” ced Hoamz. “We hav bene havving a looc at yor horceez, but I thhinc Ile wauc, aafter aul. Its not far, I beleve.”

“Not moer dhan too mialz too the Haul gaits. Dhats the rode too the left.” He waucht us withe sullen ise until we had left hiz premmicez.

We did not go verry far along the rode, for Hoamz stopt the instant dhat the kerv hid us from the landlordz vu.

“We wer worm, az the children sa, at dhat in,” ced he. “I ceme too gro coalder evvery step dhat I take awa from it. No, no, I caant poscibly leve it.”

“I am convinst,” ced I, “dhat this Ruben Hase nose aul about it. A moer celf-evvident villane I nevver sau.”

“O! he imprest u in dhat wa, did he? Dhare ar the horcez, dhare iz the smithy. Yes, it iz an interesting place, this Fiting Coc. I thhinc we shal hav anuther looc at it in an unnobtrucive wa.”

A long, sloping hilcide, dotted withe gra liamstone boalderz, strecht behiand us. We had ternd of the rode, and wer making our wa up the hil, when, loocking in the direcshon ov Hoaldernes Haul, I sau a ciaclist cumming swiftly along.

“Ghet doun, Wautson!” cride Hoamz, withe a hevvy hand uppon mi shoalder. We had hardly sunc from vu when the man flu paast us on the rode. Amid a roling cloud ov dust, I caut a glimps ov a pale, adgitated face—a face withe horror in evvery linyament, the mouth open, the ise staring wialdly in frunt. It wauz like sum strainj caricachure ov the dapper Jaimz Wialder whoome we had cene the nite befoer.

“The Juex cecretary!” cride Hoamz. “Cum, Wautson, let us ce whaut he duz.”

We scambeld from roc too roc, until in a fu moments we had made our wa too a point from which we cood ce the frunt doer ov the in. Wialderz bicikel wauz lening against the waul becide it. No wun wauz mooving about the hous, nor cood we cach a glimps ov enny facez at the windose. Sloly the twilite crept doun az

the sun sanc behiand the hi touwerz ov Hoaldernes Haul. Then, in the gloome, we sau the too cide-lamps ov a trap lite up in the stabel-yard ov the in, and shortly aafterwordz herd the rattel ov huifs, az it wheeld out intoo the rode and toer of at a fureyous pace in the direcshon ov Chesterfeeld.

“Whaut doo u make ov dhat, Wautson?” Hoamz whisperd.

“It loox like a flite.”

“A cin’ghel man in a dog-cart, so far az I cood ce. Wel, it certainly wauz not Mr. Jaimz Wialder, for dhare he iz at the doer.”

A red sqware ov lite had sprung out ov the darcnes. In the middel ov it wauz the blac figgure ov the cecretary, hiz hed advaanst, pering out intoo the nite. It wauz evvident dhat he wauz expecting sumwun. Then at laast dhare wer steps in the rode, a cecond figgure wauz vizsibel for an instant against the lite, the doer shut, and aul wauz blac wuns moer. Five minnuets later a lamp wauz lit in a roome uppon the ferst floer.

“It ceemz too be a cureyous claas ov custom dhat iz dun bi the Fiting Coc,” ced Hoamz.

“The bar iz on the uther cide.”

“Qwite so. These ar whaut wun ma caul the private ghests. Nou, whaut in the werld iz Mr. Jaimz Wialder doowing in dhat den at this our ov nite, and whoo iz the companyon whoo cumz too mete him dhare? Cum, Wautson, we must reyaly take a risc and tri too investigate this a littel moer cloasly.”

Tooghether we stole down too the rode and crept acros too the doer ov the in. The bicikel stil leend against the waul. Hoamz

struc a mach and held it too the bac whele, and I herd him chuckel az the lite fel uppon a pacht Dunlop tire. Up abuv us wauz the lited windo.

“I must hav a pepe throo dhat, Wautson. If u bend yor bac and supoert yorcelf uppon the waul, I thhinc dhat I can mannage.”

An instant later, hiz fete wer on mi shoalderz, but he wauz hardly up befoer he wauz doun agane.

“Cum, mi frend,” ced he, “our dase werc haz bene qwite long enuf. I thhinc dhat we hav gatherd aul dhat we can. Its a long wauc too the scoole, and the sooner we ghet started the better.”

He hardly opend hiz lips juring dhat wery truj across the moor, nor wood he enter the scoole when he reecht it, but went on too Mackelton Staishon, whens he cood cend sum tellegramz. Late at nite I herd him consoling Dr. Huxtabel, prostrated bi the tradgedy ov hiz maasterz deth, and later stil he enterd mi roome az alert and viggorous az he had bene when he started in the morning. “Aul gose wel, mi frend,” ced he. “I prommice dhat befoer too-moro evening we shal hav reecht the solueshon ov the mistery.”

At elevven oacloc next morning mi frend and I wer wauking up the famous u avvenu ov Hoaldernes Haul. We wer usherd throo the magnifficent Elizabeethan doerwa and intoo hiz Gracez studdy. Dhare we found Mr. Jaimz Wialder, demure and coertly, but withe sum trace ov dhat wiald terror ov the nite befoer stil lerking in hiz fertive ise and in hiz twitching fechuerz.

“U hav cum too ce hiz Grace? I am sorry, but the fact iz dhat the Juke iz far from wel. He haz bene verry much upcet bi the

tradgic nuse. We receevd a tellegram from Dr. Huxtabel yesterda
aafternoone, which toald us ov yor discuvvery."

"I must ce the Juke, Mr. Wialder."

"But he iz in hiz roome."

"Then I must go too hiz roome."

"I beleve he iz in hiz bed."

"I wil ce him dhare."

Hoamsez coald and inexorabel manner shode the secretery dhat it
wauz uesles too argu withe him.

"Verry good, Mr. Hoamz, I wil tel him dhat u ar here."

Aafter an ourz dela, the grate nobelman apeerd. Hiz face wauz
moer cadavverous dhan evver, hiz shoalderz had rounded, and he
ceemd too me too be an aultooghether oalder man dhan he had bene
the

morning befoer. He greted us withe a staitly kertecy and ceted
himself at hiz desc, hiz red beard streming down on the tabel.

"Wel, Mr. Hoamz?" ced he.

But mi frendz ise wer fixt uppon the secretery, whoo stood bi
hiz maasterz chare.

"I thhinc, yor Grace, dhat I cood speke moer frely in Mr.
Wialderz abcens."

The man ternd a shade paler and caast a malignant glaans at

Hoamz.

“If yor Grace wishez——”

“Yes, yes, u had better go. Nou, Mr. Hoamz, whaut hav u too sa?”

Mi frend wated until the doer had cloazd behiand the retreating cecretary.

“The fact iz, yor Grace,” ced he, “dhat mi colleghe, Dr. Wautson, and micelf had an ashurans from Dr. Huxtabel dhat a reword had bene offerd in this cace. I shood like too hav this confermd from yor one lips.”

“Certainly, Mr. Hoamz.”

“It amounted, if I am corectly informd, too five thousand poundz too enniwun whoo wil tel u whare yor sun iz?”

“Exactly.”

“And anuther thouzand too the man whoo wil name the person or personz whoo kepe him in custody?”

“Exactly.”

“Under the latter hedding iz included, no dout, not oonly dhose whoo ma hav taken him awa, but aulso dhose whoo conspire too kepe him in hiz prezsent posishon?”

“Yes, yes,” cride the Juke, impaishmently. “If u doo yor werc wel, Mr. Sherloc Hoamz, u wil hav no rezon too complane ov niggardly treetment.”

Mi frend rubd hiz thhin handz tooghether withe an aperans ov aviddity which wauz a cerprise too me, whoo nu hiz frugal taists.

"I fancy dhat I ce yor Gracez chec-booc uppon the tabel," ced he. "I shood be glad if u wood make me out a chec for six thousand poundz. It wood be az wel, perhaps, for u too cros it. The Cappital and Countese Banc, Oxford Strete braanch ar mi agents."

Hiz Grace sat verry stern and uprite in hiz chare and looct stonily at mi frend.

"Iz this a joke, Mr. Hoamz? It iz hardly a subget for plezzantry."

"Not at aul, yor Grace. I wauz nevver moer earnest in mi life."

"Whaut doo u mene, then?"

"I mene dhat I hav ernd the reword. I no whare yor sun iz, and I no sum, at leest, ov dhose whoo ar hoalding him."

The Juex beard had ternd moer agresciavly red dhan ever against hiz gaastly white face.

"Whare iz he?" he gaaspt.

"He iz, or wauz laast nite, at the Fiting Coc In, about too mialz from yor parc gate."

The Juke fel bac in hiz chare.

"And whoome doo u acuse?"

Sherloc Hoamsez aancer wauz an astounding wun. He stept swiftly forword and tucht the Juke uppon the shoalder.

“I acuse *u*,” ced he. “And nou, yor Grace, Ile trubbel u for dhat chec.”

Nevver shal I forghet the Juex aperans az he sprang up and claud withe hiz handz, like wun whoo iz cinking intoo an abis. Then, withe an extrordinary effort ov aristocrattic celf-comaand, he sat doun and sanc hiz face in hiz handz. It wauz sum minnuets befoer he spoke.

“Hou much doo u no?” he aasct at laast, widhout rasing hiz hed.

“I sau u tooghether laast nite.”

“Duz enniwun els becide yor frend no?”

“I hav spoken too no wun.”

The Juke tooc a pen in hiz qwivvering fin'gherz and opend hiz chec-booc.

“I shal be az good az mi werd, Mr. Hoamz. I am about too rite yor chec, houwevver unwelcum the informaishon which u hav gaind ma be too me. When the offer wauz ferst made, I littel thaut the tern which events mite take. But u and yor frend ar men ov disreshon, Mr. Hoamz?”

“I hardly understand yor Grace.”

"I must poot it plainly, Mr. Hoamz. If oonly u too no ov this incident, dhare iz no rezon whi it shood go enny farther. I thhinc twelv thousanz poundz iz the sum dhat I o u, iz it not?"

But Hoamz smiald and shooc hiz hed.

"I fere, yor Grace, dhat matterz can hardly be arainjd so esily. Dhare iz the deth ov this scuilmaaster too be acounted for."

"But Jaimz nu nuthhing ov dhat. U canot hoald him responcibel for dhat. It wauz the werc ov this brutal ruffeyan whoome he had the misforchune too emploi."

"I must take the vu, yor Grace, dhat when a man embarx uppon a crime, he iz moraly ghilty ov enny uther crime which ma spring from it."

"Moraly, Mr. Hoamz. No dout u ar rite. But shuerly not in the ise ov the lau. A man canot be condemd for a merder at which he wauz not prezsent, and which he loadhz and abhorz az much az u doo. The instant dhat he herd ov it he made a complete confeshon too me, so fild wauz he withe horror and remors. He lost not an our in braking entiarly withe the merderer. O, Mr. Hoamz, u must save him—u must save him! I tel u dhat u must save him!" The Juke had dropt the laast atempt at celf-comaand, and wauz pacing the roome withe a convulst face and withe hiz clencht handz raving in the are. At laast he maasterd himcelf and sat doun wuns moer at hiz desc. "I apreesheyate yor conduct in cumming here befoer u spoke too enniwun els," ced he. "At leest, we ma take council hou far we can minnimise this hidjous scandal."

“Exactly,” ced Hoamz. “I thhinc, yor Grace, dhat this can oanly be dun bi absolute francnes betwene us. I am dispoazd too help yor Grace too the best ov mi abillity, but, in order too doo so, I must understand too the laast detale hou the matter standz. I reyalise dhat yor werdz aplide too Mr. Jaimz Wialder, and dhat he iz not the merderer.”

“No, the merderer haz escaipt.”

Sherloc Hoamz smiald demuerly.

“Yor Grace can hardly hav herd ov enny smaul reputaishon which I poses, or u wood not imadgine dhat it iz so esy too escape me. Mr. Ruben Hase wauz arested at Chesterfeeld, on mi informaishon, at elevven oacloc laast nite. I had a tellegram from the hed ov the local polece befoer I left the scoole this morning.”

The Juke leend bac in hiz chare and staerd withe amaizment at mi frend.

“U ceme too hav pouwerz dhat ar hardly human,” ced he. “So Ruben Hase iz taken? I am rite glad too here it, if it wil not reyact uppon the fate ov Jaimz.”

“Yor secretery?”

“No, cer, mi sun.”

It wauz Hoamsez tern too looc astonnisht.

“I confes dhat this iz entiarly nu too me, yor Grace. I must beg u too be moer expliscit.”

“I wil concele nuthhing from u. I agry withe u dhat complete francnes, houwevver painfool it ma be too me, iz the best pollicy in this desperate cichuwaishon too which Jaimsez folly and gelloucy hav rejuest us. When I wauz a verry yung man, Mr. Hoamz, I luvd withe such a luv az cumz oanly wuns in a liaftime. I offerd the lady marrage, but she refuezd it on the groundz dhat such a mach mite mar mi carere. Had she livd, I wood certainly never hav marrede enniwun els. She dide, and left this wun chiald, whoome for her sake I hav cherrisht and caerd for. I cood not acnollej the paternity too the werld, but I gave him the best ov ejucaishonz, and cins he came too manhood I hav kept him nere mi person. He cermiazd mi ceecret, and haz prezhuemd evver cins uppon the clame which he haz uppon me, and uppon hiz pouwer ov provoking a

scandal which wood be abhorent too me. Hiz prezsens had sumthhing too doo withe the unhappy ishu ov mi marrage. Abuv aul, he hated mi yung legittimate are from the ferst withe a percistent haitred. U ma wel aasc me whi, under these circumstaancez, I stil kept Jaimz under mi roofe. I aancer dhat it wauz becauz I cood ce hiz mutherz face in hiz, and dhat for her dere sake dhare wauz no end too mi long-suffering. Aul her pritty wase too—dhare wauz not wun ov them which he cood not sugest and bring bac too mi memmory. I *cood* not cend him awa. But I feerd so much lest he shood doo Arthher—dhat iz, Lord Saltire—a mischefe, dhat I dispacht him for saifty too Dr. Huxtabelz scoole.

“Jaimz came intoo contact withe this fello Hase, becauz the man wauz a tennant ov mine, and Jaimz acted az agent. The fello wauz a raascal from the beghinning, but, in sum extrordinary wa, Jaimz became intimate withe him. He had aulwase a taist for lo cumpany. When Jaimz determiand too kidnap Lord Saltire, it wauz ov this manz cervice dhat he availd himcelf. U remember dhat I rote

too Arthher uppon dhat laast da. Wel, Jaimz opend the letter and incerted a note aasking Arthher too mete him in a littel wood cauld the Ragghed Shau, which iz nere too the scoole. He uezd the Dutchecez name, and in dhat wa got the boi too cum. Dhat evening Jaimz bicikeld over—I am telling u whaut he haz himcelf confest too me—and he toald Arthher, whoome he met in the wood, dhat

hiz muther longd too ce him, dhat she wauz awating him on the moor, and dhat if he wood cum bac intoo the wood at midnite he wood fiand a man withe a hors, whoo wood take him too her. Poor Arthher fel intoo the trap. He came too the apointment, and found this fello Hase withe a led pony. Arthher mounted, and dha cet of tooghether. It apeerz—dho this Jaimz oanly herd yesterda—dhat dha wer pershude, dhat Hase struc the pershuer withe hiz stic, and dhat the man dide ov hiz injurese. Hase braut Arthher too hiz public-hous, the Fiting Coc, whare he wauz confiand in an upper roome, under the care ov Mrs. Hase, whoo iz a kiandly woomman, but entiarly under the controle ov her brutal huzband.

“Wel, Mr. Hoamz, dhat wauz the state ov afaerz when I ferst sau u too dase ago. I had no moer ideyaa ov the trueth dhan u. U wil aasc me whaut wauz Jaimsez motive in doowing such a dede. I aancer dhat dhare wauz a grate dele which wauz unrezoning and fanattical in the haitred which he boer mi are. In hiz vu he shood himcelf hav bene are ov aul mi estaits, and he deeply resented dhose soashal lauz which made it imposcibel. At the same time, he had a deffinite motive aulso. He wauz egher dhat I shood brake the entale, and he wauz ov opinyon dhat it la in mi pouwer too doo so. He intended too make a bargane withe me—too restoer Arthher

if I wood brake the entale, and so make it poscibel for the estate too be left too him bi wil. He nu wel dhat I shood nevver willingly invoke the ade ov the polece against him. I sa

dhat he wood hav propoazd such a bargane too me, but he did not acchuwaly doo so, for events muivd too qwicly for him, and he had not time too poot hiz planz intoo practice.

“Whaut braut aul hiz wicked skeme too rec wauz yor discuvvery ov this man Hideggherz ded boddy. Jaimz wauz ceezd withe horor at the nuse. It came too us yesterda, az we sat tooghether in this studdy. Dr. Huxtabel had cent a tellegram. Jaimz wauz so overwhelmd withe grefe and agitaishon dhat mi suspishonz, which had nevver bene entiarly abcent, rose instantly too a certainty, and I taxt him withe the dede. He made a complete volluntary confeshon. Then he imploerd me too kepe hiz ceecret for thre dase lon’gher, so az too ghiv hiz retched acumplice a chaans ov saving hiz ghilty life. I yeelded—az I hav aulwase yeelded—too hiz praerz, and instantly Jaimz hurrede of too the Fiting Coc too worn Hase and ghiv him the meenz ov flite. I cood not go dhare bi dalite widhout provoking comment, but az soone az nite fel I hurrede of too ce mi dere Arthher. I found him safe and wel, but horifide beyond expreshon bi the dredfool dede he had witnest. In defferens too mi prommice, and much against mi wil, I concented too leve him dhare for thre dase, under the charj ov Mrs. Hase, cins it wauz evvident dhat it wauz imposcibel too inform the polece whare he wauz widhout telling them aulso whoo wauz the merderer, and I cood not ce hou dhat merderer cood be punnisht widhout ruwin too mi unforchunate Jaimz. U aasct for francnes, Mr. Hoamz, and I hav taken u at yor werd, for I hav nou toald u evverithhing widhout an atempt at cercumlocueshon or conceelment. Doo u in tern be az franc withe me.”

“I wil,” ced Hoamz. “In the ferst place, yor Grace, I am bound too tel u dhat u hav plaist yorcelf in a moast cereyous posishon in the ise ov the lau. U hav condoand a fellony, and u hav aded the escape ov a merderer, for I canot dout dhat enny munny which wauz taken bi Jaimz Wialder too ade hiz acumplice

in hiz flite came from yor Gracez pers.”

The Juke boud hiz acent.

“This iz, indede, a moast cereyous matter. Even moer culpabel in mi opinyon, yor Grace, iz yor attichude toowordz yor yun’gher sun. U leve him in this den for thre dase.”

“Under sollem prommicez——”

“Whaut ar prommicez too such pepel az these? U hav no garanty dhat he wil not be spirrited awa agane. Too humor yor ghilty elder sun, u hav expoazd yor innocent yun’gher sun too imminent and un’necesary dain’ger. It wauz a moast unjustifiyabel acshon.”

The proud lord ov Hoaldernes wauz not acustomd too be so rated in hiz one jucal haul. The blud flusht intoo hiz hi foerhed, but hiz conshens held him dum.

“I wil help u, but on wun condishon oonly. It iz dhat u ring for the footman and let me ghiv such orderz az I like.”

Without a werd, the Juke prest the electric bel. A cervant enterd.

“U wil be glad too here,” ced Hoamz, “dhat yor yung maaster iz found. It iz the Juex desire dhat the carrage shal go at wuns too the Fiting Coc In too bring Lord Saltire home.

“Nou,” ced Hoamz, when the rejoicing lacky had disapeerd, “havving cecuerd the fuchure, we can afoerd too be moer leenyent
withe

the paast. I am not in an ofishal posishon, and dhare iz no rezon, so long az the endz ov justice ar cervd, whi I shood

disclose aul dhat I no. Az too Hase, I sa nuthhing. The gallose awaits him, and I wood doo nuthhing too save him from it. Whaut he wil divulj I canot tel, but I hav no dout dhat yor Grace cood make him understand dhat it iz too hiz interest too be cilent. From the polece point ov vu he wil hav kidnapt the boi for the perpoce ov ransom. If dha doo not themcelvz fiand it out, I ce no rezon whi I shood prompt them too take a brauder point ov vu. I wood worn yor Grace, houwevver, dhat the continnude prezsens ov Mr. Jaimz Wialder in yor hous'hoald can oanly lede too misforchune."

"I understand dhat, Mr. Hoamz, and it iz aulreddy cetteld dhat he shal leve me forevver, and go too ceke hiz forchune in Australeyaa."

"In dhat cace, yor Grace, cins u hav yorcelf stated dhat enny unhappines in yor marrede life wauz cauzd bi hiz prezsens I wood sugest dhat u make such amendz az u can too the Dutches, and dhat u tri too rezhume dhose relaishonz which hav bene so unhappily interupted."

"Dhat aulso I hav arainjd, Mr. Hoamz. I rote too the Dutches this morning."

"In dhat cace," ced Hoamz, rising, "I thhinc dhat mi frend and I can con'gratchulate ourcelvz uppon cevveral moast happy rezults from

our littel vizsit too the North. Dhare iz wun uther smaual point uppon which I desire sum lite. This fello Hase had shod hiz horcez withe shoose which counterfeted the trax ov couz. Wauz it from Mr. Wialder dhat he lernd so extrordinary a device?"

The Juke stood in thaut for a moment, withe a looc ov intens cerprise on hiz face. Then he opend a doer and shode us intoo a larj roome fernisht az a museyum. He led the wa too a glaas cace

in a corner, and pointed too the inscripshon.

“These shoose,” it ran, “wer dug up in the mote ov Hoaldernes Haul. Dha ar for the uce ov horcez, but dha ar shaipt belo withe a cloven foot ov iarn, so az too thro pershuwerz of the trac. Dha ar supoast too hav belongd too sum ov the marauding Barronz ov Hoaldernes in the Middel Agez.”

Hoamz opend the cace, and moicenning hiz fin'gher he paast it along the shoo. A thhin film ov recent mud wauz left uppon hiz skin.

“Thanc u,” ced he, az he replaist the glaas. “It iz the cecond moast interesting obgett dhat I hav cene in the North.”

“And the ferst?”

Hoamz foalded up hiz chec and plaist it caerfooly in hiz noatbooc. “I am a poor man,” ced he, az he patted it afecshonaitly, and thrust it intoo the depths ov hiz inner pocket.

THE ADVENCHURE OV BLAC PETER

I hav nevver none mi frend too be in better form, boath mental and fizensal, dhan in the yere '95. Hiz increcing fame had braut withe it an imens practice, and I shood be ghilty ov an indiscrechon if I wer even too hint at the identity ov sum ov the ilustreyous cliyents whoo crost our humbel threshoald in Baker Strete. Hoamz, houwevver, like aul grate artists, livd for hiz arts sake, and, save in the cace ov the Juke ov Hoaldernes, I hav celdom none him clame enny larj reword for hiz inestimabel cervicez. So unwerldly wauz he—or so caprishous—dhat he freeqwently
refuezd hiz help too the pouwerfool and welthhy whare the problem

made no apele too hiz cimpathese, while he wood devote weex ov moast intens aplicaishon too the afaerz ov sum humbel cliyent whose cace presented dhose strainj and dramattic qwaulitese which apeeld too hiz imaginaishon and challenjd hiz in' genuwity.

In this memmorabel yere '95, a cureyous and incon'gruwous suxeshon ov cacez had en'gaijd hiz atenshon, rain'ging from hiz famous investigaishon ov the sudden deth ov Cardinal Toscaa—an inqwiry which wauz carrede out bi him at the expres desire ov Hiz Holines the Pope—doun too hiz arest ov Wilson, the notoereyous canary-traner, which remuivd a plaghe-spot from the Eest End ov Lunden. Cloce on the heelz ov these too famous cacez came the tradgedy ov Woodmanz Le, and the verry obscure circumstaancez which surounded the deth ov Captane Peter Cary. No reccord ov the doowingz ov Mr. Sherloc Hoamz wood be complete which did not include sum acount ov this verry unnuezhual afare.

Juring the ferst weke ov Juli, mi frend had bene abcent so often and so long from our lodgingz dhat I nu he had sumthhing on hand. The fact dhat ceveral ruf-loocking men cauld juring dhat time and inqwiard for Captane Bazsil made me understand dhat Hoamz wauz werking sumwhare under wun ov the numerous disghisez

and naimz withe which he conceeld hiz one formiddabel identity. He had at leest five smaul reffugez in different parts ov Lunden, in which he wauz abel too chainj hiz personallity. He ced nuthhing ov hiz biznes too me, and it wauz not mi habbit too foers a confidens. The ferst pozsitive cine which he gave me ov the direcshon which hiz investigaishon wauz taking wauz an extraordinary wun. He had gon out befoer breccfast, and I had sat doun too mine when he strode intoo the roome, hiz hat uppon hiz hed and a huge barbd-hedded spere tuct like an umbrellaa under hiz arm.

“Good graishous, Hoamz!” I cride. “U doant mene too sa dhat u

hav bene wauking about Lundoon withe dhat thhing?"

"I drove too the bootcherz and bac."

"The bootcherz?"

"And I retern withe an exelent appetite. Dhare can be no qweschon, mi dere Wautson, ov the vullu ov exercise befoer brefast. But I am prepaerd too bet dhat u wil not ghes the form dhat mi exercise haz taken."

"I wil not atempt it."

He chuckeld az he poerd out the coffy.

"If u cood hav looct intoo Allardicez bac shop, u wood hav cene a ded pig swung from a hooc in the celing, and a gentelman in hiz shert sleevz fureyously stabbing at it withe this weppon. I wauz dhat energettic person, and I hav sattisfide micelf dhat bi no exershon ov mi strength can I traansfix the pig withe a cin'ghel blo. Perhaps u wood care too tri?"

"Not for werldz. But whi wer u doowing this?"

"Becauz it ceemd too me too hav an indirect baring uppon the mistery ov Woodmanz Le. Aa, Hopkinz, I got yor wire laast nite, and I hav bene expecting u. Cum and join us."

Our vizsitor wauz an exedingly alert man, thherty yeeرز ov age, drest in a qwiyet twede sute, but retaning the erect baring ov wun whoo wauz acustomd too ofishal uniform. I reccogniazd him at wuns az Stanly Hopkinz, a yung polece inspector, for whoose fuchure Hoamz had hi hoaps, while he in tern profest the admiraishon and respect ov a pupil for the ciyentiffic methodz ov

the famous ammater. Hopkinsez brou wauz clouded, and he sat down
withe an are ov depe degecshon.

“No, thanc u, cer. I brecfasted befoer I came round. I spent
the nite in toun, for I came up yesterda too repoert.”

“And whaut had u too repoert?”

“Falure, cer, absolute falure.”

“U hav made no proagres?”

“Nun.”

“Dere me! I must hav a looc at the matter.”

“I wish too hevvenz dhat u wood, Mr. Hoamz. Its mi ferst big
chaans, and I am at mi wits’ end. For goodnes’ sake, cum doun
and lend me a hand.”

“Wel, wel, it just happenz dhat I hav aulreddy red aul the
avalabel evvidens, including the repoert ov the inqwest, withe
sum care. Bi the wa, whaut doo u make ov dhat tobacco pouch,
found on the cene ov the crime? Iz dhare no clu dhare?”

Hopkinz looct cerpriazd.

“It wauz the manz one pouch, cer. Hiz inishalz wer incide it.
And it wauz ov ceelskin,—and he wauz an oald celer.”

“But he had no pipe.”

“No, cer, we cood fiand no pipe. Indede, he smoact verry littel,
and yet he mite hav kept sum tobacco for hiz frendz.”

“No dout. I oonly menshon it becauz, if I had bene handling the cace, I shood hav bene incliand too make dhat the starting-point ov mi investigaishon. Houwevver, mi frend, Dr. Wautson, nose nuthing ov this matter, and I shood be nun the wers for hering the ceeqwens ov events wuns moer. Just ghiv us sum short sketchez ov the ecenshalz.”

Stanly Hopkinz dru a slip ov paper from hiz pocket.

“I hav a fu daits here which wil ghiv u the carere ov the ded man, Captane Peter Cary. He wauz born in '45—fifty yeez ov age. He wauz a moast daring and suxesfool cele and whale fisher. In 1883 he comaanded the steme celer *Ce Unicorn*, ov Dundy. He had then had cevveral suxesfool voiyagez in suxeshon, and in the following yere, 1884, he retiard. Aafter dhat he travveld for sum yeez, and finaly he baut a smaul place cauld Woodmanz Le, nere Forest Ro, in Suscex. Dhare he haz livd for cix yeez, and dhare he dide just a weke ago too-da.

“Dhare wer sum moast cin'gular points about the man. In ordinary life, he wauz a strict Puritan—a cilent, gloomy fello. Hiz hous'hoald concisted ov hiz wife, hiz dauter, aijd twenty, and too female cervants. These laast wer continuwaly chain'ging, for it wauz nevver a verry chery cichuwaishon, and sumtiamz it became paast

aul baring. The man wauz an intermittent druncard, and when he had the fit on him he wauz a perfect feend. He haz bene none too drive hiz wife and dauter out ov doerz in the middel ov the nite and flog them throo the parc until the whole village outside the gaits wauz arouzd bi dhare screemz.

“He wauz summond wuns for a savvage asault uppon the oald viccar,

whoo had cauld uppon him too remmonstrate withe him uppon hiz conduct.

In short, Mr. Hoamz, u wood go far befoer u found a moer dain'gerous man dhan Peter Cary, and I hav herd dhat he boer the same carracter when he comaanded hiz ship. He wauz none in the trade az Blac Peter, and the name wauz ghivven him, not oarly on acount ov hiz sworthy fechuerz and the cullor ov hiz huge beard, but for the humorz which wer the terror ov aul around him. I nede not sa dhat he wauz loadhd and avoided bi evvery wun ov hiz naborz, and dhat I hav not herd wun cin'ghel werd ov soro about hiz terribel end.

“U must hav red in the acount ov the inqwest about the manz cabbin, Mr. Hoamz, but perhaps yor frend here haz not herd ov it. He had bilt himcelf a wooden out'hous—he aulwase cauld it the 'cabbin'—a fu hundred yardz from hiz hous, and it wauz here dhat he slept evvery nite. It wauz a littel, cin'ghel-ruimd hut, cixtene fete bi ten. He kept the ke in hiz pocket, made hiz one bed, cleend it himcelf, and aloud no uther foot too cros the threshoald. Dhare ar smaul windose on eche cide, which wer cuvverd bi kertainz and nevver opend. Wun ov these windose wauz ternd toowordz the hi rode, and when the lite bernd in it at nite the foke uest too point it out too eche uther and wunder whaut Blac Peter wauz doowing in dhare. Dhats the windo, Mr. Hoamz, which gave us wun ov the fu bits ov pozsitive evvidens dhat came out at the inqwest.

“U remember dhat a stoanmason, naimd Slater, wauking from Forest Ro about wun oacloc in the morning—too dase befoer the merder—stopt az he paast the groundz and looct at the square ov lite stil shining among the trese. He swaerz dhat the shaddo ov a manz hed ternd ciadwase wauz cleerly vizsibel on the bliand, and dhat this shaddo wauz certainly not dhat ov Peter Cary, whoome he nu wel. It wauz dhat ov a bearded man, but the beard wauz

short and brisceld forward in a wa verry different from dhat ov the captane. So he cez, but he had bene too ourz in the public-hous, and it iz sum distans from the rode too the windo. Beciadz, this referz too the Munda, and the crime wauz dun uppon the Wednzda.

“On the Chuezda, Peter Cary wauz in wun ov hiz blackest muidz, flusht withe drinc and az savvage az a dain’gerous wiald beest. He roamd about the hous, and the wimmen ran for it when dha herd him cumming. Late in the evening, he went down too hiz one hut. About too oacloc the following morning, hiz dauter, whoo slept withe her windo open, herd a moast feerfool yel from dhat direcshon, but it wauz no unnuezhual thhing for him too baul and shout when he wauz in drinc, so no notice wauz taken. On rising at cevven, wun ov the maidz notiast dhat the doer ov the hut wauz open, but so grate wauz the terror which the man cauzd dhat it wauz midda befoer enniwun wood venchure down too ce whaut had becum ov him. Peping intoo the open doer, dha sau a cite which cent them fliying, withe white facez, intoo the village. Within an our, I wauz on the spot and had taken over the cace.

“Wel, I hav faerly stedly nervz, az u no, Mr. Hoamz, but I ghiv u mi werd, dhat I got a shake when I poot mi hed intoo dhat littel hous. It wauz droning like a harmoanyum withe the flise and blubottelz, and the floer and waulz wer like a slauter-hous. He had cauld it a cabbin, and a cabbin it wauz, shure enuf, for u wood hav thaut dhat u wer in a ship. Dhare wauz a bunc at wun end, a ce-chest, maps and charts, a picchure ov the *Ce Unicorn*, a line ov logboox on a shelf, aul exactly az wun wood expect too fiand it in a captainz roome. And dhare, in the middel ov it, wauz the man himcelf—hiz face twisted like a lost sole in torment, and hiz grate brindeld beard stuc

upword in hiz aggony. Rite throo hiz braud brest a stele harpoone had bene drivven, and it had sunc depe intoo the wood ov the waul behiand him. He wauz pind like a betel on a card. Ov coers, he wauz qwite ded, and had bene so from the instant dhat he had utterd dhat laast yel ov aggony.

“I no yor methodz, cer, and I aplide them. Befoer I permitted ennithhing too be muivd, I exammiand moast caerfooly the ground outside, and aulso the floer ov the roome. Dhare wer no footmarx.”

“Mening dhat u sau nun?”

“I ashure u, cer, dhat dhare wer nun.”

“Mi good Hopkinz, I hav investigated menny criamz, but I hav nevver yet cene wun which wauz comitted bi a fliying crechure. Az long az the crimminal remainz uppon too legz so long must dhare be sum indentaishon, sum abraizhon, sum triafling displaisment which can be detected bi the ciyentiffic cercher. It iz increddibel dhat this blud-bespatterd roome containd no trace which cood hav aded us. I understand, houwevver, from the inqwest dhat dhare wer sum obgets which u faild too overlooc?”

The yung inspector winst at mi companyonz ironnical comments.

“I wauz a foole not too caul u in at the time Mr. Hoamz. Houwevver, dhats paast praying for nou. Yes, dhare wer cevveral obgets in the roome which cauld for speshal atenshon. Wun wauz the harpoone withe which the dede wauz comitted. It had bene snacht doun from a rac on the waul. Too utherz remaind dhare, and dhare wauz a vacant place for the thherd. On the stoc wauz en’graivd ‘SS. *Ce Unicorn, Dundy.*’ This ceemd too establish dhat the crime had

bene dun in a moment ov fury, and dhat the merderer had ceezd the ferst weppon which came in hiz wa. The fact dhat the crime wauz comitted at too in the morning, and yet Peter Cary wauz foolly drest, sugested dhat he had an apointment withe the merderer, which iz boern out bi the fact dhat a bottel ov rum and too derty glaacez stood uppon the tabel."

"Yes," ced Hoamz; "I thhinc dhat boath inferencez ar permiscibel. Wauz dhare enny uther spirrit but rum in the roome?"

"Yes, dhare wauz a tantalus contaning brandy and whisky on the ce-chest. It iz ov no importans too us, houwevver, cins the decanterz wer fool, and it had dhaerfoer not bene uezd."

"For aul dhat, its prezsens haz sum cignificans," ced Hoamz. "Houwevver, let us here sum moer about the obgets which doo ceme too u too bare uppon the cace."

"Dhare wauz this tobacco-pouch uppon the tabel."

"Whaut part ov the tabel?"

"It la in the middel. It wauz ov coers ceelskin—the strate-haerd skin, withe a lether thong too biand it. Incide wauz 'P.C.' on the flap. Dhare wauz haaf an ouns ov strong ships tobacco in it."

"Exelent! Whaut moer?"

Stanly Hopkinz dru from hiz pocket a drab-cuverd noatbooc. The outside wauz ruf and woern, the leevz discullord. On the ferst page wer ritten the inishalz "J.H.N." and the date "1883." Hoamz lade it on the tabel and exammiand it in hiz minute wa, while Hopkinz and I gaizd over eche shoalder. On the cecond page

wer the printed letterz "C.P.R.," and then came cevveral sheets ov numberz. Anuther hedding wauz "Argentine," anuther "Costaa Recaa," and anuther "San Paulo," eche withe pagez ov cianz and figguerz aafter it.

"Whaut doo u make ov these?" aasct Hoamz.

"Dha apere too be lists ov Stoc Exchainj securitese. I thaut dhat 'J.H.N.' wer the inishalz ov a broker, and dhat 'C.P.R.' ma hav bene hiz cliyent."

"Tri Canajan Paciffic Railwa," ced Hoamz.

Stanly Hopkinz swoer betwene hiz teeth, and struc hiz thhi withe hiz clencht hand.

"Whaut a foole I hav bene!" he cride. "Ov coers, it iz az u sa. Then 'J.H.N.' ar the oonly inishalz we hav too solv. I hav aulreddy exammiand the oald Stoc Exchainj lists, and I can fiand no wun in 1883, iather in the hous or amung the outside brokerz, whose inishalz corespond withe these. Yet I fele dhat the clu iz the moast important wun dhat I hoald. U wil admit, Mr. Hoamz, dhat dhare iz a pocibility dhat these inishalz ar dhose ov the cecond person whoo wauz prezsent—in uther werdz, ov the merderer.

I

wood aulso erj dhat the introducshon intoo the cace ov a document relating too larj mascez ov vallubel securitese ghivz us for the ferst time sum indicaishon ov a motive for the crime."

Sherloc Hoamsez face shode dhat he wauz thurroly taken abac bi this nu devellopment.

"I must admit boath yor points," ced he. "I confes dhat this noatbooc, which did not apere at the inqwest, moddifise enny vuse

which I ma hav formd. I had cum too a ththeyory ov the crime in which I can fiand no place for this. Hav u endevvord too trace enny ov the securitese here menshond?"

"Inqwirse ar nou beying made at the officez, but I fere dhat the complete redgister ov the stoc'hoalderz ov these South Amerrican concernz iz in South Amerricaa, and dhat sum weex must elaps befoer we can trace the shaerz."

Hoamz had bene exammining the cuvver ov the noatbooc withe hiz magnifying lenz.

"Shuerly dhare iz sum disculloraishon here," ced he.

"Yes, cer, it iz a blud-stane. I toald u dhat I pict the booc of the floer."

"Wauz the blud-stane abuv or belo?"

"On the cide next the boerdz."

"Which pruiuz, ov coers, dhat the booc wauz dropt aafter the crime wauz comitted."

"Exactly, Mr. Hoamz. I apreesheyated dhat point, and I con'gechuerd dhat it wauz dropt bi the merderer in hiz hurrede flite. It la nere the doer."

"I supose dhat nun ov these securitese hav bene found among the property ov the ded man?"

"No, cer."

"Hav u enny rezon too suspect robbery?"

"No, cer. Nuthhing ceemd too hav bene tucht."

"Dere me, it iz certainly a verry interesting cace. Then dhare wauz a nife, wauz dhare not?"

"A sheeth-nife, stil in its sheeth. It la at the fete ov the ded man. Mrs. Cary haz identifide it az beying her huzbandz propperty."

Hoamz wauz lost in thaut for sum time.

"Wel," ced he, at laast, "I supose I shal hav too cum out and hav a looc at it."

Stanly Hopkinz gave a cri ov joi.

"Thanc u, cer. Dhat wil, indede, be a wate of mi miand."

Hoamz shooc hiz fin'gher at the inspector.

"It wood hav bene an eseyer taasc a weke ago," ced he. "But even nou mi vizsit ma not be entiarly fruetles. Wautson, if u can spare the time, I shood be verry glad ov yor cumpany. If u wil caul a foer-wheler, Hopkinz, we shal be reddy too start for Forest Ro in a qworter ov an our."

Aliting at the smaul wacide staishon, we drove for sum mialz throo the remainz ov wiadspred woodz, which wer wuns part ov dhat grate forest which for so long held the Saxon invaderz at ba—the impennetrabel "weeld," for cixty yeeرز the boolworc ov Brittone. Vaast cecshonz ov it hav bene cleerd, for this iz the cete ov the ferst iarn-werx ov the cuntry, and the trese hav bene feld too smelt the oer. Nou the ritcher feeldz ov the North

hav abzorbd the trade, and nuthing save these ravvaird groavz and grate scarz in the erth sho the werc ov the paast. Here, in a clering uppon the grene slope ov a hil, stood a long, lo, stone hous, aproacht bi a kerving drive running throo the feeldz. Nerer the rode, and surrounded on thre ciadz bi booshez, wauz a smaul out'houz, wun windo and the doer facing in our direcshon. It wauz the cene ov the merder.

Stanly Hopkinz led us ferst too the hous, whare he introjuest us too a haggard, gra-haerd woomman, the widdo ov the merderd man, whose gaunt and depe-liand face, withe the fertive looc ov terror in the depths ov her red-rimnd ise, toald ov the yeerz ov hardship and il-usage which she had enjuerd. Withe her wauz her dauter, a pale, fare-haerd gherl, whose ise blaizd defiyantly at us az she toald us dhat she wauz glad dhat her faather wauz ded, and dhat she blest the hand which had struc him doun. It wauz a terribel hous'hoald dhat Blac Peter Cary had made for himcelf, and it wauz withe a cens ov relefe dhat we found ourcelvz in the sunlite agane and making our wa along a paath which had bene woern acros the feeldz bi the fete ov the ded man.

The out'houz wauz the cimpest ov dwellingz, woodden-wauld, shin'ghel-ruift, wun windo beside the doer and wun on the farther cide. Stanly Hopkinz dru the ke from hiz pocket and had stuipt too the loc, when he pauzd withe a looc ov atenshon and cerprise uppon hiz face.

"Sumwun haz bene tampering withe it," he ced.

Dhare cood be no dout ov the fact. The woodwerc wauz cut, and the scratchez shode white throo the paint, az if dha had bene dhat instant dun. Hoamz had bene exammining the windo.

"Sumwun haz tride too foers this aulso. Whoowevver it wauz haz faild

too make hiz wa in. He must hav bene a verry poor berglar."

"This iz a moast extrordinary thhing," ced the inspector, "I cood sware dhat these marx wer not here yesterda evening."

"Sum cureyous person from the village, perhaps," I sugested.

"Verry unliacly. Fu ov them wood dare too cet foot in the groundz, far les tri too foers dhare wa intoo the cabbin. Whaut doo u thhinc ov it, Mr. Hoamz?"

"I thhinc dhat forchune iz verry kiand too us."

"U mene dhat the person wil cum agane?"

"It iz verry probbabel. He came expecting too fiand the doer open. He tride too ghet in withe the blade ov a verry smaual pen'nife. He cood not mannage it. Whaut wood he doo?"

"Cum agane next nite withe a moer uesfool toole."

"So I shood sa. It wil be our fault if we ar not dhare too receve him. Meenwhile, let me ce the incide ov the cabbin."

The tracez ov the tradgedy had bene remuivd, but the fernichure within the littel roome stil stood az it had bene on the nite ov the crime. For too ourz, withe moast intens concentraishon, Hoamz exammiand evvery obgett in tern, but hiz face shode dhat hiz qwest wauz not a suxesfool wun. Wuns oonly he pauzd in hiz paishent investigaishon.

"Hav u taken ennithhing of this shelf, Hopkinz?"

"No, I hav muivd nuthhing."

“Sumthhing haz bene taken. Dhare iz les dust in this corner ov the shelf dhan elshware. It ma hav bene a booc liying on its cide. It ma hav bene a box. Wel, wel, I can doo nuthhing moer. Let us wauc in these butifool woodz, Wautson, and ghiv a fu ourz too the berdz and the flouwerz. We shal mete u here later, Hopkinz, and ce if we can cum too clocer qworterz withe the gentelman whoo haz pade this vizsit in the nite.”

It wauz paast elevven oacloc when we formd our littel ambushade. Hopkinz wauz for leving the doer ov the hut open, but Hoamz wauz ov the opinyon dhat this wood rouz the suspishonz ov the strain’ger. The loc wauz a perfectly cimpel wun, and oanly a strong blade wauz neded too poosh it bac. Hoamz aulso sugested dhat we shood wate, not incide the hut, but outcide it, amung the booshez which gru round the farther windo. In this wa we shood be abel too wauch our man if he struc a lite, and ce whaut hiz obgect wauz in this stelthhy nocternal vizsit.

It wauz a long and mellancoly vidgil, and yet braut withe it sumthhing ov the thril which the hunter feelz when he lise becide the wauter-poole, and waits for the cumming ov the thhersty beest ov pra. Whaut savvage crechure wauz it which mite stele uppon us out ov the darcnes? Wauz it a feers tigher ov crime, which cood oanly be taken fiting hard withe flashing fang and clau, or wood it proove too be sum sculking jaccaul, dain’gerous oanly too the weke and un’garded?

In absolute cilens we croucht amungst the booshez, wating for whautevver mite cum. At ferst the steps ov a fu belated villagerz, or the sound ov voicez from the village, litend our vidgil, but wun bi wun these interupshonz dide awa, and an absolute stilnes fel uppon us, save for the chiamz ov the distant cherch, which toald us ov the proagres ov the nite, and

for the ruscel and whisper ov a fine rane fauling amid the foleyage which ruift us in.

Haaf-paast too had chiamd, and it wauz the darkest our which preceedz the daun, when we aul started az a lo but sharp clic came from the direcshon ov the gate. Sumwun had enterd the drive. Agane dhare wauz a long cilens, and I had begun too fere dhat it wauz a fauls alarm, when a stelthhy step wauz herd uppon the uthher cide ov the hut, and a moment later a metallic scraping and clinking. The man wauz tryying too foers the loc. This time hiz skil wauz grater or hiz toole wauz better, for dhare wauz a sudden snap and the creke ov the hin'gez. Then a mach wauz struc, and next instant the stedy lite from a candel fild the intereyor ov the hut. Throo the gauz kertane our ise wer aul rivveted uppon the cene within.

The nocternal vizsitor wauz a yung man, frale and thhin, withe a blac moostaash, which intencifide the dedly pallor ov hiz face. He cood not hav bene much abuv twenty yeerz ov age. I hav nevver cene enny human beying whoo apeerd too be in such a pitteyabel

frite, for hiz teeth wer vizsibly chattering, and he wauz shaking in evvery lim. He wauz drest like a gentelman, in Norfoke jacket and nickerbokerz, withe a cloth cap uppon hiz hed. We waucht him staring round withe fritend ise. Then he lade the candel-end uppon the tabel and disapeerd from our vu intoo wun ov the cornerz. He reternd withe a larj booc, wun ov the logboox which formd a line uppon the shelvz. Lening on the tabel, he rappidly ternd over the leevz ov this vollume until he came too the entry which he saut. Then, withe an an'gry geschure ov hiz clencht hand, he cloazd the booc, replaist it in the corner, and poot out the lite. He had hardly ternd too leve the hut when Hopkinz hand wauz on the fellose collar, and I herd hiz loud gaasp ov terror az he understood dhat he wauz taken. The candel wauz

relit, and dhare wauz our retched captive, shivvering and couwering in the graasp ov the detective. He sanc down uppon the ce-chest, and looct helplesly from wun ov us too the uther.

“Nou, mi fine fello,” ced Stanly Hopkinz, “whoo ar u, and whaut doo u waunt here?”

The man poold himcelf toogheter, and faist us withe an effort at celf-compoazhure.

“U ar detectiavz, I supose?” ced he. “U imadgine I am conected withe the deth ov Captane Peter Cary. I ashure u dhat I am innocent.”

“Wele ce about dhat,” ced Hopkinz. “Ferst ov aul, whaut iz yor name?”

“It iz Jon Hoply Nelligan.”

I sau Hoamz and Hopkinz exchainj a qwic glaans.

“Whaut ar u doowing here?”

“Can I speke confidenshaly?”

“No, certainly not.”

“Whi shood I tel u?”

“If u hav no aancer, it ma go badly withe u at the triyal.”

The yung man winst.

“Wel, I wil tel u,” he ced. “Whi shood I not? And yet I

hate too thhinc ov this oald scandal ganing a nu lece ov life.
Did u evver here ov Dauson and Nelligan?"

I cood ce, from Hopkinsez face, dhat he nevver had, but Hoamz
wauz keenly interested.

"U mene the West Cuntry bankerz," ced he. "Dha faild for a
milleyon, ruwind haaf the county fammilese ov Cornwaul, and
Nelligan
disapeerd."

"Exactly. Nelligan wauz mi faather."

At laast we wer ghetting sumthhing pozsitive, and yet it ceemd a
long gap betwene an absconding banker and Captane Peter Cary
pind against the waul withe wun ov hiz one harpuinz. We aul
liscend intently too the yung manz werdz.

"It wauz mi faather whoo wauz reyaly concernd. Dauson had retiard. I
wauz oonly ten yeez ov age at the time, but I wauz oald enuf too
fele the shame and horror ov it aul. It haz aulwase bene ced dhat
mi faather stole aul the securitese and fled. It iz not tru. It
wauz hiz belefe dhat if he wer ghivven time in which too reyalise
them, aul wood be wel and evvery credditor pade in fool. He
started in hiz littel yaut for Norwa just befoer the worant
wauz ishude for hiz arest. I can remember dhat laast nite when he
bad faerwel too mi muther. He left us a list ov the securitese
he wauz taking, and he swoer dhat he wood cum bac withe hiz
onnor cleerd, and dhat nun whoo had trusted him wood suffer.
Wel, no werd wauz evver herd from him agane. Boath the yaut and
he vannisht utterly. We beleevd, mi muther and I, dhat he and
it, withe the securitese dhat he had taken withe him, wer at the
bottom ov the ce. We had a faithfool frend, houwevver, whoo iz a
biznes man, and it wauz he whoo discuverd sum time ago dhat

sum ov the securitese which mi faather had withe him had reyapeerd on the Lundon market. U can imadgine our amaizment. I spent munths in trying too trace them, and at laast, aafter menny doutingz and difficultese, I discuvverd dhat the oridginal celler had bene Captane Peter Cary, the oner ov this hut.

“Natchurally, I made sum inqwirese about the man. I found dhat he had bene in comaand ov a whaler which wauz ju too retern from the Arctic cese at the verry time when mi faather wauz crosscing too Norwa. The autum ov dhat yere wauz a stormy wun, and dhare wauz a long suxeshon ov sutherly gailz. Mi faatherz yaut ma wel hav bene blone too the north, and dhare met bi Captane Peter Carese ship. If dhat wer so, whaut had becum ov mi faather? In enny cace, if I cood prove from Peter Carese evvidens hou these securitese came on the market it wood be a prooffe dhat mi faather had not soald them, and dhat he had no vu too personal proffit when he tooc them.

“I came doun too Suscex withe the intenshon ov ceying the captane, but it wauz at this moment dhat hiz terribel deth okerd. I red at the inqwest a descripshon ov hiz cabbin, in which it stated dhat the oald logboox ov hiz vescel wer preservd in it. It struc me dhat if I cood ce whaut okerd in the munth ov August, 1883, on boerd the *Ce Unicorn*, I mite cettel the mystery ov mi faatherz fate. I tride laast nite too ghet at these logboox, but wauz unnabel too open the doer. Too-nite I tride agane and suxeded, but I fiand dhat the pagez which dele withe dhat munth hav bene toern from the booc. It wauz at dhat moment I found micelf a prizzoner in yor handz.”

“Iz dhat aul?” aasct Hopkinz.

“Yes, dhat iz aul.” Hiz ise shifted az he ced it.

“U hav nuthhing els too tel us?”

He hezsitated.

“No, dhare iz nuthhing.”

“U hav not bene here befoer laast nite?”

“No.

“Then hou doo u acount for *dhat*?” cride Hopkinz, az he held up the damming noatbooc, withe the inishalz ov our prizzoner on the ferst lefe and the blud-stane on the cuvver.

The retched man colapst. He sanc hiz face in hiz handz, and trembeld aul over.

“Whare did u ghet it?” he groand. “I did not no. I thaut I had lost it at the hotel.”

“Dhat iz enuf,” ced Hopkinz, sternly. “Whautevver els u hav too sa, u must sa in coert. U wil wauc doun withe me nou too the polece-staishon. Wel, Mr. Hoamz, I am verry much obliajd too u and too yor frend for cumming doun too help me. Az it ternz out yor prezsens wauz un’nescesary, and I wood hav braut the cace too this suxesfool ishu widhout u, but, nun the les, I am graitfool. Ruimz hav bene reservd for u at the Brambelti Hotel, so we can aul wauc doun too the village tooghether.”

“Wel, Wautson, whaut doo u thhinc ov it?” aasct Hoamz, az we travveld bac next morning.

"I can ce dhat u ar not sattisfide."

"O, yes, mi dere Wautson, I am perfectly sattisfide. At the same time, Stanly Hopkinsez methodz doo not comend themcelvz too me. I am disapointed in Stanly Hopkinz. I had hoapt for better thhingz from him. Wun shood aulwase looc for a poscibel aulternative, and provide against it. It iz the ferst rule ov crimminal investigaishon."

"Whaut, then, iz the aulternative?"

"The line ov investigaishon which I hav micelf bene pershuwing. It ma ghiv us nuthhing. I canot tel. But at leest I shal follo it too the end."

Cevveral letterz wer wating for Hoamz at Baker Strete. He snacht wun ov them up, opend it, and berst out intoo a triyumfant chuckel ov laafter.

"Exelent, Wautson! The aulternative devellops. Hav u tellegraaf formz? Just rite a cuppel ov messagez for me: 'Summer, Shipping Agent, Ratclif Hiwa. Cend thre men on, too arive ten too-moro morning.—Bazsil.' Dhats mi name in dhose parts. The uther iz: 'Inspector Stanly Hopkinz, 46 Lord Strete, Brixton. Cum breccfast too-moro at nine-thherty. Important. Wire if unnel too cum.—Sherloc Hoamz.' Dhare, Wautson, this infernal cace haz haunted me for ten dase. I heerbi bannish it compleetly from mi prezsens. Too-moro, I trust dhat we shal here the laast ov it forevver."

Sharp at the our naimd Inspector Stanly Hopkinz apeerd, and we sat doun tooghether too the exelent breccfast which Mrs. Hudson had prepaerd. The yung detective wauz in hi spirrits at hiz suxes.

“U reyaly thhinc dhat yor solueshon must be corect?” aasct Hoamz.

“I cood not imadgine a moer complete cace.”

“It did not ceme too me conclucive.”

“U astonnish me, Mr. Hoamz. Whaut moer cood wun aasc for?”

“Duz yor explanaishon cuvver evvery point?”

“Undoutedly. I fiand dhat yung Nelligan ariavd at the Brambelti Hotel on the verry da ov the crime. He came on the pretens ov playing golf. Hiz roome wauz on the ground-floer, and he cood ghet out when he liact. Dhat verry nite he went down too Woodmanz Le, sau Peter Cary at the hut, qworeld withe him, and kild him withe the harpoone. Then, horifide bi whaut he had dun, he fled out ov the hut, dropping the noatbooc which he had braut withe him in order too qweschon Peter Cary about these different ceuritesse. U ma hav observd dhat sum ov them wer marct withe tix, and the utherz—the grate majority—wer not. Dhose which ar tict hav bene traist on the Lundon market, but the utherz, preezhumably, wer stil in the poseshon ov Cary, and yung Nelligan, acording too hiz one acount, wauz ancshous too recuvver them in order too doo the rite thhing bi hiz faatherz credditorz. Aafter hiz flite he did not dare too aproche the hut agane for sum time, but at laast he foerst himcelf too doo so in order too obtane the informaishon which he neded. Shuerly dhat iz aul cimpel and obveyous?”

Hoamz smiald and shooc hiz hed.

“It ceemz too me too hav oanly wun draubac, Hopkinz, and dhat iz

dhat it iz intrinsicaly imposcibel. Hav u tride too drive a harpoone throo a boddy? No? Tut, tut mi dere cer, u must reyalz pa atenshon too these detailz. Mi frend Wautson cood tel u dhat I spent a whole morning in dhat exercise. It iz no esy matter, and reqwiarz a strong and practiast arm. But this blo wauz delivverd withe such viyolens dhat the hed ov the weppon sanc depe intoo the waul. Doo u imadgine dhat this anemic ueth wauz capabel ov so friatfool an asault? Iz he the man whoo hobnobd in rum and wauter withe Blac Peter in the ded ov the nite? Wauz it hiz profile dhat wauz cene on the bliand too niats befoer? No, no, Hopkinz, it iz anuther and moer formiddabel person for whoome we must ceke."

The detectiavz face had grone lon'gher and lon'gher juring Hoamsez speche. Hiz hoaps and hiz ambishonz wer aul crumbling about him. But he wood not abandon hiz posishon widhout a strugghel.

"U caant deni dhat Nelligan wauz prezsent dhat nite, Mr. Hoamz. The booc wil proove dhat. I fancy dhat I hav evvidens enuf too sattisfi a jury, even if u ar abel too pic a hole in it. Beciadz, Mr. Hoamz, I hav lade mi hand uppon *mi* man. Az too this terribel person ov yorz, whare iz he?"

"I raather fancy dhat he iz on the stare," ced Hoamz, cereenly. "I thhinc, Wautson, dhat u wood doo wel too poot dhat revolver whare u can reche it." He rose and lade a ritten paper uppon a cide-tabel. "Nou we ar reddy," ced he.

Dhare had bene sum tauking in gruf voicez outcide, and nou Mrs. Hudson opend the doer too sa dhat dhare wer thre men inqwiring for Captane Bazsil.

“Sho them in wun bi wun,” ced Hoamz.

“The ferst whoo enterd wauz a littel Ribston pippin ov a man, withe ruddy cheex and fluffy white cide-whiskerz. Hoamz had draun a letter from hiz pocket.

“Whaut name?” he aasct.

“Jaimz Lancaster.”

“I am sorry, Lancaster, but the berth iz fool. Here iz haaf a sovverane for yor trubbel. Just step intoo this roome and wate dhare for a fu minnuets.”

The cecond man wauz a long, dride-up crechure, withe lanc hare and sallo cheex. Hiz name wauz Hu Pattinz. He aulso receevd hiz dismissal, hiz haaf-sovverane, and the order too wate.

The thherd aplicant wauz a man ov remarcabel aperans. A feers bool-dog face wauz fraimd in a tan'ghel ov hare and beard, and too boald, darc ise gleemd behiand the cuvver ov thhic, tufted, overhung iabrouz. He saluted and stood salor-fashion, terning hiz cap round in hiz handz.

“Yor name?” aasct Hoamz.

“Patric Caernz.”

“Harpooner?”

“Yes, cer. Twenty-cix voiyagez.”

“Dundy, I supose?”

"Yes, cer."

"And reddy too start withe an exploering ship?"

"Yes, cer."

"Whaut wagez?"

"Ate poundz a munth."

"Cood u start at wuns?"

"Az soone az I ghet mi kit."

"Hav u yor paperz?"

"Yes, cer." He tooc a shefe ov woern and grecy formz from hiz pocket. Hoamz glaanst over them and reternd them.

"U ar just the man I waunt," ced he. "Heerz the agrement on the cide-tabel. If u cine it the whole matter wil be cetteld."

The ceman lercht acros the roome and tooc up the pen.

"Shal I cine here?" he aasct, stooping over the tabel.

Hoamz leend over hiz shoalder and paast boath handz over hiz nec.

"This wil doo," ced he.

I herd a clic ov stele and a bello like an enraijd bool. The next instant Hoamz and the ceman wer roling on the ground tooghether. He wauz a man ov such gigantic strength dhat, even withe

the handcufs which Hoamz had so deftly faacend uppon hiz rists, he wood hav verry qwicly overpouwerd mi frend had Hopkinz and I not rusht too hiz rescu. Oanly when I prest the coald muzsel ov the revolver too hiz tempel did he at laast understand dhat resistans wauz vane. We lasht hiz ankelz withe cord, and rose brethles from the strugghel.

“I must reyaly apollogise, Hopkinz,” ced Sherloc Hoamz. “I fere dhat the scambeld egz ar coald. Houwevver, u wil enjoi the rest ov yor brecfast aul the better, wil u not, for the thaut dhat u hav braut yor cace too a triyumfant concluezhon.”

Stanly Hopkinz wauz speechles withe amaizment.

“I doant no whaut too sa, Mr. Hoamz,” he blerted out at laast, withe a verry red face. “It ceemz too me dhat I hav bene making a foole ov micelf from the beghinning. I understand nou, whaut I shood nevver hav forgotten, dhat I am the pupil and u ar the maaster. Even nou I ce whaut u hav dun, but I doant no hou u did it or whaut it cignifise.”

“Wel, wel,” ced Hoamz, good-humordly. “We aul lern bi expereyens, and yor lesson this time iz dhat u shood nevver loose cite ov the aulternative. U wer so abzorbd in yung Nelligan dhat u cood not spare a thaut too Patric Caernz, the tru merderer ov Peter Cary.”

The hoers vois ov the ceman broke in on our conversaishon.

“Ce here, mister,” ced he, “I make no complaint ov beying man-handeld in this fashon, but I wood hav u caul thhingz bi dhare rite naimz. U sa I merderd Peter Cary, I sa I *kild* Peter Cary, and dhaerz aul the differens. Maby u

doant beleve whaut I sa. Maby u thhinc I am just slinging u a yarn."

"Not at aul," ced Hoamz. "Let us here whaut u hav too sa."

"Its soone toald, and, bi the Lord, evvery werd ov it iz trueth. I nu Blac Peter, and when he poold out hiz nife I whipt a harpoone throo him sharp, for I nu dhat it wauz him or me. Dhats hou he dide. U can caul it merder. Ennihou, Ide az soone di withe a rope round mi nec az withe Blac Peterz nife in mi hart."

"Hou came u dhare?" aasct Hoamz.

"Ile tel it u from the beghinning. Just cit me up a littel, so az I can speke esy. It wauz in '83 dhat it happend—August ov dhat yere. Peter Cary wauz maaster ov the *Ce Unicorn*, and I wauz spare harpooner. We wer cumming out ov the ice-pac on our wa home, withe hed windz and a weex sutherly gale, when we pict up a littel craaft dhat had bene blone north. Dhare wauz wun man on her—a landzman. The cru had thaut she wood founder and had made for the Norwejan coast in the dingy. I ghes dha wer aul dround. Wel, we tooc him on boerd, this man, and he and the skipper had sum long taux in the cabbिन. Aul the baggage we tooc of withe him wauz wun tin box. So far az I no, the manz name wauz nevver menshond, and on the cecond nite he disapeerd az if he had nevver bene. It wauz ghivven out dhat he had iather throne himcelf overboerd or faulen overboerd in the hevvy wether dhat we wer havving. Oonly wun man nu whaut had happend too him, and dhat wauz me, for, withe mi one ise, I sau the skipper tip up hiz heelz and poot him over the rale in the middel wauch ov a darc nite, too dase befoer we cited the Shetland Liats. Wel, I kept mi nollej too micelf, and wated too ce whaut wood cum ov

it. When we got bac too Scotland it wauz esily husht up, and nobody aasct enny qweschonz. A strain'ger dide bi axident and it wauz nobodese biznes too inqwire. Shortly aafter Peter Cary gave up the ce, and it wauz long yeerz befoer I cood fiand whare he wauz. I ghest dhat he had dun the dede for the sake ov whaut wauz in dhat tin box, and dhat he cood afoerd nou too pa me wel for keping mi mouth shut. I found out whare he wauz throo a salor man dhat had met him in Lundon, and doun I went too sqwese him. The ferst nite he wauz rezonabel enuf, and wauz reddy too ghiv me whaut wood make me fre ov the ce for life. We wer too fix it aul too niats later. When I came, I found him thre parts drunc and in a vile temper. We sat doun and we dranc and we yarnd about oald tiamz, but the moer he dranc the les I liact the looc on hiz face. I spotted dhat harpoone uppon the waul, and I thaut I mite nede it befoer I wauz throo. Then at laast he broke out at me, spitting and kercing, withe merder in hiz ise and a grate claasp-nife in hiz hand. He had not time too ghet it from the sheeth befoer I had the harpoone throo him. Hevvenz! whaut a yel he gave! and hiz face ghets betwene me and mi slepe. I stood dhare, withe hiz blud splashing round me, and I wated for a bit, but aul wauz qwiyet, so I tooc hart wuns moer. I looct round, and dhare wauz the tin box on the shelf. I had az much rite too it az Peter Cary, ennihou, so I tooc it withe me and left the hut. Like a foole I left mi backy-pouch uppon the tabel.

“Nou Ile tel u the qwerest part ov the whole stoery. I had hardly got outside the hut when I herd sumwun cumming, and I hid among the booshez. A man came slinking along, went intoo the hut, gave a cri az if he had cene a goast, and legd it az hard az he cood run until he wauz out ov cite. Whoo he wauz or whaut he waunted
iz moer dhan I can tel. For mi part I wauct ten mialz, got a trane at Tunbrij Welz, and so reecht Lundon, and no wun the wiser.

“Wel, when I came too exammine the box I found dhare wauz no munny

in it, and nuthhing but paperz dhat I wood not dare too cel. I had lost mi hoald on Blac Peter and wauz stranded in Lunden widhout a shilling. Dhare wauz oonly mi trade left. I sau these advertiazments about harpoonerz, and hi wagez, so I went too the shipping agents, and dha cent me here. Dhats aul I no, and I sa agane dhat if I kild Blac Peter, the lau shood ghiv me thanx, for I saivd them the price ov a hempen rope.”

“A verry clere staitment ced Hoamz,” rising and liting hiz pipe. “I thhinc, Hopkinz, dhat u shood loose no time in convaying yor prizzoner too a place ov saifty. This roome iz not wel adapted for a cel, and Mr. Patric Caernz occupise too larj a propoershon ov our carpet.”

“Mr. Hoamz,” ced Hopkinz, “I doo not no hou too expres mi grattichude. Even nou I doo not understand hou u ataind this rezult.”

“Cimply bi havving the good forchune too ghet the rite clu from the beghinning. It iz verry poscibel if I had none about this noatbooc it mite hav led awa mi thauts, az it did yorz. But aul I herd pointed in the wun direcshon. The amasing strength, the skil in the uce ov the harpoone, the rum and wauter, the ceelskin tobacco-pouch withe the coers tobacco—aul these pointed too a ceman, and wun whoo had bene a whaler. I wauz convinst dhat the inishalz ‘P.C.’ uppon the pouch wer a cowincidens, and not dhose ov Peter Cary, cins he celdom smoact, and no pipe wauz found in hiz cabbिन. U remember dhat I aasct whether whisky and brandy wer in the cabbिन. U ced dha wer. Hou menny landzmen ar dhare whoo wood drinc rum when dha cood ghet these utherr spirrits? Yes, I wauz certane it wauz a ceman.”

“And hou did u fiand him?”

“Mi dere cer, the problem had becum a verry cimpel wun. If it wer a ceman, it cood oanly be a ceman whoo had bene withe him on the *Ce Unicorn*. So far az I cood lern he had saild in no uther ship. I spent thre dase in wiring too Dundy, and at the end ov dhat time I had ascertaind the naimz ov the cru ov the *Ce Unicorn* in 1883. When I found Patric Caernz among the harpoonerz, mi recerch wauz nering its end. I argude dhat the man wauz probbably in Lunden, and dhat he wood desire too leve the cuntry for a time. I dhaerfoer spent sum dase in the Eest End, deviazd an Arctic expedishon, poot foerth tempting termz for harpoonerz whoo wood cerv under Captane Bazsil—and behoald the rezult!”

“Wunderfool!” cride Hopkinz. “Wunderfool!”

“U must obtane the relece ov yung Nelligan az soone az poscibel,” ced Hoamz. “I confes dhat I thhinc u o him sum apollogy. The tin box must be reternd too him, but, ov coers, the securitese which Peter Cary haz soald ar lost forevver. Dhaerz the cab, Hopkinz, and u can remoove yor man. If u waunt me for the triyal, mi adres and dhat ov Wautson wil be sumwhare in Norwa—Ile cend particularz later.”

THE ADVENCHURE OV CHARLZ AUGUSTUS MILVERTON

It iz yeeرز cins the incidents ov which I speke tooc place, and yet it iz withe diffidens dhat I alude too them. For a long time, even withe the utmoast discredhon and retticens, it wood hav bene imposcibel too make the facts public, but nou the principal person concernd iz beyond the reche ov human lau, and withe ju

supreshon the stoery ma be toald in such fashon az too injure no wun. It recordz an absoluetly uneke expereyens in the carere boath ov Mr. Sherloc Hoamz and ov micelf. The reder wil excuse me if I concele the date or enny uthor fact bi which he mite trace the acchuwal ocurens.

We had bene out for wun ov our evening rambelz, Hoamz and I, and had reternd about six oacloc on a coald, frosty winterz evening. Az Hoamz ternd up the lamp the lite fel uppon a card on the tabel. He glaanst at it, and then, withe an ejaculaishon ov disgust, thru it on the floer. I pict it up and red:

CHARLZ AUGUSTUS MILVERTON,
Appeldor Touwerz,
Hampsted.
Agent.

“Whoo iz he?” I aasct.

“The werst man in Lundo,” Hoamz aancerd, az he sat down and strecht hiz legz befoer the fire. “Iz ennithing on the bac ov the card?”

I ternd it over.

“Wil caul at 6:30—C.A.M.,” I red.

“Hum! Hese about ju. Doo u fele a creping, shrinking censaishon, Wautson, when u stand befoer the cerpents in the Zoo, and ce the slithery, gliding, vennomous crechuerz, withe dhare dedly ise and wicked, flattend facez? Wel, dhats hou Milverton imprescez me. Ive had too doo withe fifty merdererz in mi carere, but the werst ov them never gave me the repulshon which I

hav for this fello. And yet I caant ghet out ov doowing biznes withe him—indede, he iz here at mi invitaishon.”

“But whoo iz he?”

“Ile tel u, Wautson. He iz the king ov aul the blacmalerz. Hevven help the man, and stil moer the woomman, whose ceecret and reputaishon cum intoo the pouwer ov Milverton! Withe a smiling face and a hart ov marbel, he wil sqwese and sqwese until he haz draind them dri. The fello iz a geenyus in hiz wa, and wood hav made hiz marc in sum moer savory trade. Hiz method iz az follose: He alouz it too be none dhat he iz prepaerd too pa verry hi sumz for letterz which compromise pepel ov welth and posishon. He receevz these waerz not oonly from tretcherous vallase or maidz, but freeqwently from gentele ruffeyanz, whoo hav gaind the confidens and afecshon ov trusting wimmen. He deelz withe no niggard hand. I happen too no dhat he pade cevven hundred poundz too a footman for a note too lianz in length, and dhat the ruwin ov a nobel fammily wauz the rezult. Evverithing which iz in the market gose too Milverton, and dhare ar hundredz in this grate citty whoo tern white at hiz name. No wun nose whare hiz grip ma faul, for he iz far too rich and far too cunning too werc from hand too mouth. He wil hoald a card bac for yeerz in order too pla it at the moment when the stake iz best werth winning. I hav ced dhat he iz the werst man in Lundon, and I wood aasc u hou cood wun compare the ruffeyan, whoo in hot blud bludjonz hiz mate, withe this man, whoo methoddicaly and at hiz lezhure torchuerz the sole and ringz the nervz in order too ad too hiz aulreddy swollen munny-bagz?”

I had celdom herd mi frend speke withe such intencity ov feling.

“But shuerly,” ced I, “the fello must be within the graasp ov the

lau?"

"Tecnicaly, no dout, but practicaly not. Whaut wood it proffit a woomman, for exaampel, too ghet him a fu munths' imprizzonment if her one ruwin must imejaitly follo? Hiz victimz dare not hit bac. If evver he blacmaild an innocent person, then indede we shood hav him, but he iz az cunning az the Evil Wun. No, no, we must fiand uther wase too fite him."

"And whi iz he here?"

"Becauz an ilustreyous cliyent haz plaist her pitchous cace in mi handz. It iz the Lady Evaa Blaqwel, the moast butifool *dabutant* ov laast cezon. She iz too be marrede in a fortnite too the Erl ov Dovercort. This feend haz cevveral imprudent letterz—imprudent, Wautson, nuthhing wers—which wer ritten too an impecuenyous yung sqwire in the cuntry. Dha wood sufice too brake of the mach. Milverton wil cend the letterz too the Erl unles a larj sum ov munny iz pade him. I hav bene comishond too mete him, and—too make the best termz I can."

At dhat instant dhare wauz a clatter and a rattel in the strete belo. Loocking doun I sau a staitly carrage and pare, the brilleyant lamps gleming on the gloscy haunchez ov the nobel chesnuds. A footman opend the doer, and a smaul, stout man in a shagghy astracan overcote decended. A minnute later he wauz in the roome.

Charlz Augustus Milverton wauz a man ov fifty, withe a larj, intelecchuwal hed, a round, plump, haerles face, a perpetchuwal frosen smile, and too kene gra ise, which gleemd briatly from behiand braud, goald-rimd glaacez. Dhare wauz sumthhing ov Mr. Piqwix benevvolens in hiz aperans, mard oonly bi the

incincerity ov the fixt smile and bi the hard glitter ov dhose restles and pennetrating ise. Hiz vois wauz az smuithe and swaav az hiz countenans, az he advaanst withe a plump littel hand extended, mermering hiz regret for havving mist us at hiz ferst vizsit. Hoamz disregarded the outstrecht hand and looct at him withe a face ov grannite. Milvertonz smile braudend, he shrugd hiz shoalderz remuivd hiz overcote, foalded it withe grate deliberaishon over the bac ov a chare, and then tooc a cete.

“This gentelman?” ced he, withe a wave in mi direcshon. “Iz it discrete? Iz it rite?”

“Dr. Wautson iz mi frend and partner.”

“Verry good, Mr. Hoamz. It iz oanly in yor cliyents interests dhat I protested. The matter iz so verry dellicate——”

“Dr. Wautson haz aulreddy herd ov it.”

“Then we can procede too biznes. U sa dhat u ar acting for Lady Evaa. Haz she empouwerd u too axept mi termz?”

“Whaut ar yor termz?”

“Cevven thouzand poundz.”

“And the aulternative?”

“Mi dere cer, it iz painfool for me too discus it, but if the munny iz not pade on the 14th, dhare certainly wil be no marrage on the 18th.” Hiz insufferabel smile wauz moer complacent dhan evver.

Hoamz thaut for a littel.

“U apere too me,” he ced, at laast, “too be taking matterz too much for graanted. I am, ov coers, familleyar withe the contents ov these letterz. Mi cliyent wil certainly doo whaut I ma advise. I shal councel her too tel her fuchure huzband the whole stoery and too trust too hiz generoscity.”

Milverton chuckeld.

“U evvidently doo not no the Erl,” ced he.

From the baffeld looc uppon Hoamsez face, I cood ce cleerly dhat he did.

“Whaut harm iz dhare in the letterz?” he aasct.

“Dha ar spriatly—verry spriatly,” Milverton aancerd. “The lady wauz a charming corespondent. But I can ashure u dhat the Erl ov Dovercort wood fale too apreesheyate them. Houwevver, cins u thhinc uthewise, we wil let it rest at dhat. It iz puerly a matter ov biznes. If u thhinc dhat it iz in the best interests ov yor cliyent dhat these letterz shood be plaist in the handz ov the Erl, then u wood indede be foolish too pa so larj a sum ov munny too regane them.” He rose and ceezd hiz astracan cote.

Hoamz wauz gra withe an’gher and mortificaishon.

“Wate a littel,” he ced. “U go too faast. We shood certainly make evvery effort too avoid scandal in so dellicate a matter.”

Milverton relapst intoo hiz chare.

“I wauz shure dhat u wood ce it in dhat lite,” he perd.

“At the same time,” Hoamz continnude, “Lady Evaa iz not a welthhy woomman. I ashure u dhat too thouzand poundz wood be a drane uppon her rezoercez, and dhat the sum u name iz utterly beyond her pouwer. I beg, dhaerfoer, dhat u wil modderate yor demaandz, and dhat u wil retern the letterz at the price I indicate, which iz, I ashure u, the hiyest dhat u can ghet.”

Milvertonz smile braudend and hiz ise twinkeld humorously.

“I am aware dhat whaut u sa iz tru about the ladese rezoercez,” ced he. “At the same time u must admit dhat the ocaizhon ov a ladese marrage iz a verry sutabel time for her frendz and rellatiavz too make sum littel effort uppon her behaaf. Dha ma hezsitate az too an axeptabel wedding prezsent. Let me ashure them dhat this littel bundel ov letterz wood ghiv moer joi dhan aul the candelaabraa and butter-dishez in Lunden.”

“It iz imposcibel,” ced Hoamz.

“Dere me, dere me, hou unforchunate!” cride Milverton, taking out a bulky pocketbooc. “I cannot help thhinking dhat ladese ar il-adviazd in not making an effort. Looc at this!” He held up a littel note withe a cote-ov-armz uppon the envelope. “Dhat belongz too—wel, perhaps it iz hardly fare too tel the name until too-moro morning. But at dhat time it wil be in the handz ov the ladese huzband. And aul becauz she wil not fiand a beggarly sum which she cood ghet bi terning her dimondz intoo paist. It iz such a pitty! Nou, u remember the sudden end ov the en’gaijment betwene the Onnorabel Mis Mialz and Cuunel Dorking? Oonly too dase befoer the wedding, dhare wauz a parragraaf in the *Morning Poast* too sa dhat it wauz aul of. And whi? It iz aulmoast increddibel, but the abcerd sum ov twelv hundred poundz wood

hav cetteld the whole qweschon. Iz it not pittifool? And here I fiand u, a man ov cens, bogling about termz, when yor cliyents fuchure and onnor ar at stake. U cerprise me, Mr. Hoamz.”

“Whaut I sa iz tru,” Hoamz aancerd. “The munny canot be found. Shuerly it iz better for u too take the substaanshal sum which I offer dhan too ruwin this woommanz carere, which can proffit u in no wa?”

“Dhare u make a mistake, Mr. Hoamz. An expoazhure wood proffit me indirectly too a concidderabel extent. I hav ate or ten cimmilar cacez machuring. If it wauz cerculated among them dhat I had made a cevere exaampel ov the Lady Evaa, I shood fiand aul ov them much moer open too rezon. U ce mi point?”

Hoamz sprang from hiz chare.

“Ghet behiand him, Wautson! Doant let him out! Nou, cer, let us ce the contents ov dhat noatbooc.”

Milverton had glided az qwic az a rat too the cide ov the roome and stood withe hiz bac against the waul.

“Mr. Hoamz, Mr. Hoamz,” he ced, terning the frunt ov hiz cote and exhibbiting the but ov a larj revolver, which proected from the incide pocket. “I hav bene expecting u too doo sumthhing oridginal. This haz bene dun so often, and whaut good haz ever cum from it? I ashure u dhat I am armd too the teeth, and I am perfectly prepaerd too use mi wepponz, nowing dhat the lau wil supoert me. Beciadz, yor suposishon dhat I wood bring the letterz here in a noatbooc iz entiarly mistaken. I wood doo nuthhing so foolish. And nou, gentelmen, I hav wun or too littel intervuse this evening, and it iz a long drive too Hampsted.” He

stept forward, tooc up hiz cote, lade hiz hand on hiz revolver, and ternd too the doer. I pict up a chare, but Hoamz shooc hiz hed, and I lade it doun agane. Withe bou, a smile, and a twinkel, Milverton wauz out ov the roome, and a fu moments aafter we herd the slam ov the carrage doer and the rattel ov the wheelz az he drove awa.

Hoamz sat moashonles bi the fire, hiz handz berrede depe in hiz trouser pockets, hiz chin sunc uppon hiz brest, hiz ise fixt uppon the glowing emberz. For haaf an our he wauz cilent and stil. Then, withe the geschure ov a man whoo haz taken hiz decizhon, he sprang too hiz fete and paast intoo hiz bedroome. A littel later a rakish yung werzman, withe a goty beard and a swaggher, lit hiz cla pipe at the lamp befoer decending intoo the strete. "Ile be bac sum time, Wautson," ced he, and vannisht intoo the nite. I understood dhat he had opend hiz campane against Charlz Augustus Milverton, but I littel dreemd the strainj shape which dhat campane wauz destiand too take.

For sum dase Hoamz came and went at aul ourz in this atire, but beyond a remarc dhat hiz time wauz spent at Hampsted, and dhat it wauz not waisted, I nu nuthhing ov whaut he wauz doowing. At laast, houwevver, on a wiald, tempeschuwous evening, when the wind screemd and ratteld against the windose, he reternd from hiz laast expedishon, and havving remuivd hiz disghise he sat befoer the fire and laaft hartily in hiz cilent inword fashon.

"U wood not caul me a marreying man, Wautson?"

"No, indede!"

"Ule be interested too here dhat Ime en'gaijd."

"Mi dere fello! I con'grat——"

"Too Milvertonz housmade."

"Good hevvenz, Hoamz!"

"I waunted informaishon, Wautson."

"Shuerly u hav gon too far?"

"It wauz a moast nescenary step. I am a plumber withe a rising biznes, Escot, bi name. I hav wauct out withe her eche evening, and I hav tauct withe her. Good hevvenz, dhose taux! Houwevver, I hav got aul I waunted. I no Milvertonz hous az I no the paalm ov mi hand."

"But the gherl, Hoamz?"

He shrugd hiz shoalderz.

"U caant help it, mi dere Wautson. U must pla yor cardz az best u can when such a stake iz on the tabel. Houwevver, I rejois too sa dhat I hav a hated rival, whoo wil certainly cut me out the instant dhat mi bac iz ternd. Whaut a splendid nite it iz!"

"U like this wether?"

"It suets mi perpoce. Wautson, I mene too berghel Milvertonz hous too-nite."

I had a catching ov the breth, and mi skin went coald at the werdz, which wer sloly utterd in a tone ov concentrated rezolueshon. Az a flash ov liatning in the nite shose up in an instant evvery detale ov a wiald landscape, so at wun glaans I

ceemd too ce evvery poscibel rezult ov such an acshon—the detecshon, the capchure, the onnord carere ending in irrepparabel falure and disgrace, mi frend himcelf liying at the mercy ov the ojous Milverton.

“For hevvenz sake, Hoamz, thhinc whaut u ar doowing,” I cride.

“Mi dere fello, I hav ghivven it evvery concideraishon. I am nevver precippitate in mi acshonz, nor wood I adopt so energettich and, indede, so dain’gerous a coers, if enny uther wer poscibel. Let us looc at the matter cleerly and faerly. I supose dhat u wil admit dhat the acshon iz moraly justifiyabel, dho tecnicaly crimminal. Too berghel hiz hous iz no moer dhan too forcibly take hiz pocketbooc—an acshon in which u wer prepaerd too ade me.”

I ternd it over in mi miand.

“Yes,” I ced, “it iz moraly justifiyabel so long az our obgett iz too take no artikelz save dhose which ar uezd for an ilegal perpoce.”

“Exactly. Cins it iz moraly justifiyabel, I hav oonly too concidder the qweschon ov personal risc. Shuerly a gentelman shood not la much stres uppon this, when a lady iz in moast desperate nede ov hiz help?”

“U wil be in such a fauls posishon.”

“Wel, dhat iz part ov the risc. Dhare iz no uther poscibel wa ov reganing these letterz. The unforchunate lady haz not the munny, and dhare ar nun ov her pepel in whoome she cood confide. Too-moro iz the laast da ov grace, and unles we can ghet the letterz too-nite, this villane wil be az good az hiz werd and wil bring about her ruwin. I must, dhaerfoer, abandon mi

cliyent too her fate or I must pla this laast card. Betwene ourcelvz, Wautson, its a spoerting juwel betwene this fello Milverton and me. He had, az u sau, the best ov the ferst exchain'gez, but mi celf-respect and mi reputaishon ar concernd too fite it too a finnish."

"Wel, I doant like it, but I supose it must be," ced I. "When doo we start?"

"U ar not cumming."

"Then u ar not gowing," ced I. "I ghiv u mi werd ov onnor—and I nevvver broke it in mi life—dhat I wil take a cab strate too the polece-staishon and ghiv u awa, unles u let me share this advenchure withe u."

"U caant help me."

"Hou doo u no dhat? U caant tel whaut ma happen. Enniwa, mi rezolueshon iz taken. Uther pepel beciadz u hav celf-respect, and even reputaishonz."

Hoamz had looct anoid, but hiz brou cleerd, and he clapt me on the shoalder.

"Wel, wel, mi dere fello, be it so. We hav shaerd this same roome for sum yeerz, and it wood be amusing if we ended bi sharing the same cel. U no, Wautson, I doant miand confescing too u dhat I hav aulwase had an ideyaa dhat I wood hav made a hily efishent crimminal. This iz the chaans ov mi liaftime in dhat direcshon. Ce here!" He tooc a nete littel lether cace out ov a drauwer, and opening it he exhibbited a number ov shining instruments. "This iz a ferst-claas, up-too-date bergling kit, withe nickel-plated gemmy, dimond-tipt glaas-cutter, adaptabel

kese, and evvery moddern impruivment which the march ov civilizaishon demaandz. Here, too, iz mi darc lantern. Evverithhing iz in order. Hav u a pare ov cilent shoose?"

"I hav rubber-soald tennis shoose."

"Exelent! And a maasc?"

"I can make a cuppel out ov blac cilc."

"I can ce dhat u hav a strong, natchural tern for this sort ov thhing. Verry good, doo u make the maasx. We shal hav sum coald supper befoer we start. It iz nou nine-thherty. At elevven we shal drive az far az Chersch Ro. It iz a qworter ov an ourz wauc from dhare too Appeldor Touwerz. We shal be at werc befoer midnite. Milverton iz a hevvy sleper, and retiarz puncchuwaly at ten-thherty. Withe enny luc we shood be bac here bi too, withe the Lady Evaaz letterz in mi pocket."

Hoamz and I poot on our dres-cloadhz, so dhat we mite apere too be too thheyater-gowerz hoamword bound. In Oxford Strete we pict up a hansom and drove too an adres in Hampsted. Here we pade of our cab, and withe our grate coats buttond up, for it wauz bitterly coald, and the wind ceemd too blo throo us, we wauct along the ej ov the heeth.

"Its a biznes dhat needz dellicate treetment," ced Hoamz.

"These documents ar containd in a safe in the fellose studdy, and the studdy iz the anty-roome ov hiz bed-chaimber. On the uther hand, like aul these stout, littel men whoo doo themcelvz wel, he iz a plethoric sleper. Aggathaa—dhats mi *feyaansa*—cez it iz a joke in the cervants' haul dhat its imposcibel too wake the maaster. He haz a cecretary whoo iz devoted too hiz interests, and

nevver budgez from the studdy aul da. Dhats whi we ar gowing at nite. Then he haz a beest ov a dog which roamz the garden. I met Aggathaa late the laast too eveningz, and she lox the brute up so az too ghiv me a clere run. This iz the hous, this big wun in its one groundz. Throo the gate—nou too the rite among the lorelz. We mite poot on our maasx here, I thhinc. U ce, dhare iz not a glimmer ov lite in enny ov the windose, and evverithhing iz werking splendidly.”

Withe our blac cilc face-cuvveringz, which ternd us intoo too ov the moast trucculent figguerz in Lundon, we stole up too the cilent, gloomy hous. A sort ov tiald verandaa extended along wun cide ov it, liand bi cevveral windose and too doerz.

“Dhats hiz bedroome,” Hoamz whisperd. “This doer openz strate intoo the studdy. It wood sute us best, but it iz bolted az wel az loct, and we shood make too much noiz ghetting in. Cum round here. Dhaerz a greenhous which openz intoo the drauwing-roome.”

The place wauz loct, but Hoamz remuivd a cerkel ov glaas and ternd the ke from the incide. An instant aafterwordz he had cloazd the doer behiand us, and we had becum fellonz in the ise ov the lau. The thhic, worm are ov the concervatory and the rich, choking fraigrans ov exottic plaants tooc us bi the throte. He ceezd mi hand in the darcnes and led me swiftly paast banx ov shrubz which brusht against our facez. Hoamz had remarcabel pouwerz, caerfooly cultivated, ov ceying in the darc. Stil hoalding mi hand in wun ov hiz, he opend a doer, and I wauz vaigly conshous dhat we had enterd a larj roome in which a cigar had bene smoact not long befoer. He felt hiz wa among the fernichure, opend anuther doer, and cloazd it behiand us. Pooting out mi hand I felt cevveral coats hanging from the waul, and I understood dhat I wauz in a passage. We paast along it and Hoamz

verry gently opend a doer uppon the rite-hand cide. Sumthhing rusht out at us and mi hart sprang intoo mi mouth, but I cood hav laaft when I reyaliazd dhat it wauz the cat. A fire wauz barning in this nu roome, and agane the are wauz hevvy withe tobacco smoke. Hoamz enterd on tipto, wated for me too follo, and then verry gently cloazd the doer. We wer in Milvertonz studdy, and a *portière* at the farther cide shode the entrans too hiz bedroome.

It wauz a good fire, and the roome wauz iluminated bi it. Nere the doer I sau the gleme ov an electric swich, but it wauz un'necesary, even if it had bene safe, too tern it on. At wun cide ov the fiarplace wauz a hevvy kertane which cuvverd the ba windo we had cene from outside. On the uthar cide wauz the doer which comunicated withe the verandaa. A desc stood in the center, withe a terning-chare ov shining red lether. Opposite wauz a larj booc'cace, withe a marbel bust ov Athheny on the top. In the corner, betwene the booc'cace and the waul, dhare stood a taul, grene safe, the fiarlite flashing bac from the pollisht braas nobz uppon its face. Hoamz stole acros and looct at it. Then he crept too the doer ov the bedroome, and stood withe slaanting hed liscening intently. No sound came from within. Meenwhile it had struc me dhat it wood be wise too cecure our retrete throo the outer doer, so I exammiand it. Too mi amaizment, it wauz niather loct nor bolted. I tucht Hoamz on the arm, and he ternd hiz maasct face in dhat direcshon. I sau him start, and he wauz evvidently az cerpriazd az I.

"I doant like it," he whisperd, pootting hiz lips too mi verry ere.
"I caant qwite make it out. Ennihou, we hav no time too loose."

"Can I doo ennithhing?"

“Yes, stand bi the doer. If u here enniwun cum, bolt it on the incide, and we can ghet awa az we came. If dha cum the uther wa, we can ghet throo the doer if our job iz dun, or hide behiand these windo kertainz if it iz not. Doo u understand?”

I nodded, and stood bi the doer. Mi ferst feling ov fere had paast awa, and I thrild nou withe a kener sest dhan I had evver enjoid when we wer the defenderz ov the lau insted ov its defiyerz. The hi obgect ov our mishon, the conshousnes dhat it wauz uncelfish and shivvalrous, the villanous carracter ov our oponent, aul added too the spoerting interest ov the advenchure. Far from feling ghilty, I rejoist and exulted in our dain'gerz. Withe a glo ov admiraishon I waucht Hoamz unroling hiz cace ov instruments and chusing hiz toole withe the caalm, ciyentiffic accuracy ov a cerjon whoo performz a dellicate operaishon. I nu dhat the opening ov saifs wauz a particcular hobby withe him, and I understood the joi which it gave him too be confrunted withe this grene and goald monster, the draggon which held in its mau the reputaishonz ov menny fare ladese. Terning up the cuffs ov hiz dres-cote—he had plaist hiz overcote on a chare—Hoamz lade out too driliz, a gemmy, and cevveral skelleton kese. I stood at the center doer withe mi ise glaancing at eche ov the utherz, reddy for enny emergency, dho, indede, mi planz wer sumwhaut vaghe az too whaut I shood doo if we wer interupted. For haaf an our, Hoamz werct withe concentrated ennergy, laying down wun toole, picking up anuther, handling eche withe the strength and dellicacy ov the traind mecannic. Finaly I herd a clic, the braud grene doer swung open, and incide I had a glimps ov a number ov paper packets, eche tide, ceeld, and inscriabd. Hoamz pict wun out, but it wauz az hard too rede bi the flickering fire, and he dru out hiz littel darc lantern, for it wauz too dain'gerous, withe Milverton in the next roome, too swich on the electric lite. Suddenly I sau him hault, liscen intently, and then in an instant he had swung the doer ov the safe too, pict up hiz cote, stuft

hiz tuilz intoo the pockets, and darted behiand the windo kertane, moashonning me too doo the same.

It wauz oanly when I had joind him dhare dhat I herd whaut had alarmd hiz qwicker cencez. Dhare wauz a noiz sumwhare within the hous. A doer slamd in the distans. Then a confuezd, dul mermer broke itcelf intoo the mezhuerd thud ov hevvy footsteps rappidly aproching. Dha wer in the passage outside the roome. Dha pauzd at the doer. The doer opend. Dhare wauz a sharp snic az the electric lite wauz ternd on. The doer cloazd wuns moer, and the pun'gent reke ov a strong cigar wauz boern too our nostrilz. Then the footsteps continnude baqword and forword, baqword and forword, within a fu yardz ov us. Finaly dhare wauz a creke from a chare, and the footsteps ceest. Then a ke clict in a loc, and I herd the ruscel ov paperz.

So far I had not daerd too looc out, but nou I gently parted the divizhon ov the kertainz in frunt ov me and peept throo. From the preshure ov Hoamsez shoalder against mine, I nu dhat he wauz sharing mi observaishonz. Rite in frunt ov us, and aulmoast within our reche, wauz the braud, rounded bac ov Milverton. It wauz evvident dhat we had entiarly miscalculated hiz muivments, dhat he had nevver bene too hiz bedroome, but dhat he had bene citting up in sum smoking or billeyard roome in the farther wing ov the hous, the windose ov which we had not cene. Hiz braud, grizseld hed, withe its shining pach ov bauldnes, wauz in the imejate foerground ov our vizhon. He wauz lening far bac in the red lether chare, hiz legz outstreht, a long, blac cigar progecting at an an'ghel from hiz mouth. He woer a cemmy-military smoking jacket, clarret-cullord, withe a blac velvet collar. In hiz hand he held a long, legal document which he wauz reding in an indolent fashon, blowing ringz ov tobacco smoke from hiz lips az he did so. Dhare wauz no prommice ov a spedy deparchure in hiz compoazd baring and hiz cumfortabel attichude.

I felt Hoamsez hand stele intoo mine and ghiv me a reyashuring shake, az if too sa dhat the cichuwaishon wauz within hiz pouwerz, and dhat he wauz esy in hiz miand. I wauz not shure whether he had cene whaut wauz oonly too obveyous from mi posishon, dhat the doer ov the

safe wauz imperfectly cloazd, and dhat Milverton mite at enny moment observ it. In mi one miand I had determiand dhat if I wer shure, from the rigiddity ov hiz gase, dhat it had caut hiz i, I wood at wuns spring out, thro mi grate cote over hiz hed, pinyon him, and leve the rest too Hoamz. But Milverton never looct up. He wauz lan'gwidly interested bi the paperz in hiz hand, and page aafter page wauz ternd az he follode the argument ov the lauyer. At leest, I thaut, when he haz finnisht the doccument and the cigar he wil go too hiz roome, but befoer he had reecht the end ov iather, dhare came a remarcabel devellopment, which ternd our thauts intoo qwite anuther channel.

Cevveral tiamz I had observd dhat Milverton looct at hiz wauch, and wuns he had rizsen and sat doun agane, withe a geschure ov impaishens. The ideyaa, houwevver, dhat he mite hav an apointment at so strainj an our never okerd too me until a faint sound reecht mi eerz from the verandaa outside. Milverton dropt hiz paperz and sat ridgid in hiz chare. The sound wauz repeted, and then dhare came a gentel tap at the doer. Milverton rose and openid it.

“Wel,” ced he, kertly, “u ar neerly haaf an our late.”

So this wauz the explanaishon ov the unloct doer and ov the nocternal vidgil ov Milverton. Dhare wauz the gentel ruscel ov a woommanz dres. I had cloazd the slit betwene the kertainz az Milvertonz face had ternd in our direcshon, but nou I venchuerd verry caerfooly too open it wuns moer. He had rezhuemd hiz cete, the

cigar stil progecting at an insolent an'ghel from the corner ov hiz mouth. In frunt ov him, in the fool glare ov the electric lite, dhare stood a taul, slim, darc woomman, a vale over her face, a mantel draun round her chin. Her breth came qwic and faast, and evvery inch ov the liathe figgure wauz qwivvering withe strong emoashon.

“Wel,” ced Milverton, “u made me loose a good niats rest, mi dere. I hope ule proove werth it. U coodnt cum enny uther time—a?”

The woomman shooc her hed.

“Wel, if u coodnt u coodnt. If the Countes iz a hard mistres, u hav yor chaans too ghet levvel withe her nou. Bles the gherl, whaut ar u shivvering about? Dhats rite. Pool yorself toogheter. Nou, let us ghet doun too biznes.” He tooc a noatbooc from the drauwer ov hiz desc. “U sa dhat u hav five letterz which compromise the Countes dAlbert. U waunt too cel them. I waunt too bi them. So far so good. It oonly remainz too fix a price. I shood waunt too inspect the letterz, ov coers. If dha ar reyaly good spescimenz—Grate hevvenz, iz it u?”

The woomman, widhout a werd, had raizd her vale and dropt the mantel from her chin. It wauz a darc, handsum, clere-cut face which confrunted Milverton—a face withe a kervd nose, strong, darc iabrouz shading hard, glittering ise, and a strate, thhin-lipt mouth cet in a dain'gerous smile.

“It iz I,” she ced, “the woomman whoose life u hav ruwind.”

Milverton laaft, but fere viabrated in hiz vois. “U wer so verry obstinate,” ced he. “Whi did u drive me too such extremmitese? I ashure u I woodnt hert a fli ov mi one acord,

but evvery man haz hiz biznes, and whaut wauz I too doo? I poot the price wel within yor meenz. U wood not pa.”

“So u cent the letterz too mi huzband, and he—the noablest gentelman dhat evver livd, a man whoose buits I wauz nevver werthy too lace—he broke hiz gallant hart and dide. U remember dhat laast nite, when I came throo dhat doer, I begd and prade u for mercy, and u laaft in mi face az u ar triying too laaf nou, oonly yor couward hart canot kepe yor lips from twitching. Yes, u nevver thaut too ce me here agane, but it wauz dhat nite which taut me hou I cood mete u face too face, and alone. Wel, Charlz Milverton, whaut hav u too sa?”

“Doant imadgine dhat u can boolly me,” ced he, rising too hiz fete. “I hav oonly too rase mi vois and I cood caul mi cervants and hav u arested. But I wil make alouwans for yor natchural an’gher. Leve the roome at wuns az u came, and I wil sa no moer.”

The woomman stood withe her hand berrede in her boozzom, and the same dedly smile on her thhin lips.

“U wil ruwin no moer livz az u hav ruwind mine. U wil ring no moer harts az u rung mine. I wil fre the werld ov a poizonous thhing. Take dhat, u hound—and dhat!—and dhat!—and dhat!”

She had draun a littel gleming revolver, and emptede barrel aafter barrel intoo Milvertonz boddy, the muzsel within too fete ov hiz shert frunt. He shranc awa and then fel forword uppon the tabel, coffin fureyously and clauwing among the paperz. Then he staggherd too hiz fete, receevd anuther shot, and roald uppon the floer. “Uve dun me,” he cride, and la stil. The woomman

lookt at him intently, and ground her hele intoo hiz upternd face. She looct agane, but dhare wauz no sound or muivment. I herd a sharp ruscel, the nite are blu intoo the heted roome, and the aven'ger wauz gon.

No interferens uppon our part cood hav saivd the man from hiz fate, but, az the woomman poerd boollet aafter boollet intoo Milvertonz shrinking boddy I wauz about too spring out, when I felt Hoamsez coald, strong graasp uppon mi rist. I understood the whole argument ov dhat ferm, restraining grip—dhat it wauz no afare ov ourz, dhat justice had overtaken a villane, dhat we had our one jutese and our one objects, which wer not too be lost cite ov. But hardly had the woomman rusht from the roome when Hoamz, with

with swift, cilent steps, wauz over at the uther doer. He ternd the ke in the loc. At the same instant we herd voicez in the hous and the sound ov hurreying fete. The revolver shots had rouzd the hous'hoald. Withe perfect cuilnes Hoamz slipt acros too the safe, fild hiz too armz withe bundelz ov letterz, and poerd them aul intoo the fire. Agane and agane he did it, until the safe wauz empty. Sumwun ternd the handel and bete uppon the outside ov the doer. Hoamz looct swiftly round. The letter which had bene the mescen'ger ov deth for Milverton la, aul motteld withe hiz blud, uppon the tabel. Hoamz tost it in among the blasing paperz. Then he dru the ke from the outer doer, paast throo aafter me, and loct it on the outside. "This wa, Wautson," ced he, "we can scale the garden waul in this direcshon."

I cood not hav beleevd dhat an alarm cood hav spred so swiftly. Looocking bac, the huge hous wauz wun blase ov lite. The frunt doer wauz open, and figguerz wer rushing down the drive. The whole garden wauz alive withe pepel, and wun fello raizd a vu-hallo az we emerjd from the verandaa and follode hard at our heelz. Hoamz ceemd too no the groundz perfectly, and he

thredded hiz wa swiftly among a plaantaishon ov smaul trese, I cloce at hiz heelz, and our foermoast pershuwer panting behiand us. It wauz a cix-foot waul which bard our paath, but he sprang too the top and over. Az I did the same I felt the hand ov the man behiand me grab at mi ankel, but I kict micelf fre and scambeld over a graas-strune coping. I fel uppon mi face among sum booshez, but Hoamz had me on mi fete in an instant, and tooghether we dasht awa across the huge expans ov Hampsted Heeth. We had run too mialz, I supose, befoer Hoamz at laast halted and liscend intently. Aul wauz absolute cilens behiand us. We had shaken of our pershuwerz and wer safe.

We had brefasted and wer smoking our morning pipe on the da aafter the remarcabel expereyens which I hav recorded, when Mr. Lestrade, ov Scotland Yard, verry sollem and imprescive, wauz usherd intoo our moddest citting-roome.

“Good-morning, Mr. Hoamz,” ced he; “good-morning. Ma I aasc if u ar verry bizsy just nou?”

“Not too bizsy too liscen too u.”

“I thaut dhat, perhaps, if u had nuthhing particcular on hand, u mite care too acist us in a moast remarcabel cace, which okerd oanly laast nite at Hampsted.”

“Dere me!” ced Hoamz. “Whaut wauz dhat?”

“A merder—a moast dramattic and remarcabel merder. I no hou kene u ar uppon these thhingz, and I wood take it az a grate favor if u wood step down too Appeldor Touwerz, and ghiv us the bennefit ov yor advice. It iz no ordinary crime. We hav had our ise uppon this Mr. Milverton for sum time, and, betwene ourcelvz, he wauz a bit ov a villane. He iz none too hav held

paperz which he uezd for blacmaling perpocez. These paperz hav aul bene bernd bi the merdererz. No artikel ov vallu wauz taken, az it iz probbabel dhat the crimminalz wer men ov good posishon, whoose sole obgett wauz too prevent soashal expoazhure."

"Crimminalz?" ced Hoamz. "Plural?"

"Yes, dhare wer too ov them. Dha wer az neerly az poscibel capchuerd red-handed. We hav dhare footmarx, we hav dhare descripshon, its ten too wun dhat we trace them. The ferst fello wauz a bit too active, but the cecond wauz caut bi the under-gardener, and oanly got awa aafter a strugghel. He wauz a middel-ciazd, strongly bilt man—square jau, thhic nec, moostaash, a maasc over hiz ise."

"Dhats raather vaghe," ced Sherloc Hoamz. "Mi, it mite be a descripshon ov Wautson!"

"Its tru," ced the inspector, withe amuezment. "It mite be a descripshon ov Wautson."

"Wel, Ime afrade I caant help u, Lestrade," ced Hoamz. "The fact iz dhat I nu this fello Milverton, dhat I concidderd him wun ov the moast dain'gerous men in Lunden, and dhat I thhinc dhare ar certane criamz which the lau canot tuch, and which dhaerfoer, too sum extent, justifi private revenj. No, its no uce arguwing. I hav made up mi miand. Mi cimpathese ar withe the crimminalz raather dhan withe the victim, and I wil not handel this cace."

Hoamz had not ced wun werd too me about the tradgedy which we had

witnest, but I observd aul the morning dhat he wauz in hiz moast thautfool moode, and he gave me the impreshon, from hiz vacant

ise and hiz abstracted manner, ov a man whoo iz striving too recaul sumthhing too hiz memmory. We wer in the middel ov our lunch, when he suddenly sprang too hiz fete. "Bi Jove, Wautson, Ive got it!" he cride. "Take yor hat! Cum withe me!" He hurrede at hiz top spede doun Baker Strete and along Oxford Strete, until we had aulmoast reecht Regent Cercus. Here, on the left hand, dhare standz a shop windo fild withe fotograafs ov the celebritese and butese ov the da. Hoamsez ise fixt themcelvz uppon wun ov them, and following hiz gase I sau the picchure ov a regal and staitly lady in Coert dres, withe a hi dimond teyaaraa uppon her nobel hed. I looct at dhat dellicaitly kervd nose, at the marct iabrouz, at the strate mouth, and the strong littel chin beneeth it. Then I caut mi breth az I red the time-onnord titel ov the grate nobelman and staitzman whose wife she had bene. Mi ise met dhose ov Hoamz, and he poot hiz fin'gher too hiz lips az we ternd awa from the windo.

THE ADVENCHURE OV THE CIX NAPOLEYONZ

It wauz no verry unnuezhuwal thhing for Mr. Lestrade, ov Scotland Yard,

too looc in uppon us ov an evening, and hiz vizsits wer welcum too Sherloc Hoamz, for dha enabeld him too kepe in tuch withe aul dhat wauz gowing on at the polece hedqworterz. In retern for the nuse which Lestrade wood bring, Hoamz wauz aulwase reddy too liscen withe atenshon too the detailz ov enny cace uppon which the detective wauz en'gaijd, and wauz abel ocaizhonaly, widhout enny active interferens, too ghiv sum hint or sugeschon draun from hiz one vaast nollej and expereyens.

On this particcular evening, Lestrade had spoken ov the wether and the nuespaperz. Then he had faulen cilent, puffing thautfooly at hiz cigar. Hoamz looct keenly at him.

“Ennithhing remarcabel on hand?” he aasct.

“O, no, Mr. Hoamz—nuthhing verry particcular.”

“Then tel me about it.”

Lestrade laaft.

“Wel, Mr. Hoamz, dhare iz no uce deniying dhat dhare *iz* sumthhing on mi miand. And yet it iz such an abcerd biznes, dhat I hezsitated too bother u about it. On the uther hand, auldho it iz trivveyal, it iz undoutedly qwere, and I no dhat u hav a taist for aul dhat iz out ov the common. But, in mi opinyon, it cumz moer in Dr. Wautsonz line dhan ourz.”

“Disese?” ced I.

“Madnes, ennihou. And a qwere madnes, too. U woodnt thhinc dhare wauz enniwun livving at this time ov da whoo had such a haitred ov Napoleyon the Ferst dhat he wood brake enny image ov him dhat he cood ce.”

Hoamz sanc bac in hiz chare.

“Dhats no biznes ov mine,” ced he.

“Exactly. Dhats whaut I ced. But then, when the man comits berglary in order too brake imagez which ar not hiz one, dhat bringz it awa from the doctor and on too the poleesman.”

Hoamz sat up agane.

“Berglary! This iz moer interesting. Let me here the detailz.”

Lestrade tooc out hiz ofishal noatbooc and refresht hiz memmory from its pagez.

“The ferst cace repoerted wauz foer dase ago,” ced he. “It wauz at the shop ov Mors Hudson, whoo haz a place for the sale ov picchuerz and statchuse in the Kennington Rode. The acistant had left the frunt shop for an instant, when he herd a crash, and hurreying in he found a plaaster bust ov Napoleyon, which stood withe cevveral uther werx ov art uppon the counter, liying shivverd intoo fragments. He rusht out intoo the rode, but, auldho cevveral paacerz-bi declaerd dhat dha had notiast a man run out ov the shop, he cood niather ce enniwun nor cood he fiand enny meenz ov identifiying the raascal. It ceemd too be wun ov dhose censles acts ov hooliganizm which oker from time too time, and it wauz repoerted too the cunstabel on the bete az such. The plaaster caast wauz not werth moer dhan a fu shillingz, and the whole afare apeerd too be too chialdish for enny particcular investigaishon.

“The cecond cace, houwevver, wauz moer cereyous, and aulso moer cin‘gular. It okerd oanly laast nite.

“In Kennington Rode, and within a fu hundred yardz ov Mors Hudsonz shop, dhare livz a wel-none meddical practishoner, naimd Dr. Barnicot, whoo haz wun ov the largest practicez uppon the south cide ov the Temz. Hiz rezsidens and principal consulting-roome iz at Kennington Rode, but he haz a braanch cergery and dispensary at Lower Brixton Rode, too mialz awa. This Dr. Barnicot iz an enthuseyaastic admirer ov Napoleyon, and hiz hous iz fool ov boox, picchuerz, and rellix ov the French Emperor. Sum littel time ago he perchaist from Mors Hudson too jueplicate plaaster caasts ov the famous hed ov Napoleyon bi the French sculptor, Devine. Wun ov these he plaist in hiz haul in the hous at Kennington Rode, and the uther on the mantelpece ov

the cergery at Lower Brixton. Wel, when Dr. Barnicot came doun this morning he wauz astonnist too fiand dhat hiz hous had bene bergheld juring the nite, but dhat nuthhing had bene taken save the plaaster hed from the haul. It had bene carrede out and had bene dasht savvaijly against the garden waul, under which its splinterd fragments wer discuvverd."

Hoamz rubd hiz handz.

"This iz certainly verry novvel," ced he.

"I thaut it wood plese u. But I hav not got too the end yet. Dr. Barnicot wauz ju at hiz cergery at twelv oacloc, and u can imadgine hiz amaizment when, on ariving dhare, he found dhat the windo had bene opend in the nite and dhat the broken pecez ov hiz cecond bust wer strune aul over the roome. It had bene smasht too attomz whare it stood. In niather cace wer dhare enny cianz which cood ghiv us a clu az too the crimminal or lunatic whoo had dun the mischefe. Nou, Mr. Hoamz, u hav got the facts."

"Dha ar cin'gular, not too sa grotesc," ced Hoamz. "Ma I aasc whether the too busts smasht in Dr. Barnicots ruimz wer the exact jueplicaits ov the wun which wauz destroid in Mors Hudsonz shop?"

"Dha wer taken from the same moald."

"Such a fact must tel against the theyory dhat the man whoo braix them iz influwenst bi enny genneral haitred ov Napoleyon.

Conciddering

hou menny hundredz ov statchuse ov the grate Emperor must exist in Lunden, it iz too much too suppose such a cowincidens az dhat a promiscuwous iconnoclast shood chaans too beghin uppon thre

specimenz ov the same bust.”

“Wel, I thaut az u doo,” ced Lestrade. “On the uther hand, this Mors Hudson iz the pervayor ov busts in dhat part ov Lunden, and these thre wer the oonly wunz which had bene in hiz shop for yeerz. So, auldho, az u sa, dhare ar menny hundredz ov statchuse in Lunden, it iz verry probbabel dhat these thre wer the oonly wunz in dhat district. Dhaerfoer, a local fanattic wood beggin withe them. Whaut doo u thhinc, Dr. Wautson?”

“Dhare ar no limmits too the pocibillitese ov monomaiyyaa,” I aancerd. “Dhare iz the condishon which the moddern French cicologists hav cauld the *idée fixe*, which ma be triafling in carracter, and acumpanede bi complete sannity in evvery uther wa. A man whoo had red deeply about Napoleyon, or whoo had poscibly receevd sum hereditary fammily injury throo the grate wor, mite concevably form such an *ida fix* and under its influwens be capabel ov enny fantastic outrage.”

“Dhat woant doo, mi dere Wautson,” ced Hoamz, shaking hiz hed, “for no amount ov *idée fixe* wood enabel yor interesting monomaiyyac too fiand out whare these busts wer citchuwated.”

“Wel, hou doo *u* explane it?”

“I doant atempt too doo so. I wood oonly observ dhat dhare iz a certane method in the gentelmanz exentric procedingz. For exaampel, in Dr. Barnicots haul, whare a sound mite arouz the fammily, the bust wauz taken outcide befoer beying broken, wharaz in the cergery, whare dhare wauz les dain’ger ov an alarm, it wauz smasht whare it stood. The afare ceemz abcerdly triafling, and yet I dare caul nuthhing trivveyal when I reflect dhat sum ov mi moast clascic cacez hav had the leest prommicoments. U

wil remember, Wautson, hou the dredfool biznes ov the Abernetty fammily wauz ferst braut too mi notice bi the depth which the parsly had sunc intoo the butter uppon a hot da. I caant afoerd, dhaerfoer, too smile at yor thre broken busts, Lestrade, and I shal be verry much obliajd too u if u wil let me here ov enny fresh devellopment ov so cin'gular a chane ov events."

The devellopment for which mi frend had aasct came in a qwicker and an infiniatly moer tradgic form dhan he cood hav imadgiand. I wauz stil drescing in mi bedroome next morning, when dhare wauz a tap at the doer and Hoamz enterd, a tellegram in hiz hand. He rede it aloud:

"Cum instantly, 131, Pit Strete, Kensington.—LESTRADE."

"Whaut iz it, then?" I aasct.

"Doant no—ma be ennithhing. But I suspect it iz the ceeqwel ov the stoery ov the statchuse. In dhat cace our frend the immagine-braker haz begun operaishonz in anuther qworter ov Lunden. Dhaerz coffy on the tabel, Wautson, and I hav a cab at the doer."

In haaf an our we had reecht Pit Strete, a qwiyet littel baqwauter just becide wun ov the briskest currents ov Lunden life. No. 131 wauz wun ov a ro, aul flat-chested, respectabel, and moast unromantic dwellingz. Az we drove up, we found the ralingz in frunt ov the hous liand bi a cureyous croud. Hoamz whisceld.

"Bi Jorj! Its atempted merder at the leest. Nuthhing les wil hoald the Lunden message-boi. Dhaerz a dede ov viyolens indicated in dhat fellose round shoalderz and outstrecht nec. Whauts this, Wautson? The top steps swild down and the uther wunz dri.

Footsteps enuf, ennihou! Wel, wel, dhaerz Lestrade at the frunt windo, and we shal soone no aul about it."

The ofishal receevd us withe a verry grave face and shode us intoo a citting-roome, whare an exedingly unkempt and adgitated elderly man, clad in a flannel drescing-goun, wauz pacing up and doun. He wauz introjuest too us az the oner ov the hous—Mr. Horace Harker, ov the Central Pres Cindicate.

"Its the Napoleyon bust biznes agane," ced Lestrade. "U ceemd interested laast nite, Mr. Hoamz, so I thaut perhaps u wood be glad too be prezsent nou dhat the afare haz taken a verry much graver tern."

"Whaut haz it ternd too, then?"

"Too merder. Mr. Harker, wil u tel these gentelmen exactly whaut haz okerd?"

The man in the drescing-goun ternd uppon us withe a moast mellancoly face.

"Its an extrordinary thhing," ced he, "dhat aul mi life I hav bene colecting uther pepelz nuse, and nou dhat a reyal pece ov nuse haz cum mi one wa I am so confuezd and botherd dhat I caant poot too werdz tooghether. If I had cum in here az a gernalist, I shood hav intervude micelf and had too collumz in evvery evening paper. Az it iz, I am ghivving awa vallubel copy bi telling mi stoery over and over too a string ov different pepel, and I can make no uce ov it micelf. Houwevver, Ive herd yor name, Mr. Sherloc Hoamz, and if ule oonly explane this qwere biznes, I shal be pade for mi trubbel in telling u the stoery."

Hoamz sat doun and liscend.

“It aul ceemz too center round dhat bust ov Napoleyon which I baut for this verry roome about foer munths ago. I pict it up chepe from Harding Brutherz, too doerz from the Hi Strete Staishon. A grate dele ov mi gernalistic werc iz dun at nite, and I often rite until the erly morning. So it wauz too-da. I wauz citting in mi den, which iz at the bac ov the top ov the hous, about thre oacloc, when I wauz convinst dhat I herd sum soundz dounstaerz. I liscend, but dha wer not repeted, and I concluded dhat dha came from outside. Then suddenly, about five minnuets later, dhare came a moast horibel yel—the moast dredfool sound, Mr. Hoamz, dhat evver I herd. It wil ring in mi eerz az long az I liv. I sat frosen withe horror for a minnute or too. Then I ceezd the poker and went dounstaerz. When I enterd this roome I found the windo wide open, and I at wuns observd dhat the bust wauz gon from the mantelpece. Whi enny berglar shood take such a thhing paacez mi understanding, for it wauz oonly a plaaster caast and ov no reyal vallu whautevver.

“U can ce for yorcelf dhat enniwun gowing out throo dhat open windo cood reche the frunt doerstep bi taking a long stride. This wauz cleerly whaut the berglar had dun, so I went round and opened the doer. Stepping out intoo the darc, I neerly fel over a ded man, whoo wauz liying dhare. I ran bac for a lite and dhare wauz the poor fello, a grate gash in hiz throte and the whole place swimming in blud. He la on hiz bac, hiz nese draun up, and hiz mouth horibly open. I shal ce him in mi dreemz. I had just time too blo on mi polece-whiscel, and then I must hav fainted, for I nu nuthing moer until I found the polesman standing over me in the haul.”

“Wel, whoo wauz the merderd man?” aasct Hoamz.

“Dhaerz nuthhing too sho whoo he wauz,” ced Lestrade. “U shal ce the boddy at the morchuwary, but we hav made nuthhing ov it up too nou. He iz a taul man, sunbernd, verry pouwerfool, not moer dhan thherty. He iz poorly drest, and yet duz not apere too be a laborer. A horn-handeld clasp nife wauz liying in a poole ov blud beside him. Whether it wauz the weppon which did the dede, or whether it belongd too the ded man, I doo not no. Dhare wauz no name on hiz cloathing, and nuthhing in hiz pockets save an appel, sum string, a shilling map ov Lundon, and a fotograaf. Here it iz.”

It wauz evvidently taken bi a snapshot from a smaul cammeraa. It represented an alert, sharp-fechuerd cimmeyan man, withe thhic iabrouz and a verry peculeyar progecshon ov the lower part ov the face, like the muzsel ov a baboone.

“And whaut became ov the bust?” aasct Hoamz, aafter a caerfool studdy ov this picchure.

“We had nuse ov it just befoer u came. It haz bene found in the frunt garden ov an empty hous in Campden Hous Rode. It wauz broken intoo fragments. I am gowing round nou too ce it. Wil u cum?”

“Certainly. I must just take wun looc round.” He exammiand the carpet and the windo. “The fello had iather verry long legz or wauz a moast active man,” ced he. “Withe an areyaa beneeth, it wauz no mene fete too reche dhat windo lej and open dhat windo. Ghetting bac wauz comparriativly cimpel. Ar u cumming withe us too ce the remainz ov yor bust, Mr. Harker?”

The disconsolate gernalist had ceted himcelf at a riting-tabel.

“I must tri and make sumthhing ov it,” ced he, “dho I hav no dout dhat the ferst edishonz ov the evening paperz ar out aulreddy withe fool detailz. Its like mi luc! U remember when the stand fel at Doncaster? Wel, I wauz the oonly gernalist in the stand, and mi gernal the oonly wun dhat had no acount ov it, for I wauz too shaken too rite it. And nou Ile be too late withe a merder dun on mi one doerstep.”

Az we left the roome, we herd hiz pen travveling shrilly over the fuilscap.

The spot whare the fragments ov the bust had bene found wauz oonly a fu hundred yardz awa. For the ferst time our ise rested uppon this presentment ov the grate emperor, which ceemd too rase such frantic and destructive haitred in the miand ov the un‘none. It la scatterd, in splinterd shardz, uppon the graas. Hoamz pict up cevveral ov them and exammiand them caerfooly. I wauz convinst, from hiz intent face and hiz perpoasfool manner, dhat at laast he wauz uppon a clu.

“Wel?” aasct Lestrade.

Hoamz shrugd hiz shoalderz.

“We hav a long wa too go yet,” ced he. “And yet—and yet—wel, we hav sum sugestive facts too act uppon. The poseshon ov this triafling bust wauz werth moer, in the ise ov this strainj crimminal, dhan a human life. Dhat iz wun point. Then dhare iz the cin‘gular fact dhat he did not brake it in the hous, or imejaitly outside the hous, if too brake it wauz hiz sole obgect.”

“He wauz ratteld and busceld bi meting this uther fello. He

hardly nu whaut he wauz doowing."

"Wel, dhats liacly enuf. But I wish too caul yor atenshon verry particullarly too the posishon ov this hous, in the garden ov which the bust wauz destroid."

Lestrade looct about him.

"It wauz an empty hous, and so he nu dhat he wood not be disterbd in the garden."

"Yes, but dhare iz anuther empty hous farther up the strete which he must hav paast befoer he came too this wun. Whi did he not brake it dhare, cins it iz evvident dhat evvery yard dhat he carrede it increest the risc ov sumwun meting him?"

"I ghiv it up," ced Lestrade.

Hoamz pointed too the strete lamp abuv our hedz.

"He cood ce whaut he wauz doowing here, and he cood not dhare. Dhat wauz hiz rezon."

"Bi Jove! dhats tru," ced the detective. "Nou dhat I cum too thhinc ov it, Dr. Barnicots bust wauz broken not far from hiz red lamp. Wel, Mr. Hoamz, whaut ar we too doo withe dhat fact?"

"Too remember it—too docket it. We ma cum on sumthhing later which wil bare uppon it. Whaut steps doo u propose too take nou, Lestrade?"

"The moast practical wa ov ghetting at it, in mi opinyon, iz too identifi the ded man. Dhare shood be no difficulty about dhat. When we hav found whoo he iz and whoo hiz asoasheyaits ar, we

shood hav a good start in lerning whaut he wauz doowing in Pit Strete laast nite, and whoo it wauz whoo met him and kild him on the doerstep ov Mr. Horace Harker. Doant u thhinc so?"

"No dout; and yet it iz not qwite the wa in which I shood aproche the cace."

"Whaut wood u doo then?"

"O, u must not let me influwens u in enny wa. I sugest dhat u go on yor line and I on mine. We can compare noats aafterwordz, and eche wil suplement the uther."

"Verry good," ced Lestrade.

"If u ar gowing bac too Pit Strete, u mite ce Mr. Horace Harker. Tel him for me dhat I hav qwite made up mi miand, and dhat it iz certane dhat a dain'gerous homicidal lunatic, withe Napoleyonic deluezhonz, wauz in hiz hous laast nite. It wil be uesfool for hiz artikel."

Lestrade staerd.

"U doant cereyously beleve dhat?"

Hoamz smiald.

"Doant I? Wel, perhaps I doant. But I am shure dhat it wil interest Mr. Horace Harker and the subscriberz ov the Central Pres Cindicate. Nou, Wautson, I thhinc dhat we shal fiand dhat we hav a long and raather complex dase werc befoer us. I shood be glad, Lestrade, if u cood make it conveenient too mete us at Baker Strete at six oacloc this evening. Until then I shood like too kepe this fotograaf, found in the ded manz pocket. It

iz poscibel dhat I ma hav too aasc yor cumpany and acistans uppon a smaul expedishon which wil hav be undertaken too-nite, if mi chane ov rezoning shood proove too be corect. Until then good-bi and good luc!”

Sherloc Hoamz and I wauct toogheter too the Hi Strete, whare we stopt at the shop ov Harding Brutherz, whens the bust had bene perchaist. A yung acistant informd us dhat Mr. Harding wood be abcent until aafternoone, and dhat he wauz himcelf a nucummer, whoo cood ghiv us no informaishon. Hoamsez face shode hiz disapointment and anoiyans.

“Wel, wel, we caant expect too hav it aul our one wa, Wautson,” he ced, at laast. “We must cum bac in the aafternoone, if Mr. Harding wil not be here until then. I am, az u hav no dout cermiazd, endevvoring too trace these busts too dhare soers, in order too fiand if dhare iz not sumthhing peculeyar which ma acount for dhare remarcabel fate. Let us make for Mr. Mors Hudson, ov the Kennington Rode, and ce if he can thro enny lite uppon the problem.”

A drive ov an our braut us too the picchure-delerz establishment. He wauz a smaul, stout man withe a red face and a peppery manner.

“Yes, cer. On mi verry counter, cer,” ced he. “Whaut we pa raitz and taxez for I doant no, when enny ruffeyan can cum in and brake wunz goodz. Yes, cer, it wauz I whoo soald Dr. Barnicot hiz too statchuse. Disgraisfool, cer! A Niyilist plot—dhats whaut I make it. No wun but an annarkist wood go about braking statchuse. Red republicanz—dhats whaut I caul em. Whoo did I ghet the statchuse from? I doant ce whaut dhat haz too doo withe it. Wel, if u reyaly waunt too no, I got them from Ghelder & Co., in Charch Strete, Stepny. Dha ar a wel-none hous in the trade, and

hav bene this twenty yeerz. Hou menny had I? Thre—too and wun ar thre—too ov Dr. Barnicots, and wun smasht in braud dalite on mi one counter. Doo I no dhat fotograaf? No, I doant. Yes, I doo, dho. Whi, its Beppo. He wauz a kiand ov Italleyan pece-werc man, whoo made himcelf uesfool in the shop. He cood carv a bit, and ghild and frame, and doo od jobz. The fello left me laast weke, and Ive herd nuthhing ov him cins. No, I doant no whare he came from nor whare he went too. I had nuthhing against him while he wauz here. He wauz gon too dase befoer the bust wauz smasht.”

“Wel, dhats aul we cood rezonably expect from Mors Hudson,” ced Hoamz, az we emerjd from the shop. “We hav this Beppo az a common factor, boath in Kennington and in Kensington, so dhat iz werth a ten-mile drive. Nou, Wautson, let us make for Ghelder & Co., ov Stepny, the soers and origin ov the busts. I shal be cerpriazd if we doant ghet sum help doun dhare.”

In rappid suxeshon we paast throo the frinj ov fashonabel Lundoon, hotel Lundoon, ththeyatrical Lundoon, litterary Lundoon, comershal Lundoon, and, finally, marritime Lundoon, til we came too a rivvercide citty ov a hundred thouzand soalz, whare the tennement housez swelter and reke withe the outcaasts ov Urope. Here, in a braud thurrofare, wuns the abode ov welthy Citty merchants, we found the sculpchure werx for which we cercht. Outcide wauz a concidderabel yard fool ov monnumental masonry. Incide wauz a larj roome in which fifty werkerz wer carving or moalding. The mannager, a big blond German, receevd us civvily and gave a clere aancer too aul Hoamsez qweschonz. A refferens too hiz boox shode dhat hundredz ov caasts had bene taken from a marbel cobby ov Devianz hed ov Napoleyon, but dhat the thre which had bene cent too Mors Hudson a yere or so befoer had bene haaf ov a bach ov cix, the uther thre beying cent too Harding Brutherz, ov Kensington. Dhare wauz no rezon whi dhose cix shood be different

from enny ov the uther caasts. He cood sugest no poscibel cauz whi enniwun shood wish too destroi them—in fact, he laaft at the ideyaa. Dhare whoalsale price wauz cix shillingz, but the retaler wood ghet twelv or moer. The caast wauz taken in too moaldz from eche cide ov the face, and then these too profialz ov plaaster ov Parris wer joind tooghether too make the complete bust. The werc wauz uezhuwaly dun bi Italleyanz, in the roome we wer in. When finnisht, the busts wer poot on a tabel in the passage too dri, and aafterwordz stord. Dhat wauz aul he cood tel us.

But the producshon ov the fotograaf had a remarcabel efect uppon the mannager. Hiz face flusht withe an'gher, and hiz brouz notted over hiz blu Chutonic ise.

“Aa, the raascal!” he cride. “Yes, indede, I no him verry wel. This haz aulwase bene a respectabel establishment, and the oonly time dhat we hav evver had the polece in it wauz over this verry fello. It wauz moer dhan a yere ago nou. He niaft anuther Italleyan in the strete, and then he came too the werx withe the polece on hiz heelz, and he wauz taken here. Beppo wauz hiz name—hiz cecond name I nevvver nu. Cerv me rite for en'gaging a man withe such a face. But he wauz a good wercman—wun ov the best.”

“Whaut did he ghet?”

“The man livd and he got of withe a yere. I hav no dout he iz out nou, but he haz not daerd too sho hiz nose here. We hav a cuzsin ov hiz here, and I daersa he cood tel u whare he iz.”

“No, no,” cride Hoamz, “not a werd too the cuzsin—not a werd, I beg ov u. The matter iz verry important, and the farther I go withe it, the moer important it ceemz too gro. When u referd in yor ledger too the sale ov dhose caasts I observd dhat the

date wauz June 3rd ov laast yere. Cood u ghiv me the date when Beppo wauz arested?"

"I cood tel u rufly bi the pa-list," the mannager aancerd.

"Yes," he continnude, aafter sum terning over ov pagez, "he wauz pade laast on Ma 20th."

"Thanc u," ced Hoamz. "I doant thhinc dhat I nede intrude uppon yor time and paishens enny moer." Withe a laast werd ov caushon dhat he shood sa nuthhing az too our recerchez, we ternd our facez westword wuns moer.

The aafternoone wauz far advaanst befoer we wer Abel too snach a haisty lunchon at a restorant. A nuse-bil at the entrans anounst "Kensington Outrage. Merder bi a Madman," and the contents ov the paper shode dhat Mr. Horace Harker had got hiz acount intoo print aafter aul. Too collumz wer occupide withe a hily censaishonal and flouwery rendering ov the whole incident. Hoamz propt it against the cruwet-stand and red it while he ate. Wuns or twice he chuckeld.

"This iz aul rite, Wautson," ced he. "Liscen too this:

"It iz satisfactory too no dhat dhare can be no differens ov opinyon uppon this cace, cins Mr. Lestrade, wun ov the moast expereyenst memberz ov the ofishal foers, and Mr. Sherloc Hoamz, the wel-none consulting expert, hav eche cum too the concluezhon dhat the grotesc cerese ov incidents, which hav ended in so tradgic a fashon, arise from lunacy raather dhan from deliberate crime. No explanaishon save mental aberaishon can cuvver the facts.

"The Pres, Wautson, iz a moast vallubel instichueshon, if u oonly no hou too use it. And nou, if u hav qwite finnisht, we wil

harc bac too Kensington and ce whaut the mannager ov Harding Brutherz haz too sa on the matter.”

The founder ov dhat grate emporeyum pruivd too be a brisc, crisp littel person, verry dapper and qwic, withe a clere hed and a reddy tung.

“Yes, cer, I hav aulreddy red the acount in the evening paperz. Mr. Horace Harker iz a customer ov ourz. We suplide him withe the bust sum munths ago. We orderd thre busts ov dhat sort from Ghelder & Co., ov Stepny. Dha ar aul soald nou. Too whoome? O, I daersa bi consulting our sailz booc we cood verry esily tel u. Yes, we hav the entrese here. Wun too Mr. Harker u ce, and wun too Mr. Jociyaa Broun, ov Labernum Loj, Labernum Vale, Chizsic, and wun too Mr. Sandeford, ov Lower Grove Rode, Reding. No, I hav nevver cene this face which u sho me in the fotograaf. U wood hardly forghet it, wood u, cer, for Ive celdom cene an ugleyer. Hav we enny Italleyanz on the staaf? Yes, cer, we hav cevveral amung our wercpepel and clenerz. I daersa dha mite ghet a pepe at dhat sailz booc if dha waunted too. Dhare iz no particcular rezon for keping a wauch uppon dhat booc. Wel, wel, its a verry strainj biznes, and I hope dhat u wil let me no if ennithing cumz ov yor inqwirese.”

Hoamz had taken cevveral noats juring Mr. Hardingz evvidens, and I cood ce dhat he wauz thurroly sattisfide bi the tern which afaerz wer taking. He made no remarc, houwevver, save dhat, unles we hurrede, we shood be late for our apointment withe Lestrade. Shure enuf, when we reecht Baker Strete the detective wauz aulreddy dhare, and we found him pacing up and down in a fever ov impaishens. Hiz looc ov importans shode dhat hiz dase werc had not bene in vane.

“Wel?” he aasct. “Whaut luc, Mr. Hoamz?”

“We hav had a verry bizsy da, and not entiarly a waisted wun,” mi frend explaind. “We hav cene boath the retalerz and aulso the whoalsale manufacchurerz. I can trace eche ov the busts nou from the beghinning.”

“The busts,” cride Lestrade. “Wel, wel, u hav yor one methodz, Mr. Sherloc Hoamz, and it iz not for me too sa a werd against them, but I thhinc I hav dun a better dase werc dhan u. I hav identifide the ded man.”

“U doant sa so?”

“And found a cauz for the crime.”

“Splendid!”

“We hav an inspector whoo maix a speshalty ov Safron Hil and the Italleyan Qworter. Wel, this ded man had sum Catholic emblem round hiz nec, and dhat, along withe hiz cullor, made me thhinc he wauz from the South. Inspector Hil nu him the moment he caut cite ov him. Hiz name iz Peyetro Venuxy, from Napelz, and he iz wun ov the gratest cut-throats in Lundon. He iz conected withe the Maafeyaa, which, az u no, iz a ceecret polittical sociyety, enforcing its decrese bi merder. Nou, u ce hou the afare beghinz too clere up. The uther fello iz probbably an Italleyan aulso, and a member ov the Maafeyaa. He haz broken the ruelz in sum fashon. Peyetro iz cet uppon hiz trac. Probbably the fotograaf we found in hiz pocket iz the man himcelf, so dhat he ma not nife the rong person. He dogz the fello, he cese him enter a hous, he waits outcide for him, and in the scuffel he receevz hiz one deth-wuind. Hou iz dhat, Mr. Sherloc Hoamz?”

Hoamz clapt hiz handz aproovingly.

“Exelent, Lestrade, exelent!” he cride. “But I didnt qwite follo yor explanaishon ov the destrucshon ov the busts.”

“The busts! U nevver can ghet dhose busts out ov yor hed. Aafter aul, dhat iz nuthhing; petty larceny, cix munths at the moast. It iz the merder dhat we ar reyaly investigating, and I tel u dhat I am gathering aul the thredz intoo mi handz.”

“And the next stage?”

“Iz a verry cimpel wun. I shal go doun withe Hil too the Italleyan Qworter, fiand the man whoose fotograaf we hav got, and arest him on the charj ov merder. Wil u cum withe us?”

“I thhinc not. I fancy we can atane our end in a cimpler wa. I caant sa for certane, becauz it aul dependz—wel, it aul dependz uppon a factor which iz compleetly outside our controle. But I hav grate hoaps—in fact, the betting iz exactly too too wun—dhat if u wil cum withe us too-nite I shal be abel too help u too la him bi the heelz.”

“In the Italleyan Qworter?”

“No, I fancy Chizsic iz an adres which iz moer liacly too fiand him. If u wil cum withe me too Chizsic too-nite, Lestrade, Ile prommice too go too the Italleyan Qworter withe u too-moro, and no harm wil be dun bi the dela. And nou I thhinc dhat a fu ourz’ slepe wood doo us aul good, for I doo not propose too leve befoer elevven oacloc, and it iz unliacly dhat we shal be bac befoer morning. Ule dine withe us, Lestrade, and then u ar welcum too the sofaa until it iz time for us too start. In the meentime, Wautson, I shood be glad if u wood ring for an expres mescen’ger, for I hav a letter too cend and it iz

important dhat it shood go at wuns."

Hoamz spent the evening in rummaging among the fialz ov the oald daly paperz withe which wun ov our lumber-ruimz wauz pact. When at laast he decended, it wauz withe triyumf in hiz ise, but he ced nuthhing too iather ov us az too the rezult ov hiz recerchez. For mi one part, I had follode step bi step the methodz bi which he had traist the vareyouz wiandingz ov this complex cace, and, dho I cood not yet perceve the gole which we wood reche, I understood cleerly dhat Hoamz expected this grotesc crimminal too make an atempt uppon the too remaning busts, wun ov which, I rememberd, wauz at Chizsic. No dout the obgect ov our gerny wauz too cach him in the verry act, and I cood not but admire the cunning withe which mi frend had incerted a rong clu in the evening paper, so az too ghiv the fello the ideyaa dhat he cood continu hiz skeme withe impunity. I wauz not cerpriazd when Hoamz sugested dhat I shood take mi revolver withe me. He had himcelf pict up the loded hunting-crop, which wauz hiz favorite weppon.

A foer-wheler wauz at the doer at elevven, and in it we drove too a spot at the uther cide ov Hammersmith Brij. Here the cabman wauz directed too wate. A short wauc braut us too a cecluded rode frinjd withe plezzant housez, eche standing in its one groundz. In the lite ov a strete lamp we red "Labernum Villaa" uppon the gate-poast ov wun ov them. The occupants had evvidently retiard too rest, for aul wauz darc save for a fanlite over the haul doer, which shed a cin'ghel blerd cerkel on too the garden paath. The wooden fens which cepparated the groundz from the rode thru a dens blac shaddo uppon the inner cide, and here it wauz dhat we croucht.

"I fere dhat ule hav a long wate," Hoamz whisperd. "We ma thanc our starz dhat it iz not raning. I doant thhinc we can even

venchure too smoke too paas the time. Houwevver, its a too too wun chaans dhat we ghet sumthhing too pa us for our trubbel.”

It pruivd, houwevver, dhat our vidgil wauz not too be so long az Hoamz had led us too fere, and it ended in a verry sudden and cin'gular fashon. In an instant, widhout the leest sound too worn us ov hiz cumming, the garden gate swung open, and a liathe, darc figgure, az swift and active az an ape, rusht up the garden paath. We sau it whisc paast the lite throne from over the doer and disapere against the blac shaddo ov the hous. Dhare wauz a long pauz, juring which we held our breth, and then a verry gentel creking sound came too our eertz. The windo wauz beying opend. The noiz ceest, and agane dhare wauz a long cilens. The fello wauz making hiz wa intoo the hous. We sau the sudden flash ov a darc lantern incide the roome. Whaut he saut wauz evvidently not dhare, for agane we sau the flash throo anuther bliand, and then throo anuther.

“Let us ghet too the open windo. We wil nab him az he cliamz out,” Lestrade whisperd.

But befoer we cood moove, the man had emerjd agane. Az he came out intoo the glimmering pach ov lite, we sau dhat he carrede sumthhing white under hiz arm. He looct stelthhily aul round him. The cilens ov the deserted strete reyashuerd him. Terning hiz bac uppon us he lade down hiz berden, and the next instant dhare wauz the sound ov a sharp tap, follode bi a clatter and rattel. The man wauz so intent uppon whaut he wauz doowing dhat he nevver herd our steps az we stole acros the graas plot. Withe the bound ov a tigher Hoamz wauz on hiz bac, and an instant later Lestrade and I had him bi iather rist, and the handcufs had bene faacend. Az we ternd him over I sau a hidjous, sallo face, withe riathing, fureyous fechuerz, glaring up at us, and I nu dhat it wauz indede the man ov the fotograaf whoome we had

cecuerd.

But it wauz not our prizzoner too whoome Hoamz wauz ghivving hiz atenshon. Sqwauted on the doerstep, he wauz en'gajid in moast caerfooly exammining dhat which the man had braut from the hous. It wauz a bust ov Napoleyon, like the wun which we had cene dhat morning, and it had bene broken intoo cimmilar fragments. Caerfooly Hoamz held eche cepparate shard too the lite, but in no wa did it differ from enny uther shatterd pece ov plaaster. He had just completed hiz examinaishon when the haul liats flu up, the doer opend, and the oner ov the hous, a joveyal, rotund figgure in shert and trouserz, presented himcelf.

“Mr. Jociyaa Broun, I supose?” ced Hoamz.

“Yes, cer; and u, no dout, ar Mr. Sherloc Hoamz? I had the note which u cent bi the expres mescen'ger, and I did exactly whaut u toald me. We loct evvery doer on the incide and awated devellopments. Wel, Ime verry glad too ce dhat u hav got the raascal. I hope, gentelmen, dhat u wil cum in and hav sum refreshment.”

Houwevver, Lestrade wauz ancshous too ghet hiz man intoo safe qworterz,

so within a fu minnuets our cab had bene summond and we wer aul foer uppon our wa too Lundon. Not a werd wood our captive sa, but he glaerd at us from the shaddo ov hiz matted hare, and wuns, when mi hand ceemd within hiz reche, he snapt at it like a hun'gry wolf. We stade long enuf at the polece-staishon too lern dhat a cerch ov hiz cloathing reveeld nuthhing save a fu shillingz and a long sheeth nife, the handel ov which boer copeyous tracez ov recent blud.

“Dhats aul rite,” ced Lestrade, az we parted. “Hil nose aul

these gentry, and he wil ghiv a name too him. Ule fiand dhat mi thheyory ov the Maafeyaa wil werc out aul rite. But Ime shure I am exedingly obliajd too u, Mr. Hoamz, for the wercmanlike wa in which u lade handz uppon him. I doant qwite understand it aul yet.”

“I fere it iz raather too late an our for explanaishonz,” ced Hoamz. “Beciadz, dhare ar wun or too detailz which ar not finnisht of, and it iz wun ov dhose cacez which ar werth werking out too the verry end. If u wil cum round wuns moer too mi ruimz at six oacloc too-moro, I thhinc I shal be abel too sho u dhat even nou u hav not graaspt the entire mening ov this biznes, which presents sum fechuerz which make it absoluetly oridginal in the history ov crime. If evver I permit u too cronnikel enny moer ov mi littel problemz, Wautson, I foercy dhat u wil enliven yor pagez bi an acount ov the cin’gular advenchure ov the Napoleyonic busts.”

When we met agane next evening, Lestrade wauz fernisht withe much informaishon concerning our prizzoner. Hiz name, it apeerd, wauz Beppo, cecond name un’none. He wauz a wel-none nare-doo-wel amung the Italleyan collony. He had wuns bene a skilfool sculptor and had ernd an onnest livving, but he had taken too evil coercez and had twice aulreddy bene in jale—wuns for a petty thheft, and wuns, az we had aulreddy herd, for stabbing a fello-cuntriman. He cood tauc In’glish perfectly wel. Hiz rezonz for destroyng the busts wer stil un’none, and he refuezd too aancer enny qweschonz uppon the subgect, but the polece had discuvverd dhat these same busts mite verry wel hav bene made bi hiz one handz, cins he wauz en’gajjd in this claas ov werc at the establishment ov Ghelder & Co. Too aul this informaishon, much ov which we aulreddy nu, Hoamz liscend withe polite atenshon, but I, whoo nu him so wel, cood cleerly ce dhat hiz thauts wer elshware, and I detected a mixchure ov min’gheld unnesines and expectaishon beneath

dhat maasc which he wauz woant too ashume. At laast he started in hiz chare, and hiz ise britend. Dhare had bene a ring at the bel. A minnute later we herd steps uppon the staerz, and an elderly red-faist man withe grizseld cide-whiskerz wauz usherd in. In hiz rite hand he carrede an oald-fashond carpet-bag, which he plaist uppon the tabel.

“Iz Mr. Sherloc Hoamz here?”

Mi frend boud and smiald. “Mr. Sandeford, ov Reding, I suppose?” ced he.

“Yes, cer, I fere dhat I am a littel late, but the trainz wer auqword. U rote too me about a bust dhat iz in mi poseshon.”

“Exactly.”

“I hav yor letter here. U ced, ‘I desire too poses a copy ov Devianz Napoleyon, and am prepaerd too pa u ten poundz for the wun which iz in yor poseshon.’ Iz dhat rite?”

“Certainly.”

“I wauz verry much cerpriazd at yor letter, for I cood not imadgine hou u nu dhat I oand such a thhing.”

“Ov coers u must hav bene cerpriazd, but the explanaishon iz verry cimpel. Mr. Harding, ov Harding Brutherz, ced dhat dha had soald u dhare laast copy, and he gave me yor adres.”

“O, dhat wauz it, wauz it? Did he tel u whaut I pade for it?”

“No, he did not.”

“Wel, I am an onnest man, dho not a verry rich wun. I oanly gave fiftene shillingz for the bust, and I thhinc u aut too no dhat befoer I take ten poundz from u.

“I am shure the scrupel duz u onnor, Mr. Sandeford. But I hav naimd dhat price, so I intend too stic too it.”

“Wel, it iz verry handsum ov u, Mr. Hoamz. I braut the bust up withe me, az u aasct me too doo. Here it iz!” He opend hiz bag, and at laast we sau plaist uppon our tabel a complete spescimen ov dhat bust which we had aulreddy cene moer dhan wuns in fragments.

Hoamz tooc a paper from hiz pocket and lade a ten-pound note uppon the tabel.

“U wil kiandly cine dhat paper, Mr. Sandeford, in the prezsens ov these witnecez. It iz cimply too sa dhat u traansfer evvery poscibel rite dhat u evver had in the bust too me. I am a methoddical man, u ce, and u nevver no whaut tern events mite take aafterwordz. Thanc u, Mr. Sandeford; here iz yor munny, and I wish u a verry good evening.”

When our vizsitor had disapeerd, Sherloc Hoamsez muivments wer such az too rivvet our atenshon. He began bi taking a clene white cloth from a drauwer and laying it over the tabel. Then he plaist hiz nuly aqwiard bust in the center ov the cloth. Finaly, he pict up hiz hunting-crop and struc Napoleyon a sharp blo on the top ov the hed. The figgure broke intoo fragments, and Hoamz bent egherly over the shatterd remainz. Next instant, withe a loud shout ov triyumf he held up wun splinter, in which a round, darc obgect wauz fixt like a plum in a poodding.

“Gentelmen,” he cride, “let me introjuce u too the famous blac perl ov the Borjaaz.”

Lestrade and I sat cilent for a moment, and then, withe a spontainyous impuls, we boath broke at clapping, az at the wel-raut cricis ov a pla. A flush ov cullor sprang too Hoamsez pale cheex, and he boud too us like the maaster draamatist whoo receevz the hommage ov hiz augens. It wauz at such moments dhat for an instant he ceest too be a rezoning mashene, and betrade hiz human luv for admiraishon and aplauz. The same cin'gularly proud and reservd nachure which ternd awa withe disdane from poppular notoriyety wauz capabel ov beying muivd too its depths bi spontainyous wunder and prase from a frend.

“Yes, gentelmen,” ced he, “it iz the moast famous perl nou existing in the werld, and it haz bene mi good forchune, bi a conected chane ov inductive rezoning, too trace it from the Prins ov Colonnaa bedroome at the Daker Hotel, whare it wauz lost, too the intereyor ov this, the laast ov the cix busts ov Napoleyon which wer manufacchuerd bi Ghelder & Co., ov Stepny. U wil remember, Lestrade, the censaishon cauzd bi the disaperans ov this vallubel juwel and the vane efforts ov the Lunden polece too recuvver it. I wauz micelf consulted uppon the cace, but I wauz unnabel too thro enny lite uppon it. Suspishon fel uppon the made ov the Princes, whoo wauz an Italleyan, and it wauz pruivd dhat she had a bruther in Lunden, but we faild too trace enny conecshon betwene them. The maidz name wauz Lucreeshaa Venuxy, and dhare iz no dout in mi miand dhat this Peyetro whoo wauz merderd too niats ago wauz the bruther. I hav bene locking up the daits in the oald fialz ov the paper, and I fiand dhat the disaperans ov the perl wauz exactly too dase befoer the arest ov Beppo, for sum crime ov viyolens—an event which tooc place in the factory ov Ghelder & Co., at the verry moment when these busts

wer beying made. Nou u cleerly ce the ceeqwens ov events, dho u ce them, ov coers, in the invers order too the wa in which dha presented themcelvz too me. Beppo had the perl in hiz poseshon. He ma hav stolen it from Peyetro, he ma hav bene Peyetrose confedderate, he ma hav bene the go-betwene ov Peyetro and hiz cister. It iz ov no conceqwens too us which iz the corect solueshon.

“The mane fact iz dhat he *had* the perl, and at dhat moment, when it wauz on hiz person, he wauz pershude bi the polece. He made for the factory in which he werct, and he nu dhat he had oanly a fu minnuets in which too concele this enormously vallubel prise, which wood utherwise be found on him when he wauz cercht. Cix plaaster caasts ov Napoleyon wer driying in the passage. Wun ov them wauz stil soft. In an instant Beppo, a skilfool wercman, made a smaul hole in the wet plaaster, dropt in the perl, and withe a fu tutchez cuvverd over the aperchure wuns moer. It wauz an admirabel hiding-place. No wun cood poscibly fiand it. But Beppo wauz condemd too a yeez imprizzonment, and in the meenwhile hiz cix busts wer scatterd over Lundon. He cood not tel which containd hiz trezhure. Oanly bi braking them cood he ce. Even shaking wood tel him nuthhing, for az the plaaster wauz wet it wauz probbabel dhat the perl wood ad’here too it—az, in fact, it haz dun. Beppo did not despare, and he conducted hiz cerch withe concidderabel in’ genuwity and perceverans. Throo a cuzsin whoo werx withe Ghelder, he found out the retale fermz whoo had baut the busts. He mannijd too fiand employment withe Mors Hudson, and in dhat wa tract doun thre ov them. The perl wauz not dhare. Then, withe the help ov sum Italleyan employi, he suxeded in fianding out whare the uther thre busts had gon. The ferst wauz at Harkerz. Dhare he wauz dogd bi hiz confedderate, whoo held Beppo responcibel for the los ov the perl, and he stabd him in the scuffel which follode.”

“If he wauz hiz confedderate, whi shood he carry hiz fotograaf?”
I aasct.

“Az a meenz ov tracing him, if he wisht too inqwire about him from enny thherd person. Dhat wauz the obveyous rezon. Wel, aafter the merder I calculated dhat Beppo wood probbably hurry raather dhan dela hiz muivments. He wood fere dhat the polece wood rede hiz ceecret, and so he hacend on befoer dha shood ghet ahead ov him. Ov coers, I cood not sa dhat he had not found the perl in Harkerz bust. I had not even concluded for certane dhat it wauz the perl, but it wauz evvident too me dhat he wauz loocking for sumthhing, cins he carrede the bust paast the uther housez in order too brake it in the garden which had a lamp overllocking it. Cins Harkerz bust wauz wun in thre, the chaancez wer exactly az I toald u—too too wun against the perl beying incide it. Dhare remaind too busts, and it wauz obveyous dhat he wood go for the Lundon wun ferst. I wornd the inmaits ov the hous, so az too avoid a cecond tradgedy, and we went down, withe the happyest rezults. Bi dhat time, ov coers, I nu for certane dhat it wauz the Borjaa perl dhat we wer aafter. The name ov the merderd man linct the wun event withe the uther. Dhare oonly remaind a cin’ghel bust—the Reding wun—and the perl must be dhare. I baut it in yor prezsens from the oner—and dhare it lise.”

We sat in cilens for a moment.

“Wel,” ced Lestrade, “Ive cene u handel a good menny cacez, Mr. Hoamz, but I doant no dhat I evver nu a moer wercmanlike wun dhan dhat. Were not gellous ov u at Scotland Yard. No, cer, we ar verry proud ov u, and if u cum doun too-moro, dhaerz not a man, from the oaldest inspector too the yun’ghest cunstabel, whoo woodnt be glad too shake u bi the hand.”

“Thanc u!” ced Hoamz. “Thanc u!” and az he ternd awa, it ceemd too me dhat he wauz moer neerly muivd bi the softer human emoashonz dhan I had evver cene him. A moment later he wauz the coald

and practical thhinker wuns moer. “Poot the perl in the safe, Wautson,” ced he, “and ghet out the paperz ov the Conc-Cin’gheltun forgery cace. Good-bi, Lestrade. If enny littel problem cumz yor wa, I shal be happy, if I can, too ghiv u a hint or too az too its solueshon.”

THE ADVENCHURE OV THE THRE SCHUDENTS

It wauz in the yere ’95 dhat a combinaishon ov events, intoo which I nede not enter, cauzd Mr. Sherloc Hoamz and micelf too spend sum weex in wun ov our grate univercity tounz, and it wauz juring this time dhat the smaul but instructive advenchure which I am about too relate befel us. It wil be obveyous dhat enny detailz which wood help the reder exactly too identifi the college or the crimminal wood be injudishous and ofencive. So painfool a scandal ma wel be aloud too di out. Withe ju disreshon the incident itcelf ma, houwevver, be descriabd, cins it cervz too illustrate sum ov dhose qwaulitese for which mi frend wauz remarcabel. I wil endevvor, in mi staitment, too avoid such termz az wood cerv too limmit the events too enny particcular place, or ghiv a clu az too the pepel concernd.

We wer residing at the time in fernisht lodgingz cloce too a liabrary whare Sherloc Hoamz wauz pershuwing sum laboereyous recerchez in erly In’glisch charterz—recerchez which led too rezults so striking dhat dha ma be the subject ov wun ov mi fuchure narratiavz. Here it wauz dhat wun evening we receevd a vizsit from an aqwaintans, Mr. Hilton Soamz, chutor and lecchurer at the College ov St. Luex. Mr. Soamz wauz a taul, spare man,

ov a nervous and exitabel temperament. I had aulwase none him too be restless in hiz manner, but on this particcular ocaizhon he wauz in such a state ov uncontrolabel agitaishon dhat it wauz clere sumthhing verry unnuezhuwal had okerd.

“I trust, Mr. Hoamz, dhat u can spare me a fu ourz ov yor vallubel time. We hav had a verry painfool incident at St. Luex, and reyaly, but for the happy chaans ov yor beying in toun, I shood hav bene at a los whaut too doo.”

“I am verry bizsy just nou, and I desire no distracshonz,” mi frend aancerd. “I shood much prefer dhat u cauld in the ade ov the polece.”

“No, no, mi dere cer; such a coers iz utterly imposcibel. When wuns the lau iz evoact it canot be stade agane, and this iz just wun ov dhose cacez whare, for the credit ov the college, it iz moast ecenshal too avoid scandal. Yor disreshon iz az wel-none az yor pouwerz, and u ar the wun man in the werld whoo can help me. I beg u, Mr. Hoamz, too doo whaut u can.”

Mi frendz temper had not impruivd cins he had bene depriavd ov the con'geenyal surroundingz ov Baker Strete. Widhout hiz scrapboox, hiz kemmicalz, and hiz hoamly untidines, he wauz an uncumfortabel man. He shrugd hiz shoalderz in un'graishous aqweyescens, while our vizsitor in hurrede werdz and withe much exitabel gesticulaishon poerd foerth hiz stoery.

“I must explane too u, Mr. Hoamz, dhat too-moro iz the ferst da ov the examinaishon for the Fortescu Scollarship. I am wun ov the examminerz. Mi subject iz Greke, and the ferst ov the paperz concists ov a larj passage ov Greke traanzlaishon which the candidate haz not cene. This passage iz printed on the examinaishon paper, and it wood natchuraly be an imens advaantage

if the candidate cood prepare it in advaans. For this rezon, grate care iz taken too kepe the paper ceecret.

“Too-da, about thre oacloc, the pruiifs ov this paper ariavd from the printerz. The exercise concists ov haaf a chapter ov Thuciddidese. I had too rede it over caerfooly, az the text must be absolutly corect. At foer-thherty mi taasc wauz not yet completed. I had, houwevver, prommiast too take te in a frendz ruimz, so I left the proofe uppon mi desc. I wauz abcent raather moer dhan an our.

“U ar aware, Mr. Hoamz, dhat our college doerz ar dubbel—a grene base wun within and a hevvy oke wun widhout. Az I aproacht mi outer doer, I wauz amaizd too ce a ke in it. For an instant I imadgiand dhat I had left mi one dhare, but on feling in mi pocket I found dhat it wauz aul rite. The oonly jueplicate which existed, so far az I nu, wauz dhat which belongd too mi cervant, Bannister—a man whoo haz looct aafter mi roome for ten yeerz, and whoose onnesty iz absolutly abuv suspishon. I found dhat the ke wauz indede hiz, dhat he had enterd mi roome too no if I waunted te, and dhat he had verry caerlesly left the ke in the doer when he came out. Hiz vizsit too mi roome must hav bene within a verry fu minnuets ov mi leving it. Hiz forghetfoolnes about the ke wood hav matterd littel uppon enny uther ocaizhon, but on this wun da it haz projuest the moast deplorabel conceqwencez.

“The moment I looct at mi tabel, I wauz aware dhat sumwun had rummaijd amung mi paperz. The proofe wauz in thre long slips. I had left them aul tooghether. Nou, I found dhat wun ov them wauz liying on the floer, wun wauz on the cide tabel nere the windo, and the thherd wauz whare I had left it.”

Hoamz sterd for the ferst time.

"The ferst page on the floer, the cecond in the windo, the thherd whare u left it," ced he.

"Exactly, Mr. Hoamz. U amase me. Hou cood u poscibly no dhat?"

"Pra continnu yor verry interesting staitment."

"For an instant I imadgiand dhat Bannister had taken the unpardonabel libberty ov exammining mi paperz. He denide it, houwevver, withe the utmoast ernestnes, and I am convinst dhat he wauz speking the trueth. The aulternative wauz dhat sumwun paacing had observd the ke in the doer, had none dhat I wauz out, and had enterd too looc at the paperz. A larj sum ov munny iz at stake, for the scollarship iz a verry vallubel wun, and an unscrupulous man mite verry wel run a risc in order too gane an advaantage over hiz fellose.

"Bannister wauz verry much upcet bi the incident. He had neerly fainted when we found dhat the paperz had undoutedly bene tamperd withe. I gave him a littel brandy and left him colapst in a chare, while I made a moast caerfool examinaishon ov the roome. I soone sau dhat the intruder had left uther tracez ov hiz prezsens beciadz the rumpeld paperz. On the tabel in the windo wer cevveral shredz from a pencil which had bene sharpend. A broken tip ov led wauz liying dhare aulso. Evvidently the raascal had coppede the paper in a grate hurry, had broken hiz pencil, and had bene compeld too poot a fresh point too it."

"Exelent!" ced Hoamz, whoo wauz recuvvering hiz good-humor az hiz atenshon became moer en'groast bi the cace. "Forchune haz bene yor frend."

“This wauz not aul. I hav a nu riting-tabel withe a fine cerface ov red lether. I am prepaerd too sware, and so iz Bannister, dhat it wauz smuithe and unstaind. Nou I found a clene cut in it about thre inchez long—not a mere scrach, but a pozsitive cut. Not oonly this, but on the tabel I found a smaual baul ov blac do or cla, withe spex ov sumthhing which loox like saudust in it. I am convinst dhat these marx wer left bi the man whoo rifeld the paperz. Dhare wer no footmarx and no uther evvidens az too hiz identity. I wauz at mi wits’ end, when suddenly the happy thaut okerd too me dhat u wer in the toun, and I came strate round too poot the matter intoo yor handz. Doo help me, Mr. Hoamz. U ce mi dilemmaa. Iather I must fiand the man or els the examinaishon must be poastpoand until fresh paperz ar prepaerd, and cins this canot be dun widhout explanaishon, dhare wil ensu a hidjous scandal, which wil thro a cloud not oonly on the college, but on the univercity. Abuv aul thhingz, I desire too cettel the matter qwiyetly and discreetly.”

“I shal be happy too looc intoo it and too ghiv u such advice az I can,” ced Hoamz, rising and pootting on hiz overcote. “The cace iz not entiarly devoid ov interest. Had enniwun vizsited u in yor roome aafter the paperz came too u?”

“Yes, yung Daulat Raaz, an Injan schudent, whoo livz on the same stare, came in too aasc me sum particularz about the examinaishon.”

“For which he wauz enterd?”

“Yes.”

“And the paperz wer on yor tabel?”

“Too the best ov mi belefe, dha wer roald up.”

"But mite be reccogniazd az pruifs?"

"Poscibly."

"No wun els in yor roome?"

"No."

"Did enniwun no dhat these pruifs wood be dhare?"

"No wun save the printer."

"Did this man Bannister no?"

"No, certainly not. No wun nu."

"Whare iz Bannister nou?"

"He wauz verry il, poor fello. I left him colapst in the chare. I wauz in such a hurry too cum too u."

"U left yor doer open?"

"I loct up the paperz ferst."

"Then it amounts too this, Mr. Soamz: dhat, unles the Injan schudent reccogniazd the role az beying pruifs, the man whoo tamperd withe them came uppon them axidentalaly widhout nowing dhat dha wer dhare."

"So it ceemz too me."

Hoamz gave an enigmattic smile.

“Wel,” ced he, “let us go round. Not wun ov yor cacez, Wautson—mental, not fizsical. Aul rite; cum if u waunt too. Nou, Mr. Soamz—at yor dispozal!”

The citting-roome ov our cliyent opend bi a long, lo, lattiasst windo on too the ainshent litchen-tinted coert ov the oald college. A Gothic archt doer led too a woern stone staercace. On the ground floer wauz the chutorz roome. Abuv wer thre schudents, wun on eche stoery. It wauz aulreddy twilite when we reecht the cene ov our problem. Hoamz halted and looct earnestly at the windo. Then he aproacht it, and, standing on tipto withe hiz nec craind, he looct intoo the roome.

“He must hav enterd throo the doer. Dhare iz no opening exept the wun pane,” ced our lerned ghide.

“Dere me!” ced Hoamz, and he smiald in a cin‘gular wa az he glaanst at our companyon. “Wel, if dhare iz nuthhing too be lernd here, we had best go incide.”

The lecchurer unloct the outer doer and usherd us intoo hiz roome. We stood at the entrans while Hoamz made an examinaishon ov the carpet.

“I am afrade dhare ar no cianz here,” ced he. “Wun cood hardly hope for enny uppon so dri a da. Yor cervant ceemz too hav qwite recuvverd. U left him in a chare, u sa. Which chare?”

“Bi the windo dhare.”

“I ce. Nere this littel tabel. U can cum in nou. I hav finnisht withe the carpet. Let us take the littel tabel ferst. Ov coers, whaut haz happend iz verry clere. The man enterd and tooc the paperz, shete bi shete, from the central tabel. He carrede

them over too the windo tabel, becauz from dhare he cood ce if u came acros the coertyard, and so cood efect an escape.”

“Az a matter ov fact, he cood not,” ced Soamz, “for I enterd bi the cide doer.”

“Aa, dhats good! Wel, ennihou, dhat wauz in hiz miand. Let me ce the thre strips. No fin’gher impreshonz—no! Wel, he carrede over this wun ferst, and he coppede it. Hou long wood it take him too doo dhat, using evvery poscibel contracshon? A qworter ov an our, not les. Then he tost it doun and ceezd the next. He wauz in the midst ov dhat when yor retern cauzd him too make a verry hurrede retrete—*verry* hurrede, cins he had not time too replace the paperz which wood tel u dhat he had bene dhare. U wer not aware ov enny hurreying fete on the stare az u enterd the outer doer?”

“No, I caant sa I wauz.”

“Wel, he rote so fureyously dhat he broke hiz pencil, and had, az u observ, too sharpen it agane. This iz ov interest, Wautson. The pencil wauz not an ordinary wun. It wauz abuv the uezhuwal cise, withe a soft led, the outer cullor wauz darc blu, the makerz name wauz printed in silver lettering, and the pece remaning iz oanly about an inch and a haaf long. Looc for such a pencil, Mr. Soamz, and u hav got yor man. When I ad dhat he posescez a larj and verry blunt nife, u hav an adishonal ade.”

Mr. Soamz wauz sumwhaut overwhelmd bi this flud ov informaishon. “I can follo the uther points,” ced he, “but reyal, in this matter ov the length——”

Hoamz held out a smaul chip withe the letterz NN and a space ov

clere wood aafter them.

“U ce?”

“No, I fere dhat even nou——”

“Wautson, I hav aulwase dun u an injustice. Dhare ar utherz. Whaut cood this NN be? It iz at the end ov a werd. U ar aware dhat Johan Faber iz the moast common makerz name. Iz it not clere dhat dhare iz just az much ov the pencil left az uezhuwaly follose the Johan?” He held the smaul tabel ciadwase too the electric lite. “I wauz hoping dhat if the paper on which he rote wauz thhin, sum trace ov it mite cum throo uppon this pollisht cerface. No, I ce nuthhing. I doant thhinc dhare iz ennithhing moer too be lernd here. Nou for the central tabel. This smaul pellet iz, I prezhume, the blac, dowy mas u spoke ov. Ruffy piramidial in shape and hollode out, I perceve. Az u sa, dhare apere too be grainz ov saudust in it. Dere me, this iz verry interesting. And the cut—a pozsitive tare, I ce. It began withe a thhin scrach and ended in a jagghed hole. I am much indetted too u for directing mi atenshon too this cace, Mr. Soamz. Whare duz dhat doer lede too?”

“Too mi bedroome.”

“Hav u bene in it cins yor advenchure?”

“No, I came strate awa for u.”

“I shood like too hav a glaans round. Whaut a charming, oald-fashond roome! Perhaps u wil kiandy wate a minnute, until I hav exammiand the floer. No, I ce nuthhing. Whaut about this kertane? U hang yor cloadhz behiand it. If enniwun wer foerst too concele himcelf in this roome he must doo it dhare, cins the

bed iz too lo and the wordrobe too shallo. No wun dhare, I suppose?"

Az Hoamz dru the kertane I wauz aware, from sum littel rigiddity and alertnes ov hiz attichude, dhat he wauz prepaerd for an emergency. Az a matter ov fact, the draun kertane discloazd nuthhing but thre or foer suets ov cloadhz hanging from a line ov pegz. Hoamz ternd awa, and stuipt suddenly too the floer.

"Hallo! Whauts this?" ced he.

It wauz a smaul pirramid ov blac, putty-like stuf, exactly like the wun upon the tabel ov the studdy. Hoamz held it out on hiz open paalm in the glare ov the electric lite.

"Yor vizsitor ceemz too hav left tracez in yor bedroome az wel az in yor citting-roome, Mr. Soamz."

"Whaut cood he hav waunted dhare?"

"I thhinc it iz clere enuf. U came bac bi an unnexpected wa, and so he had no worning until u wer at the verry doer. Whaut cood he doo? He caut up evverithhing which wood betra him, and he rusht intoo yor bedroome too concele himcelf."

"Good graishous, Mr. Hoamz, doo u mene too tel me dhat, aul the time I wauz tauking too Bannister in this roome, we had the man prizzoner if we had oanly none it?"

"So I rede it."

"Shuerly dhare iz anuther aulternative, Mr. Hoamz. I doant no whether u observd mi bedroome windo?"

"Lattice-paind, led fraimwerc, thre cepparate windose, wun swinging on hinj, and larj enuf too admit a man."

"Exactly. And it loox out on an an'ghel ov the coertyard so az too be partly invizibel. The man mite hav efected hiz entrans dhare, left tracez az he paast throo the bedroome, and finaly, fianding the doer open, hav escaipt dhat wa."

Hoamz shooc hiz hed impaishently.

"Let us be practical," ced he. "I understand u too sa dhat dhare ar thre schudents whoo use this stare, and ar in the habbit ov paacing yor doer?"

"Yes, dhare ar."

"And dha ar aul in for this examinaishon?"

"Yes."

"Hav u enny rezon too suspect enny wun ov them moer dhan the utherz?"

Soamz hezsitated.

"It iz a verry dellicate qweschon," ced he. "Wun hardly liax too thro suspishon whare dhare ar no pruiifs."

"Let us here the suspishonz. I wil looc aafter the pruiifs."

"I wil tel u, then, in a fu werdz the carracter ov the thre men whoo inhabbit these ruimz. The lower ov the thre iz Ghilcrist, a fine scollar and athlete, plase in the Rugby teme and the cricket teme for the college, and got hiz Blu for the herdelz

and the long jump. He iz a fine, manly fello. Hiz faather wauz the notoereyous Cer Jabez Ghilcrist, whoo ruwind himcelf on the terf. Mi scollar haz bene left verry poor, but he iz hard-werking and industreyous. He wil doo wel.

“The cecond floer iz inhabbited bi Daulat Raaz, the Injan. He iz a qwiyet, inscrutabel fello; az moast ov dhose Injanz ar. He iz wel up in hiz werc, dho hiz Greke iz hiz weke subgect. He iz stedly and methoddical.

“The top floer belongz too Mialz McLaren. He iz a brilleyant fello when he chusez too werc—wun ov the britest intelects ov the univercity; but he iz waword, discipated, and unprincipeld. He wauz neerly expeld over a card scandal in hiz ferst yere. He haz bene iadling aul this term, and he must looc forword withe dred too the examinaishon.”

“Then it iz he whoome u suspect?”

“I dare not go so far az dhat. But, ov the thre, he iz perhaps the leest unliacly.”

“Exactly. Nou, Mr. Soamz, let us hav a looc at yor cervant, Bannister.”

He wauz a littel, white-faist, clene-shaven, grizly-haerd fello ov fifty. He wauz stil suffering from this sudden disterbans ov the qwiyet rootene ov hiz life. Hiz plump face wauz twitching withe hiz nervousnes, and hiz fin'gherz cood not kepe stil.

“We ar investigating this unhappy biznes, Bannister,” ced hiz maaster.

“Yes, cer.”

"I understand," ced Hoamz, "dhat u left yor ke in the doer?"

"Yes, cer."

"Wauz it not verry extrordinary dhat u shood doo this on the verry da when dhare wer these paperz incide?"

"It wauz moast unforchunate, cer. But I hav ocaizhonaly dun the same thhing at uther tiamz."

"When did u enter the roome?"

"It wauz about haaf-paast foer. Dhat iz Mr. Soamz' te time."

"Hou long did u sta?"

"When I sau dhat he wauz abcent, I widhdru at wuns."

"Did u looc at these paperz on the tabel?"

"No, cer—certainly not."

"Hou came u too leve the ke in the doer?"

"I had the te-tra in mi hand. I thaut I wood cum bac for the ke. Then I forgot."

"Haz the outer doer a spring loc?"

"No, cer."

"Then it wauz open aul the time?"

"Yes, cer."

"Enniwun in the roome cood ghet out?"

"Yes, cer."

"When Mr. Soamz reternd and cauld for u, u wer verry much disterbd?"

"Yes, cer. Such a thhing haz nevver happend juring the menny yeerz dhat I hav bene here. I neerly fainted, cer."

"So I understand. Whare wer u when u began too fele bad?"

"Whare wauz I, cer? Whi, here, nere the doer."

"Dhat iz cin'gular, becauz u sat doun in dhat chare over yonder nere the corner. Whi did u paas these uther chaerz?"

"I doant no, cer, it didnt matter too me whare I sat."

"I reyaly doant thhinc he nu much about it, Mr. Hoamz. He wauz loocking verry bad—qwite gaastly."

"U stade here when yor maaster left?"

"Oanly for a minnute or so. Then I loct the doer and went too mi roome."

"Whoome doo u suspect?"

"O, I wood not venchure too sa, cer. I doant beleve dhare iz enny gentelman in this univercity whoo iz capabel ov proffiting bi

such an acshon. No, cer, Ile not beleve it."

"Thanc u, dhat wil doo," ced Hoamz. "O, wun moer werd. U hav not menshond too enny ov the thre gentelmen whoome u atend dhat ennithhing iz amis?"

"No, cer—not a werd."

"U havnt cene enny ov them?"

"No, cer."

"Verry good. Nou, Mr. Soamz, we wil take a wauc in the qwaudran'ghel, if u plese."

Thre yello sqwaerz ov lite shon abuv us in the gathering gloome.

"Yor thre berdz ar aul in dhare nests," ced Hoamz, loocking up. "Hallo! Whauts dhat? Wun ov them ceemz restles enuf."

It wauz the Injan, whoose darc ciloowet apeerd suddenly uppon hiz bliand. He wauz pacing swiftly up and doun hiz roome.

"I shood like too hav a pepe at eche ov them," ced Hoamz. "Iz it poscibel?"

"No difficulty in the werld," Soamz aancerd. "This cet ov ruimz iz qwite the oaldest in the college, and it iz not unnuezhual for vizsitorz too go over them. Cum along, and I wil personaly conduct u."

"No naimz, plese!" ced Hoamz, az we noct at Ghilcrist's doer. A taul, flaxen-haerd, slim yung fello opend it, and

made us welcum when he understood our errand. Dhare wer sum reyal cureyous pecez ov meddeyeval domestic arkitecchure within. Hoamz wauz so charmd withe wun ov them dhat he incisted on drauwng it in hiz noatbooc, broke hiz pencil, had too boro wun from our hoast and finaly borode a nife too sharpen hiz one. The same cureyous axident happend too him in the ruimz ov the Injan—a cilent, littel, hoo-noazd fello, whoo ide us ascaans, and wauz obveyously glad when Hoamsez arkitecchural studdese had cum too an end. I cood not ce dhat in iather cace Hoamz had cum uppon the clu for which he wauz cerching. Oonly at the thherd did our vizsit proove abortive. The outer doer wood not open too our noc, and nuthhing moer substaanshal dhan a torent ov bad lan'gwage came from behiand it. "I doant care whoo u ar. U can go too blasez!" roerd the an'gry vois. "Toomorose the exam, and I woant be draun bi enniwun."

"A rude fello," ced our ghide, flushing withe an'gher az we widhdru doun the stare. "Ov coers, he did not reyalise dhat it wauz I whoo wauz nocking, but nun the les hiz conduct wauz verry unkerchous, and, indede, under the cercumstaancez raather suspishous."

Hoamsez respons wauz a cureyous wun.

"Can u tel me hiz exact hite?" he aasct.

"Reyal, Mr. Hoamz, I canot undertake too sa. He iz tauler dhan the Injan, not so taul az Ghilcrist. I supose five foot cix wood be about it."

"Dhat iz verry important," ced Hoamz. "And nou, Mr. Soamz, I wish u good-nite."

Our ghide cride aloud in hiz astonishment and disma. "Good

graishous, Mr. Hoamz, u ar shuerly not gowing too leve me in this abrupt fashon! U doant ceme too reyalise the posishon. Too-moro iz the examinaishon. I must take sum deffinite acshon too-nite. I canot alou the examinaishon too be held if wun ov the paperz haz bene tamperd withe. The cichuwaishon must be faist."

"U must leve it az it iz. I shal drop round erly too-moro morning and chat the matter over. It iz poscibel dhat I ma be in a posishon then too indicate sum coers ov acshon. Meenwhile, u chainj nuthhing—nuthhing at aul."

"Verry good, Mr. Hoamz."

"U can be perfectly esy in yor miand. We shal certainly fiand sum wa out ov yor difficultese. I wil take the blac cla withe me, aulso the pencil cuttingz. Good-bi."

When we wer out in the darcnes ov the qwaudran'ghel, we agane looct up at the windose. The Injan stil paist hiz roome. The utherz wer invizsibel.

"Wel, Wautson, whaut doo u thhinc ov it?" Hoamz aasct, az we came out intoo the mane strete. "Qwrite a littel parlor game—sort ov thre-card tric, iz it not? Dhare ar yor thre men. It must be wun ov them. U take yor chois. Which iz yorz?"

"The foul-moutht fello at the top. He iz the wun withe the werst reccord. And yet dhat Injan wauz a sli fello aulso. Whi shood he be pacing hiz roome aul the time?"

"Dhare iz nuthhing in dhat. Menny men doo it when dha ar triying too lern ennithhing bi hart."

"He looct at us in a qwere wa."

“So wood u, if a floc ov strain’gerz came in on u when u wer preparing for an examinaishon next da, and evvery moment wauz ov vallu. No, I ce nuthhing in dhat. Pencilz, too, and niavz—aul wauz satisfactory. But dhat fello *duz* puzsel me.”

“Whoo?”

“Whi, Bannister, the cervant. Whauts hiz game in the matter?”

“He imprest me az beying a perfectly onnest man.”

“So he did me. Dhats the puzling part. Whi shood a perfectly onnest man—wel, wel, heerz a larj staishonerz. We shal beghin our recerchez here.”

Dhare wer oonly foer staishonerz ov enny conceqwencez in the toun, and at eche Hoamz projuest hiz pencil chips, and bid hi for a jueplicate. Aul wer agrede dhat wun cood be orderd, but dhat it wauz not a uezhuwal cise ov pencil and dhat it wauz celdom kept in stoc. Mi frend did not apere too be deprest bi hiz falure, but shrugd hiz shoalderz in haaf-humorous resignaishon.

“No good, mi dere Wautson. This, the best and oonly final clu, haz run too nuthhing. But, indede, I hav littel dout dhat we can bild up a sufishent cace widhout it. Bi Jove! mi dere fello, it iz neerly nine, and the landlady babbeld ov grene pese at cevven-thherty. Whaut withe yor eternal tobacco, Wautson, and yor iregularrity at meelz, I expect dhat u wil ghet notice too qwit, and dhat I shal share yor dounfaul—not, houwevver, befoer we hav solvd the problem ov the nervous chutor, the caerles cervant, and the thre enterprising schudents.”

Hoamz made no ferther aluezhon too the matter dhat da, dho he sat lost in thaut for a long time aafter our belated dinner. At ate in the morning, he came intoo mi roome just az I finnisht mi toilet.

“Wel, Wautson,” ced he, “it iz time we went doun too St. Luex. Can u doo widhout brecfast?”

“Certainly.”

“Soamz wil be in a dredfool fidget until we ar abel too tel him sumthhing pozsitive.”

“Hav u ennithhing pozsitive too tel him?”

“I thhinc so.”

“U hav formd a concluezhon?”

“Yes, mi dere Wautson, I hav solvd the mistery.”

“But whaut fresh evvidens cood u hav got?”

“Ahaa! It iz not for nuthhing dhat I hav ternd micelf out ov bed at the untiamly our ov cix. I hav poot in too ourz’ hard werc and cuvverd at leest five mialz, withe sumthhing too sho for it. Looc at dhat!”

He held out hiz hand. On the paalm wer thre littel pirramidz ov blac, dowy cla.

“Whi, Hoamz, u had oanly too yesterda.”

“And wun moer this morning. It iz a fare argument dhat wharevver

No. 3 came from iz aulso the soers ov Nos. 1 and 2. A, Wautson? Wel, cum along and poot frend Soamz out ov hiz pane."

The unforchunate chutor wauz certainly in a state ov pitteyabel agitaishon when we found him in hiz chaimberz. In a fu ourz the examinaishon wood comens, and he wauz stil in the dilemmaa betwene making the facts public and alouwing the culprit too compete for the vallubel scollarship. He cood hardly stand stil so grate wauz hiz mental agitaishon, and he ran toowordz Hoamz
withe
too egher handz outstrecht.

"Thanc hevven dhat u hav cum! I feerd dhat u had ghivven it up in despere. Whaut am I too doo? Shal the examinaishon procede?"

"Yes, let it procede, bi aul meenz."

"But this raascal?"

"He shal not compete."

"U no him?"

"I thhinc so. If this matter iz not too becum public, we must ghiv ourcelvz certane pouwerz and rezolv ourcelvz intoo a smaul private coert-marshal. U dhare, if u plese, Soamz! Wautson u here! Ile take the armchare in the middel. I thhinc dhat we ar nou sufishly imposing too strike terror intoo a ghilty brest. Kiandly ring the bel!"

Bannister enterd, and shranc bac in evvident cerprise and fere at our judishal aperans.

"U wil kiandly close the doer," ced Hoamz. "Nou, Bannister,

wil u ples tel us the trueth about yesterdase incident?"

The man ternd white too the ruits ov hiz hare.

"I hav toald u evverithhing, cer."

"Nuthhing too ad?"

"Nuthhing at aul, cer."

"Wel, then, I must make sum sugeschonz too u. When u sat doun on dhat chare yesterda, did u doo so in order too concele sum obgett which wood hav shone whoo had bene in the roome?"

Bannisterz face wauz gaastly.

"No, cer, certainly not."

"It iz oanly a sugeschon," ced Hoamz, swaavly. "I francly admit dhat I am unnabel too proove it. But it ceemz probbabel enuf, cins the moment dhat Mr. Soamsez bac wauz ternd, u releest the man whoo wauz hiding in dhat bedroome."

Bannister lict hiz dri lips.

"Dhare wauz no man, cer."

"Aa, dhats a pittty, Bannister. Up too nou u ma hav spoken the trueth, but nou I no dhat u hav lide."

The manz face cet in sullen defiyans.

"Dhare wauz no man, cer."

“Cum, cum, Bannister!”

“No, cer, dhare wauz no wun.”

“In dhat cace, u can ghiv us no ferther informaishon. Wood u plese remane in the roome? Stand over dhare nere the bedroome doer. Nou, Soamz, I am gowing too aasc u too hav the grate kiandnes too go up too the roome ov yung Ghilcrist, and too aasc him too step doun intoo yorz.”

An instant later the chutor reternd, bringing withe him the schudent. He wauz a fine figgure ov a man, taul, liathe, and adgile, withe a springy step and a plezzant, open face. Hiz trubbel blu ise glaanst at eche ov us, and finaly rested withe an expreshon ov blanc disma uppon Bannister in the farther corner.

“Just close the doer,” ced Hoamz. “Nou, Mr. Ghilcrist, we ar aul qwite alone here, and no wun nede evver no wun werd ov whaut paacez betwene us. We can be perfectly franc withe eche uther. We waunt too no, Mr. Ghilcrist, hou u, an onnorabel man, evver came too comit such an acshon az dhat ov yesterda?”

The unforchunate yung man staggherd bac, and caast a looc fool ov horror and reproche at Bannister.

“No, no, Mr. Ghilcrist, cer, I nevver ced a werd—nevver wun werd!” cride the cervant.

“No, but u hav nou,” ced Hoamz. “Nou, cer, u must ce dhat aafter Bannisterz werdz yor posishon iz hoaples, and dhat yor oanly chaans lise in a franc confeshon.”

For a moment Ghilcrist, withe upraizd hand, tride too controle hiz riathing fechuerz. The next he had throne himcelf on hiz nese

beside the table, and burying his face in his hands, he had burst into a storm of passionate sobbing.

"Cum, cum," said Hoamz, kindly, "it is human too, and at least no one can accuse you of being a callous criminal. Perhaps it would be easier for you if I were to tell Mr. Soamz what occurred, and you can check me where I am wrong. Shall I do so? Well, well, don't trouble too much. Listen, and see what I do for you no injustice.

"From the moment, Mr. Soamz, that you told me that no one, not even Bannister, could have told that the papers were in your room, the case began to take a definite shape in my mind. The printer would, of course, dismiss. He could examine the papers in his own office. The Injan I also thought nothing of. If the proofs were in a room, he could not possibly know what they were. On the other hand, it seemed an unlikely coincidence that a man should dare to enter the room, and that by chance on that very day the papers were on the table. I dismissed that. The man who entered knew that the papers were there. How did he do it?"

"When I approached your room, I examined the window. You amused me by supposing that I was contemplating the possibility of someone having in broad daylight, under the eye of all these opposite rooms, first himself through it. Such an idea was absurd. I was measuring how tall a man would need to be in order to do so, as he passed, what papers were on the central table. I am six feet high, and I could do it with an effort. No one less than that would have a chance. Surely you see I had reason to think that, if anyone of your three students was a man of unimpeachable honesty, he was the most worth watching of the three.

"I entered, and I took you into my confidence as to the

sugeschonz ov the cide tabel. Ov the center tabel I cood make nuthhing, until in yor descriphon ov Ghilcrist u menshond dhat he wauz a long-distans jumper. Then the whole thhing came too me in an instant, and I oanly neded certane corobborative pruiifs, which I spedily obtaind.

“Whaut happend wauz this. This yung fello had emploid hiz aafternoone at the athletic groundz, whare he had bene practicing the jump. He reternd carreying hiz jumping-shoose, which ar provided, az u ar aware, withe cevveral sharp spiax. Az he paast yor windo he sau, bi meenz ov hiz grate hite, these pruiifs uppon yor tabel, and con’gechuerd whaut dha wer. No harm wood hav bene dun had it not bene dhat, az he paast yor doer, he perceevd the ke which had bene left bi the caerlesnes ov yor cervant. A sudden impuls came over him too enter, and ce if dha wer indede the pruiifs. It wauz not a dain’gerous exploit for he cood aulwase pretend dhat he had simply looct in too aasc a qweschon.

“Wel, when he sau dhat dha wer indede the pruiifs, it wauz then dhat he yeelded too temptaishon. He poot hiz shoose on the tabel. Whaut wauz it u poot on dhat chare nere the windo?”

“Gluvz,” ced the yung man.

Hoamz looct triyumfantly at Bannister. “He poot hiz gluvz on the chare, and he tooc the pruiifs, shete bi shete, too copy them. He thaut the chutor must retern bi the mane gate and dhat he wood ce him. Az we no, he came bac bi the cide gate. Suddenly he herd him at the verry doer. Dhare wauz no poscibel escape. He forgot hiz gluvz but he caut up hiz shoose and darted intoo the bedroome. U observ dhat the scrach on dhat tabel iz slite at wun cide, but depenz in the direcshon ov the bedroome doer. Dhat in itcelf iz enuf too sho us dhat the shoo

had bene draun in dhat direcshon, and dhat the culprit had taken reffuge dhare. The erth round the spike had bene left on the tabel, and a cecond saampel wauz loocend and fel in the bedroome. I ma ad dhat I wauct out too the athletic groundz this morning, sau dhat tenaishous blac cla iz uezd in the jumping-pit and carrede awa a spescimen ov it, toogheter withe sum ov the fine tan or saudust which iz strune over it too prevent the athlete from slipping. Hav I toald the trueth, Mr. Ghilcrist?"

The schudent had draun himcelf erect.

"Yes, cer, it iz tru," ced he.

"Good hevvenz! hav u nuthhing too ad?" cride Soamz.

"Yes, cer, I hav, but the shoc ov this disgraisfool expoazhure haz bewilderd me. I hav a letter here, Mr. Soamz, which I rote too u erly this morning in the middel ov a restles nite. It wauz befoer I nu dhat mi cin had found me out. Here it iz, cer. U wil ce dhat I hav ced, 'I hav determiand not too go in for the examinaishon. I hav bene offerd a comishon in the Rodeezhan Polece, and I am gowing out too South Africaa at wuns.'" "

"I am indede pleezd too here dhat u did not intend too proffit bi yor unfare advaantage," ced Soamz. "But whi did u chainj yor perpoce?"

Ghilcrist pointed too Bannister.

"Dhare iz the man whoo cet me in the rite paath," ced he.

"Cum nou, Bannister," ced Hoamz. "It wil be clere too u, from whaut I hav ced, dhat oonly u cood hav let this yung man out, cins u wer left in the roome, and must hav loct

the doer when u went out. Az too hiz escaping bi dhat windo, it wauz increddibel. Can u not clere up the laast point in this mistery, and tel us the rezonz for yor acshon?"

"It wauz cimpel enuf, cer, if u oanly had none, but, withe aul yor clevernes, it wauz imposcibel dhat u cood no. Time wauz, cer, when I wauz butler too oald Cer Jabez Ghilcrist, this yung gentelmann faather. When he wauz ruwind I came too the college az cervant, but I nevrer forgot mi oald employer becauz he wauz down in the werld. I waucht hiz sun aul I cood for the sake ov the oald dase. Wel, cer, when I came intoo this roome yesterda, when the alarm wauz ghivven, the verry ferst thhing I sau wauz Mr. Ghilcrist tan gluvz a-lying in dhat chare. I nu dhose gluvz wel, and I understood dhare message. If Mr. Soamz sau them, the game wauz up. I flopt doun intoo dhat chare, and nuthhing wood buj me until Mr. Soamz he went for u. Then out came mi poor yung maaster, whoome I had dandeld on mi ne, and confest it aul too me. Wauznt it natchural, cer, dhat I shood save him, and wauznt it natchural aulso dhat I shood tri too speke too him az hiz ded faather wood hav dun, and make him understand dhat he cood not proffit bi such a dede? Cood u blame me, cer?"

"No, indede," ced Hoamz, hartily, springing too hiz fete. "Wel, Soamz, I thhinc we hav cleerd yor littel problem up, and our brecfast awaits us at home. Cum, Wautson! Az too u, cer, I trust dhat a brite fuchure awaits u in Rodeezhaa. For wuns u hav faulen lo. Let us ce, in the fuchure, hou hi u can rise."

THE ADVENCHURE OV THE GOALDEN PANS-NA

When I looc at the thre mascive mannuscript volluemz which contane our werc for the yere 1894, I confes dhat it iz verry difficult for me, out ov such a welth ov matereyal, too celect the cacez

which ar moast interesting in themcelvz, and at the same time moast conjucive too a displa ov dhose peculeyar pouwerz for which mi frend wauz famous. Az I tern over the pagez, I ce mi noats uppon the repulcive stoery ov the red leche and the terribel deth ov Crozby, the banker. Here aulso I fiand an acount ov the Addelton tradgedy, and the cin'gular contents ov the ainshent Brittish barro. The famous Smith-Mortimer suxeshon cace cumz aulso within this pereyod, and so duz the tracking and arest ov Oora, the Boulevard asascin—an exploit which wun for Hoamz an autograf letter ov thanx from the French Prezident and the Order ov the Lejon ov Onnor. Eche ov these wood fernish a narrative, but on the whole I am ov opinyon dhat nun ov them uniats so menny cin'gular points ov interest az the eppisode ov Yoxly Oald Place, which includedz not oonly the lammentabel deth ov yung Willoby Smith, but aulso dhose subceqwent devellopments which thru so cureyous a lite uppon the causez ov the crime.

It wauz a wiald, tempeschuwous nite, toowordz the close ov November. Hoamz and I sat toogheter in cilens aul the evening, he en'gaijd withe a pouwerfool lenz decifering the remainz ov the oridginal inscripshon uppon a palimpcest, I depe in a recent tretese uppon cergery. Outcide the wind hould doun Baker Strete, while the rane bete feersly against the windose. It wauz strainj dhare, in the verry depths ov the toun, withe ten mialz ov manz handiwerc on evvery cide ov us, too fele the iarn grip ov Nachure, and too be conshous dhat too the huge elemental foercez aul Lunden wauz no moer dhan the moal'hilz dhat dot the feeldz. I wauct too the windo, and looct out on the deserted strete. The ocaizhonal lamps gleemd on the expans ov muddy rode and shining paivment. A cin'ghel cab wauz splashing its wa from the Oxford Strete end.

“Wel, Wautson, its az wel we hav not too tern out too-nite,” ced Hoamz, laying acide hiz lenz and roling up the palimpcest. “Ive dun enuf for wun citting. It iz trying werc for the

ise. So far az I can make out, it iz nuthhing moer exiting dhan an Abbese acounts dating from the cecond haaf ov the fifteenth cenchury. Hallo! hallo! hallo! Whauts this?"

Amid the droning ov the wind dhare had cum the stamping ov a horcez huifs, and the long griand ov a whele az it raaspt against the kerb. The cab which I had cene had poold up at our doer.

"Whaut can he waunt?" I ejacculated, az a man stept out ov it.

"Waunt? He waunts us. And we, mi poor Wautson, waunt overcoats and

cravats and goloshez, and evvery ade dhat man evver invented too fite the wether. Wate a bit, dho! Dhaerz the cab of agane!

Dhaerz hope yet. Hede hav kept it if he had waunted us too cum. Run doun, mi dere fello, and open the doer, for aul verchuwous foke hav bene long in bed."

When the lite ov the haul lamp fel uppon our midnite vizsitor, I had no difficulty in reccognising him. It wauz yung Stanly Hopkinz, a prommicing detective, in whose carere Hoamz had cevveral tiamz shone a verry practical interest.

"Iz he in?" he aasct, egherly.

"Cum up, mi dere cer," ced Hoamsez vois from abuv. "I hope u hav no desianz uppon us such a nite az this."

The detective mounted the staerz, and our lamp gleemd uppon hiz shining wauterproofe. I helpt him out ov it, while Hoamz noct a blase out ov the logz in the grate.

"Nou, mi dere Hopkinz, drau up and worm yor tose," ced he.

"Heerz a cigar, and the doctor haz a prescripshon contaning hot

wauter and a lemmon, which iz good medicine on a nite like this. It must be sumthhing important which haz braut u out in such a gale."

"It iz indede, Mr. Hoamz. Ive had a busling aafternoone, I prommice u. Did u ce ennithhing ov the Yoxly cace in the latest edishonz?"

"Ive cene nuthhing later dhan the fifteenth cenchury too-da."

"Wel, it wauz oonly a parragraaf, and aul rong at dhat, so u hav not mist ennithhing. I havnt let the graas gro under mi fete. Its doun in Kent, cevven mialz from Chattam and thre from the railwa line. I wauz wiard for at 3:15, reecht Yoxly Oald Place at 5, conducted mi investigaishon, wauz bac at Charing Cros bi the laast trane, and strate too u bi cab."

"Which meenz, I supose, dhat u ar not qwite clere about yor cace?"

"It meenz dhat I can make niather hed nor tale ov it. So far az I can ce, it iz just az tan'gheld a biznes az evver I handeld, and yet at ferst it ceemd so cimpel dhat wun coodnt go rong. Dhaerz no motive, Mr. Hoamz. Dhats whaut botherz me—I caant poot mi hand on a motive. Heerz a man ded—dhaerz no deniying dhat—but, so far az I can ce, no rezon on erth whi enniwun shood wish him harm."

Hoamz lit hiz cigar and leend bac in hiz chare.

"Let us here about it," ced he.

"Ive got mi facts pritty clere," ced Stanly Hopkinz. "Aul I waunt nou iz too no whaut dha aul mene. The stoery, so far az I

can make it out, iz like this. Sum yeerz ago this cuntry hous, Yoxly Oald Place, wauz taken bi an elderly man, whoo gave the name ov Professor Coram. He wauz an invalid, keping hiz bed haaf the time, and the uther haaf hobling round the hous withe a stic or beying poosht about the groundz bi the gardener in a Baath chare. He wauz wel liact bi the fu naborz whoo cauld uppon him, and he haz the reputaishon doun dhare ov beying a verry lerned man. Hiz hous'hoald uest too concist ov an elderly houskeper, Mrs. Marker, and ov a made, Suzan Tarlton. These hav boath bene withe him cins hiz arival, and dha ceme too be wimmen ov exelent carracter. The professor iz riting a lerned booc, and he found it nescesary, about a yere ago, too en'gage a secretery. The ferst too dhat he tride wer not suxescez, but the thherd, Mr. Willoby Smith, a verry yung man strate from the univercity, ceemz too hav bene just whaut hiz employer waunted. Hiz werc concisted in riting aul the morning too the professorz dictaishon, and he uezhuwaly spent the evening in hunting up refferencez and passagez which boer uppon the next dase werc. This Willoby Smith haz nuthhing against him, iather az a boi at Uppin'gam or az a yung man at Caimbrij. I hav cene hiz testimoanyalz, and from the ferst he wauz a decent, qwiyet, hard-werking fello, withe no weke spot in him at aul. And yet this iz the lad whoo haz met hiz deth this morning in the professorz studdy under cercumstaancez which can point oanly too merder."

The wind hould and screemd at the windose. Hoamz and I dru clocer too the fire, while the yung inspector sloly and point bi point devellopt hiz cin'gular narrative.

"If u wer too cerch aul In'gland," ced he, "I doant supose u cood fiand a hous'hoald moer celf-containd or frere from outside influwencez. Whole weex wood paas, and not wun ov them go paast the garden gate. The professor wauz berrede in hiz werc and existed for nuthhing els. Yung Smith nu nobody in the

naborhood, and livd verry much az hiz employer did. The too wimmen had nuthhing too take them from the hous. Mortimer, the gardener, whoo wheelz the Baath chare, iz an army penshoner—an oald Crimeyan man ov exelent carracter. He duz not liv in the hous, but in a thre-ruimd cottage at the uther end ov the garden. Dhose ar the oonly pepel dhat u wood fiand within the groundz ov Yoxly Oald Place. At the same time, the gate ov the garden iz a hundred yardz from the mane Lunden too Chattam rode. It openz withe a lach, and dhare iz nuthhing too prevent enniwun from wauking in.

“Nou I wil ghiv u the evvidens ov Suzan Tarlton, whoo iz the oonly person whoo can sa ennithhing pozsitive about the matter. It wauz in the foernoone, betwene elevven and twelv. She wauz en’gaijd at the moment in hanging sum kertainz in the upstaerz frunt bedroome. Professor Coram wauz stil in bed, for when the wether iz bad he celdom risez befoer midda. The houskeper wauz bizsede withe sum werc in the bac ov the hous. Willoby Smith had bene in hiz bedroome, which he usez az a citting-roome, but the made herd him at dhat moment paas along the passage and decend too the studdy imejaitly belo her. She did not ce him, but she cez dhat she cood not be mistaken in hiz qwic, ferm tred. She did not here the studdy doer close, but a minnute or so later dhare wauz a dredfool cri in the roome belo. It wauz a wiald, hoers screme, so strainj and un’natchural dhat it mite hav cum iather from a man or a woomman. At the same instant dhare wauz a hevvy thud, which shooc the oald hous, and then aul wauz cilens. The made stood petrifide for a moment, and then, recuvvering her currage, she ran dounstaerz. The studdy doer wauz shut and she opened it. Incide, yung Mr. Willoby Smith wauz strecht uppon the floer. At ferst she cood ce no injury, but az she tride too rase him she sau dhat blud wauz poering from the undercide ov hiz nec. It wauz peerst bi a verry smaual but verry depe wuind, which had divided the carottid artery. The instrument withe which

the injury had bene inflicted la upon the carpet beside him. It wauz wun ov dhose smaule celing-wax niavz too be found on oald-fashond riting-tabelz, withe an ivory handel and a stif blade. It wauz part ov the fittingz ov the professorz one desc.

“At ferst the made thaut dhat yung Smith wauz aulreddy ded, but on poering sum wauter from the caraaf over hiz foerhed he opend hiz ise for an instant. ‘The professor,’ he mermerd—‘it wauz she.’ The made iz prepaerd too sware dhat dhose wer the exact werdz. He tride desperaitly too sa sumthhing els, and he held hiz rite hand up in the are. Then he fel bac ded.

“In the meentime the houskeper had aulso ariavd upon the cene, but she wauz just too late too cach the yung manz diying werdz. Leving Suzan withe the boddy, she hurrede too the professorz roome. He wauz citting up in bed, horribly adgitated, for he had herd enuf too convins him dhat sumthhing terribel had okerd. Mrs. Marker iz prepaerd too sware dhat the professor wauz stil in hiz nite-cloadhz, and indede it wauz imposcibel for him too dres widhout the help ov Mortimer, whoose orderz wer too cum at twelv oacloc. The professor declaerz dhat he herd the distant cri, but dhat he nose nuthhing moer. He can ghiv no explanaishon ov the yung manz laast werdz, ‘The professor—it wauz she,’ but imadgianz dhat dha wer the outcum ov delereyum. He beleevz dhat Willoby Smith had not an ennemy in the werld, and can ghiv no rezon for the crime. Hiz ferst acshon wauz too cend Mortimer, the gardener, for the local polece. A littel later the chefe cunstabel cent for me. Nuthhing wauz muivd befoer I got dhare, and strict orderz wer ghivven dhat no wun shood wauc upon the paaths leding too the hous. It wauz a splendid chaans ov pooting yor ththeyorese intoo practice, Mr. Sherloc Hoamz. Dhare wauz reyaly nuthhing waunting.”

“Exept Mr. Sherloc Hoamz,” ced mi companyon, withe a sumwhaut

bitter smile. "Wel, let us here about it. Whaut sort ov a job did u make ov it?"

"I must aasc u ferst, Mr. Hoamz, too glaans at this ruf plan, which wil ghiv u a genneral ideyaa ov the posishon ov the professorz studdy and the vareyous points ov the cace. It wil help u in following mi investigaishon."

He unfoalded the ruf chart, which I here reprojuce, and he lade it acros Hoamsez ne. I rose and, standing behiand Hoamz, studdede it over hiz shoalder.

Professorz-Studdy

"It iz verry ruf, ov coers, and it oanly deelz withe the points which ceme too me too be ecenshal. Aul the rest u wil ce later for yorcelf. Nou, ferst ov aul, prezhuming dhat the asascin enterd the hous, hou did he or she cum in? Undoutedly bi the garden paath and the bac doer, from which dhare iz direct axes too the studdy. Enny uther wa wood hav bene exedingly complicated. The escape must hav aulso bene made along dhat line, for ov the too uther exits from the roome wun wauz bloct bi Suzan az she ran dounstaerz and the uther leedz strate too the professorz bedroome. I dhaerfoer directed mi atenshon at wuns too the garden paath, which wauz satchurated withe recent rane, and wood certainly sho enny footmarx.

"Mi examinaishon shode me dhat I wauz deling withe a caushous and expert crimminal. No footmarx wer too be found on the paath. Dhare cood be no qweschon, houwevver, dhat sumwun had paast along the graas border which lianz the paath, and dhat he had dun so in order too avoid leving a trac. I cood not fiand ennithhing in the nachure ov a distinct impreshon, but the graas wauz trodden down, and sumwun had undoutedly paast. It cood oanly hav bene the

merderer, cins niather the gardener nor enniwun els had bene dhare dhat morning, and the rane had oanly begun juring the nite."

"Wun moment," ced Hoamz. "Whare duz this paath lede too?"

"Too the rode."

"Hou long iz it?"

"A hundred yardz or so."

"At the point whare the paath paacez throo the gate, u cood shuerly pic up the trax?"

"Unforchunaitly, the paath wauz tiald at dhat point."

"Wel, on the rode itcelf?"

"No, it wauz aul trodden intoo mire."

"Tut-tut! Wel, then, these trax uppon the graas, wer dha cumming or gowing?"

"It wauz impscibel too sa. Dhare wauz nevver enny outline."

"A larj foot or a smaul?"

"U cood not distin'gwish."

Hoamz gave an ejaculaishon ov impaishens.

"It haz bene poering rane and blowing a hurricane evver cins," ced he. "It wil be harder too rede nou dhan dhat palimpcest.

Wel, wel, it caant be helpt. Whaut did u doo, Hopkinz, aafter u had made certane dhat u had made certane ov nuthhing?"

"I thhinc I made certane ov a good dele, Mr. Hoamz. I nu dhat sumwun had enterd the hous caushously from widhout. I next exammiand the coridor. It iz liand withe coconut matting and had taken no impreshon ov enny kiand. This braut me intoo the studdy itcelf. It iz a scantily fernisht roome. The mane artikel iz a larj riting-tabel withe a fixt buro. This buro concists ov a dubbel collum ov drauwerz, withe a central smaul cubbord betwene them. The drauwerz wer open, the cubbord loct. The drauwerz, it ceemz, wer aulwase open, and nuthhing ov vullu wauz kept in them. Dhare wer sum paperz ov importans in the cubbord, but dhare wer no cianz dhat this had bene tamperd withe, and the professor ashuerz me dhat nuthhing wauz miscing. It iz certane dhat no robbery haz bene comitted.

"I cum nou too the boddy ov the yung man. It wauz found nere the buro, and just too the left ov it, az marct uppon dhat chart. The stab wauz on the rite cide ov the nec and from behiand forword, so dhat it iz aulmoast imposcibel dhat it cood hav bene celf-inflicted."

"Unles he fel uppon the nife," ced Hoamz.

"Exactly. The ideyaa crost mi miand. But we found the nife sum fete awa from the boddy, so dhat ceemz imposcibel. Then, ov coers, dhare ar the manz one diying werdz. And, finally, dhare wauz this verry important pece ov evvidens which wauz found claaspt in the ded manz rite hand."

From hiz pocket Stanly Hopkinz dru a smaul paper packet. He unfoalded it and discloazd a goalden pans-na, withe too broken endz ov blac cile cord dan'gling from the end ov it. "Willoby

Smith had exelent cite," he added. "Dhare can be no qweschon dhat this wauz snacht from the face or the person ov the asascin."

Sherloc Hoamz tooc the glaacez intoo hiz hand, and exammiand them withe the utmoast atenshon and interest. He held them on hiz nose, endevvord too rede throo them, went too the windo and staerd up the strete withe them, looct at them moast minuetly in the fool lite ov the lamp, and finaly, withe a chuckel, ceted himself at the tabel and rote a fu lianz uppon a shete ov paper, which he tost acros too Stanly Hopkinz.

"Dhats the best I can doo for u," ced he. "It ma proove too be ov sum uce."

The astonnisht detective rede the note aloud. It ran az follose:

"Waunted, a woomman ov good adres, atiard like a lady. She haz a remarcably thhic nose, withe ise which ar cet cloce uppon iather cide ov it. She haz a puckerd foerhed, a pering expreshon, and probbably rounded shoalderz. Dhare ar indicaishonz dhat she haz had recors too an optishan at leest twice juring the laast fu munths. Az her glaacez ar ov remarcabel strength, and az optishanz ar not verry numerous, dhare shood be no difficulty in tracing her."

Hoamz smiald at the astonishment ov Hopkinz, which must hav bene reflected uppon mi fechuerz. "Shuerly mi deducshonz ar cimpliscity itself," ced he. "It wood be difficult too name enny artikelz which afoerd a finer feeld for inferens dhan a pare ov glaacez, espeshaly so remarcabel a pare az these. Dhat dha belong too a woomman I infer from dhare dellicacy, and aulso, ov coers, from the laast werdz ov the diying man. Az too her beying a person ov refianment and wel drest, dha ar, az u perceve,

handsomly mounted in sollid goald, and it iz inconcevable dhat enniwun whoo woer such glaacez cood be slatternly in uther respects. U wil fiand dhat the clips ar too wide for yor nose, showing dhat the ladese nose wauz verry braud at the bace. This sort ov nose iz uezhuwaly a short and coers wun, but dhare iz a sufiscent number ov exepshonz too prevent me from beying dogmattic or from incisting uppon this point in mi descriphon. Mi one face iz a narro wun, and yet I fiand dhat I canot ghet mi ise intoo the center, nor nere the center, ov these glaacez. Dhaerfoer, the ladese ise ar cet verry nere too the ciadz ov the nose. U wil perceve, Wautson, dhat the glaacez ar concave and ov unnuezhuwal strength. A lady whoose vizhon haz bene so extreemly contracted aul her life iz shure too hav the fizensical caracteristix ov such vizhon, which ar cene in the foerhed, the ilidz, and the shoalderz."

"Yes," I ced, "I can follo eche ov yor arguments. I confes, houwevver, dhat I am unnabel too understand hou u arive at the dubbel vizsit too the optishan."

Hoamz tooc the glaacez in hiz hand.

"U wil perceve," he ced, "dhat the clips ar liand withe tiny bandz ov corc too soften the preschure uppon the nose. Wun ov these iz discullord and woern too sum slite extent, but the uther iz nu. Evvidently wun haz faulen of and bene replaist. I shood juj dhat the oalder ov them haz not bene dhare moer dhan a fu munths. Dha exactly corespond, so I gather dhat the lady went bac too the same establishment for the cecond."

"Bi Jorj, its marvelous!" cride Hopkinz, in an extacy ov admiraishon. "Too thhinc dhat I had aul dhat evvidens in mi hand and nevver nu it! I had intended, houwevver, too go the round ov the Lundon optishanz."

"Ov coers u wood. Meenwhile, hav u ennithhing moer too tel us about the cace?"

"Nuthhing, Mr. Hoamz. I thhinc dhat u no az much az I doo nou—probbably moer. We hav had inqwirse made az too enny strain'ger cene on the cuntry roadz or at the railwa staishon. We hav herd ov nun. Whaut beets me iz the utter waunt ov aul obgett in the crime. Not a goast ov a motive can enniwun sugest."

"Aa! dhare I am not in a posishon too help u. But I supose u waunt us too cum out too-moro?"

"If it iz not aasking too much, Mr. Hoamz. Dhaerz a trane from Charing Cros too Chattam at six in the morning, and we shood be at Yoxly Oald Place betwene ate and nine."

"Then we shal take it. Yor cace haz certainly sum fechuerz ov grate interest, and I shal be delited too looc intoo it. Wel, its neerly wun, and we had best ghet a fu ourz' slepe. I daersa u can mannage aul rite on the sofaa in frunt ov the fire. Ile lite mi spirrit lamp, and ghiv u a cup ov coffy befoer we start."

The gale had blone itcelf out next da, but it wauz a bitter morning when we started uppon our gerny. We sau the coald winter sun rise over the drery marshez ov the Temz and the long, sullen rechez ov the rivver, which I shal evver asoasheyate withe our persute ov the Andaaman Ilander in the erleyer dase ov our carere. Aafter a long and wery gerny, we alited at a smaul staishon sum mialz from Chattam. While a hors wauz beying poot intoo a trap at the local in, we snacht a hurrede brecfast, and so we wer aul reddy for biznes when we at laast ariavd at Yoxly

Oald Place. A cunstabel met us at the garden gate.

“Wel, Wilson, enny nuse?”

“No, cer—nuthhing.”

“No repoerts ov enny strain‘ger cene?”

“No, cer. Doun at the staishon dha ar certane dhat no strain‘ger iather came or went yesterda.”

“Hav u had inqwirese made at inz and lodgingz?”

“Yes, cer: dhare iz no wun dhat we canot acount for.”

“Wel, its oonly a rezonabel wauc too Chattam. Enniwun mite sta dhare or take a trane widhout beying observd. This iz the garden paath ov which I spoke, Mr. Hoamz. Ile plej mi werd dhare wauz no marc on it yesterda.”

“On which cide wer the marx on the graas?”

“This cide, cer. This narro margin ov graas betwene the paath and the flouwer-bed. I caant ce the tracez nou, but dha wer clere too me then.”

“Yes, yes: sumwun haz paast along,” ced Hoamz, stooping over the graas border. “Our lady must hav pict her steps caerfooly, must she not, cins on the wun cide she wood leve a trac on the paath, and on the uther an even clerer wun on the soft bed?”

“Yes, cer, she must hav bene a coole hand.”

I sau an intent looc paas over Hoamsez face.

“U sa dhat she must hav cum bac this wa?”

“Yes, cer, dhare iz no uther.”

“On this strip ov graas?”

“Certainly, Mr. Hoamz.”

“Hum! It wauz a verry remarcabel performans—verry remarcabel. Wel, I thhinc we hav exausted the paath. Let us go farther. This garden doer iz uezhuwaly kept open, I supose? Then this vizsitor had nuthhing too doo but too wauc in. The ideyaa ov merder wauz not in

her miand, or she wood hav provided hercelf withe sum sort ov weppon, insted ov havving too pic this nife of the riting-tabel. She advaanst along this coridor, leving no tracez uppon the coconut matting. Then she found hercelf in this studdy. Hou long wauz she dhare? We hav no meenz ov judging.”

“Not moer dhan a fu minnuets, cer. I forgot too tel u dhat Mrs. Marker, the houskeper, had bene in dhare tideying not verry long befoer—about a qworter ov an our, she cez.”

“Wel, dhat ghivz us a limmit. Our lady enterz this roome, and whaut duz she doo? She gose over too the riting-tabel. Whaut for? Not for ennithhing in the drauwerz. If dhare had bene ennithhing werth her taking, it wood shuerly hav bene loct up. No, it wauz for sumthhing in dhat wooden buro. Hallo! whaut iz dhat scrach uppon the face ov it? Just hoald a mach, Wautson. Whi did u not tel me ov this, Hopkinz?”

The marc which he wauz exammining began uppon the braas-werc on the

rite-hand side ov the kehole, and extended for about foer inches, whare it had scracht the varnish from the cerface.

"I notiast it, Mr. Hoamz, but ule aulwase fiand scratchez round a kehole."

"This iz recent, qwite recent. Ce hou the braas shianz whare it iz cut. An oald scrach wood be the same cullor az the cerface. Looc at it throo mi lenz. Dhaerz the varnish, too, like erth on eche side ov a furro. Iz Mrs. Marker dhare?"

A sad-faist, elderly woomman came intoo the roome.

"Did u dust this buro yesterda morning?"

"Yes, cer."

"Did u notice this scrach?"

"No, cer, I did not."

"I am shure u did not, for a duster wood hav swept awa these shredz ov varnish. Whoo haz the ke ov this buro?"

"The Professor keeps it on hiz wauch-chane."

"Iz it a cimpel ke?"

"No, cer, it iz a Chubz ke."

"Verry good. Mrs. Marker, u can go. Nou we ar making a littel proagres. Our lady enterz the roome, advaancez too the buro, and iather openz it or trise too doo so. While she iz dhus en'gaijd, yung Willoby Smith enterz the roome. In her hurry too widhdrau

the ke, she maix this scrach uppon the doer. He cesez her, and she, snatching up the nerest obgect, which happenz too be this nife, striax at him in order too make him let go hiz hoald. The blo iz a fatal wun. He faulz and she escaips, iather withe or widhout the obgect for which she haz cum. Iz Suzan, the made, dhare? Cood enniwun hav got awa throo dhat doer aafter the time dhat u herd the cri, Suzan?"

"No, cer, it iz imposcibel. Befoer I got doun the stare, Ide hav cene enniwun in the passage. Beciadz, the doer nevver opend, or I wood hav herd it."

"Dhat cettelz this exit. Then no dout the lady went out the wa she came. I understand dhat this uther passage leedz oanly too the professorz roome. Dhare iz no exit dhat wa?"

"No, cer."

"We shal go doun it and make the aqwaintans ov the professor. Hallo, Hopkinz! this iz verry important, verry important indede. The professorz coridor iz aulso liand withe coconut matting."

"Wel, cer, whaut ov dhat?"

"Doant u ce enny baring uppon the cace? Wel, wel. I doant incist uppon it. No dout I am rong. And yet it ceemz too me too be sugestive. Cum withe me and introjuce me."

We paast doun the passage, which wauz ov the same length az dhat which led too the garden. At the end wauz a short flite ov steps ending in a doer. Our ghide noct, and then usherd us intoo the professorz bedroome.

It wauz a verry larj chaimber, liand withe inumerabel volluemz,

which had overflode from the shelvz and la in pialz in the cornerz, or wer stact aul round at the bace ov the cacez. The bed wauz in the center ov the roome, and in it, propt up withe pillose, wauz the oner ov the hous. I hav celdom cene a moer remarcabel-loocking person. It wauz a gaunt, aqwiline face which wauz ternd toowordz us, withe peercing darc ise, which lercet in depe hollose under overhung and tufted brouz. Hiz hare and beard wer white, save dhat the latter wauz cureyously staind withe yello around hiz mouth. A ciggaret glode amid the tan'ghel ov white hare, and the are ov the roome wauz fetid withe stale tobacco smoke. Az he held out hiz hand too Hoamz, I perceevd dhat it wauz aulso staind withe yello niccotene.

“A smoker, Mr. Hoamz?” ced he, speking in wel-chosen In'glish, withe a cureyous littel mincing axent. “Pra take a ciggaret. And u, cer? I can recomend them, for I hav them espeshaly prepaerd bi Lyonidese, ov Alexaandreyaa. He cendz me a thouzand at a time, and I greve too sa dhat I hav too arainj for a fresh supli evvery fortnite. Bad, cer, verry bad, but an oald man haz fu plezhuerz. Tobacco and mi werc—dhat iz aul dhat iz left too me.”

Hoamz had lit a ciggaret and wauz shooting littel darting glaancez aul over the roome.

“Tobacco and mi werc, but nou oonly tobacco,” the oald man exclaimd. “Alaas! whaut a fatal interupshon! Whoo cood hav foercene such a terribel catastrofy? So estimabel a yung man! I ashure u dhat, aafter a fu munths' traning, he wauz an admirabel acistant. Whaut doo u thhinc ov the matter, Mr. Hoamz?”

“I hav not yet made up mi miand.”

“I shal indede be indetted too u if u can thro a lite whare aul iz so darc too us. Too a poor booqworm and invalid like micelf such a blo iz parralising. I ceme too hav lost the facculy ov thaut. But u ar a man ov acshon—u ar a man ov afaerz. It iz part ov the evverida rootene ov yor life. U can preserv yor ballans in evvery emergency. We ar forchunate, indede, in havving u at our cide.”

Hoamz wauz pacing up and doun wun cide ov the roome whialst the oald

professor wauz tauking. I observd dhat he wauz smoking withe extrordinary rapiddity. It wauz evvident dhat he shaerd our hoasts liking for the fresh Alexaandreyan ciggarets.

“Yes, cer, it iz a crushing blo,” ced the oald man. “Dhat iz mi *magnum opus*—the pile ov paperz on the cide tabel yonder. It iz mi anallicis ov the doccuments found in the Coptic monnasterese ov Cirreyaa and Egipt, a werc which wil cut depe at the verry foundaishon ov reveeld relidjon. Withe mi enfebeld helth I doo not no whether I shal evver be abel too complete it, nou dhat mi acistant haz bene taken from me. Dere me! Mr. Hoamz, whi, u ar even a qwicker smoker dhan I am micelf.”

Hoamz smiald.

“I am a conocer,” ced he, taking anuther ciggaret from the box—hiz foerth—and liting it from the stub ov dhat which he had finnisht. “I wil not trubbel u withe enny lengthhy cros-examinaishon, Professor Coram, cins I gather dhat u wer in bed at the time ov the crime, and cood no nuthhing about it. I wood oanly aasc this: Whaut doo u imadgine dhat this poor fello ment bi hiz laast werdz: ‘The professor—it wauz she’?”

The professor shooc hiz hed.

“Suzan iz a cuntry gherl,” ced he, “and u no the increddibel schupiddity ov dhat claas. I fancy dhat the poor fello mermerd sum incoherent delereyous werdz, and dhat she twisted them intoo this meningles message.”

“I ce. U hav no explanaishon yorcelf ov the tradgedy?”

“Poscibly an axident, poscibly—I oonly breathe it among ourcelvz—a suwicide. Yung men hav dhare hidden trubbelz—sum afare ov the hart, perhaps, which we hav nevver none. It iz a moer probbabel suposishon dhan merder.”

“But the iaglaacez?”

“Aa! I am oonly a schudent—a man ov dreemz. I canot explane the practical thhingz ov life. But stil, we ar aware, mi frend, dhat luv-gagez ma take strainj shaips. Bi aul meenz take anuther ciggaret. It iz a plezhure too ce enniwun apreesheyate them so. A fan, a gluv, glaacez—whoo nose whaut artikel ma be carrede az a token or trezhuerd when a man poots an end too hiz life? This gentelman speex ov footsteps in the graas, but, aafter aul, it iz esy too be mistaken on such a point. Az too the nife, it mite wel be throne far from the unforchunate man az he fel. It iz poscibel dhat I speke az a chiald, but too me it ceemz dhat Willoby Smith haz met hiz fate bi hiz one hand.”

Hoamz ceemd struc bi the theyory dhus poot forword, and he continnude too wauc up and down for sum time, lost in thaut and conshuming ciggaret aafter ciggaret.

“Tel me, Professor Coram,” he ced, at laast, “whaut iz in dhat cubbord in the buro?”

“Nuthhing dhat wood help a thhefe. Fammily paperz, letterz from mi poor wife, diplomaaz ov univercitese which hav dun me onnor. Here iz the ke. U can looc for yorcelf.”

Hoamz pict up the ke, and looct at it for an instant, then he handed it bac.

“No, I hardly thhinc dhat it wood help me,” ced he. “I shood prefer too go qwiyetly doun too yor garden, and tern the whole matter over in mi hed. Dhare iz sumthhing too be ced for the thheyory ov suwicide which u hav poot forword. We must apollogise for havving intruded uppon u, Professor Coram, and I prommice dhat we woant disterb u until aafter lunch. At too oacloc we wil cum agane, and repoert too u ennithhing which ma hav happend in the interval.”

Hoamz wauz cureyously distrate, and we wauct up and doun the garden paath for sum time in cilens.

“Hav u a clu?” I aasct, at laast.

“It dependz uppon dhose ciggarets dhat I smoact,” ced he. “It iz poscibel dhat I am utterly mistaken. The ciggarets wil sho me.”

“Mi dere Hoamz,” I exclaimd, “hou on erth——”

“Wel, wel, u ma ce for yorcelf. If not, dhaerz no harm dun. Ov coers, we aulwase hav the optishan clu too faul bac uppon, but I take a short cut when I can ghet it. Aa, here iz the good Mrs. Marker! Let us enjoi five minnuets ov instructive conversaishon withe her.”

I ma hav remarct befoer dhat Hoamz had, when he liact, a peculeyarily in'graisheyating wa withe wimmen, and dhat he verry reddily

establisht termz ov confidens withe them. In haaf the time which he had naimd, he had capchuerd the houskeperz goodwil and wauz chatting withe her az if he had none her for yeerz.

"Yes, Mr. Hoamz, it iz az u sa, cer. He duz smoke sumthhing terribel. Aul da and sumtiamz aul nite, cer. Ive cene dhat roome ov a morning—wel, cer, ude hav thaut it wauz a Lunden fog. Poor yung Mr. Smith, he wauz a smoker aulso, but not az bad az the professor. Hiz helth—wel, I doant no dhat its better nor wers for the smoking."

"Aa!" ced Hoamz, "but it kilz the appetite."

"Wel, I doant no about dhat, cer."

"I supose the professor eets hardly ennithhing?"

"Wel, he iz vareyabel. Ile sa dhat for him."

"Ile wager he tooc no breccfast this morning, and woant face hiz lunch aafter aul the ciggarets I sau him conshume."

"Wel, yor out dhare, cer, az it happenz, for he ate a remarcabel big breccfast this morning. I doant no when Ive none him make a better wun, and hese orderd a good dish ov cutlets for hiz lunch. Ime cerpriazd micelf, for cins I came intoo dhat roome yesterda and sau yung Mr. Smith liying dhare on the floer, I coodnt bare too looc at foode. Wel, it taix aul sorts too make a werld, and the professor haznt let it take hiz appetite awa."

We loiterd the morning awa in the garden. Stanly Hopkinz had gon down too the village too looc intoo sum rumorz ov a strainj woomman whoo had bene cene bi sum children on the Chattam Rode the preveyous morning. Az too mi frend, aul hiz uezhuwal ennergy ceemd too

hav deserted him. I had nevver none him handel a cace in such a haaf-harted fashon. Even the nuse braut bac bi Hopkinz dhat he had found the children, and dhat dha had undoutedly cene a woomman exactly coresponding withe Hoamsez descriphon, and waring iather spektakelz or iaglaacez, faild too rouz enny cine ov kene interest. He wauz moer atentive when Suzan, whoo wated uppon us at lunch, vollunteerd the informaishon dhat she beleevd Mr. Smith had bene out for a wauc yesterda morning, and dhat he had oanly reternd haaf an our befoer the tradgedy okerd. I cood not micelf ce the baring ov this incident, but I cleerly perceevd dhat Hoamz wauz weving it intoo the genneral skeme which he had formd in hiz brane. Suddenly he sprang from hiz chare and glaanst at hiz wauch. "Too oacloc, gentelmen," ced he. "We must go up and hav it out withe our frend, the professor."

The oald man had just finnisht hiz lunch, and certainly hiz empty dish boer evvidens too the good appetite withe which hiz houskeper had credidated him. He wauz, indede, a weerd figgure az he ternd hiz white mane and hiz glowing ise toowordz us. The eternal ciggaret smoalderd in hiz mouth. He had bene drest and wauz ceted in an armchare bi the fire.

"Wel, Mr. Hoamz, hav u solvd this mistery yet?" He shuvd the larj tin ov ciggarets which stood on a tabel beside him toowordz mi companyon. Hoamz strecht out hiz hand at the same moment, and betwene them dha tipt the box over the ej. For a minnute or too we wer aul on our nese retrieving stra

ciggarets from imposcibel placez. When we rose agane, I observd Hoamsez ise wer shining and hiz cheex tinjd withe cullor. Oonly at a cricis hav I cene dhose battel-cignalz fliying.

“Yes,” ced he, “I hav solvd it.”

Stanly Hopkinz and I staerd in amaizment. Sumthhing like a snere qwivverd over the gaunt fechuerz ov the oald professor.

“Indede! In the garden?”

“No, here.”

“Here! When?”

“This instant.”

“U ar shuerly joking, Mr. Sherloc Hoamz. U compel me too tel u dhat this iz too cereyous a matter too be treted in such a fashon.”

“I hav foerjd and tested evvery linc ov mi chane, Professor Coram, and I am shure dhat it iz sound. Whaut yor motiavz ar, or whaut exact part u pla in this strainj biznes, I am not yet abel too sa. In a fu minnuets I shal probbably here it from yor one lips. Meenwhile I wil reconstruct whaut iz paast for yor bennefit, so dhat u ma no the informaishon which I stil reqwire.

“A lady yesterda enterd yor studdy. She came withe the intenshon ov posescing hercelf ov certane documents which wer in yor buro. She had a ke ov her one. I hav had an oporchunity ov exammining yorz, and I doo not fiand dhat slite disculloraishon which the scrach made uppon the varnish wood hav projuest. U

wer not an axessory, dhaerfoer, and she came, so far az I can rede the evvidens, widhout yor nollej too rob u."

The professor blu a cloud from hiz lips. "This iz moast interesting and instructive," ced he. "Hav u no moer too ad? Shuerly, havving traist this lady so far, u can aulso sa whaut haz becum ov her."

"I wil endevvor too doo so. In the ferst place she wauz ceezd bi yor cecretary, and stabd him in order too escape. This catastrofy I am incliand too regard az an unhappy axident, for I am convinst dhat the lady had no intenshon ov inflicting so grevous an injury. An asascin duz not cum unnarmd. Horifide bi whaut she had dun, she rusht wialdly awa from the cene ov the tradgedy. Unforchunaitly for her, she had lost her glaacez in the scuffel, and az she wauz extreemly short-cited she wauz reyal helples widhout them. She ran doun a coridor, which she imadgiand too be dhat bi which she had cum—boath wer liand withe coconut matting—and it wauz oanly when it wauz too late dhat she understood dhat she had taken the rong passage, and dhat her retrete wauz cut of behiand her. Whaut wauz she too doo? She cood not go bac. She cood not remane whare she wauz. She must go on. She went on. She mounted a stare, poosht open a doer, and found hercelf in yor roome."

The oald man sat withe hiz mouth open, staring wialdly at Hoamz. Amaizment and fere wer stampd uppon hiz exprescive fechuerz. Nou, withe an effort, he shrugd hiz shoalderz and berst intoo incincere laafter.

"Aul verry fine, Mr. Hoamz," ced he. "But dhare iz wun littel flau in yor splendid ththeyory. I wauz micelf in mi roome, and I nevver left it juring the da."

"I am aware ov dhat, Professor Coram."

"And u mene too sa dhat I cood li uppon dhat bed and not be aware dhat a woomman had enterd mi roome?"

"I nevver ced so. U *wer* aware ov it. U spoke withe her. U reccogniazd her. U aded her too escape."

Agane the professor berst intoo hi-kede laafter. He had rizsen too hiz fete, and hiz ise glode like emberz.

"U ar mad!" he cride. "U ar tauking insainly. I helpt her too escape? Whare iz she nou?"

"She iz dhare," ced Hoamz, and he pointed too a hi booc'cace in the corner ov the roome.

I sau the oald man thro up hiz armz, a terribel convulshon paast over hiz grim face, and he fel bac in hiz chare. At the same instant the booc'cace at which Hoamz pointed swung round uppon a hinj, and a woomman rusht out intoo the roome. "U ar rite!" she cride, in a strainj forane vois. "U ar rite! I am here."

She wauz broun withe the dust and draipt withe the cobwebz which had

cum from the waulz ov her hiding-place. Her face, too, wauz streect withe grime, and at the best she cood nevver hav bene handsum, for she had the exact fizensal characteristix which Hoamz had diviand, withe, in adishon, a long and obstinate chin. Whaut withe her natchural bliandnes, and whaut withe the chainj from darc too lite, she stood az wun daizd, blinking about her too ce whare and whoo we wer. And yet, in spite ov aul these disadvaantagez, dhare wauz a certane nobillity in the woommanz

baring—a gallantry in the defiyant chin and in the upraizd hed, which compeld sumthhing ov respect and admiraishon.

Stanly Hopkinz had lade hiz hand uppon her arm and claimd her az hiz prizzoner, but she waivd him acide gently, and yet withe an over-maastering dignity which compeld obegens. The oald man la bac in hiz chare withe a twitching face, and staerd at her withe brooding ise.

“Yes, cer, I am yor prizzoner,” she ced. “From whare I stood I cood here evverithhing, and I no dhat u hav lernd the trueth. I confes it aul. It wauz I whoo kild the yung man. But u ar rite—u whoo sa it wauz an axident. I did not even no dhat it wauz a nife which I held in mi hand, for in mi despere I snacht ennithhing from the tabel and struc at him too make him let me go. It iz the trueth dhat I tel.”

“Maddam,” ced Hoamz, “I am shure dhat it iz the trueth. I fere dhat u ar far from wel.”

She had ternd a dredfool cullor, the moer gaastly under the darc dust-streex uppon her face. She ceted hercelf on the cide ov the bed; then she rezhuemd.

“I hav oonly a littel time here,” she ced, “but I wood hav u too no the whole trueth. I am this manz wife. He iz not an In’GLISHMAN. He iz a Rushan. Hiz name I wil not tel.”

For the ferst time the oald man sterd. “God bles u, Annaa!” he cride. “God bles u!”

She caast a looc ov the depest disdane in hiz direcshon. “Whi shood u cling so hard too dhat retched life ov yorz, Cerjus?” ced she. “It haz dun harm too menny and good too

nun—not even too yorcelf. Houwevver, it iz not for me too cauz the frale thred too be snapt befoer Godz time. I hav enuf aulreddy uppon mi sole cins I crost the threshoald ov this kerst hous. But I must speke or I shal be too late.

“I hav ced, gentelmen, dhat I am this manz wife. He wauz fifty and I a foolish gherl ov twenty when we marrede. It wauz in a citty ov Rushaa, a univercity—I wil not name the place.”

“God bles u, Annaa!” mermerd the oald man agane.

“We wer reformerz—revolueshonists—Niyilists, u understand. He and I and menny moer. Then dhare came a time ov trubbel, a polece officer wauz kild, menny wer arested, evvidens wauz waunted, and in order too save hiz one life and too ern a grate reword, mi huzband betrade hiz one wife and hiz companyonz. Yes, we wer aul arested uppon hiz confeshon. Sum ov us found our wa too the gallose, and sum too Cibereyaa. I wauz among these laast, but mi term wauz not for life. Mi huzband came too In’gland withe hiz il-gotten gainz and haz livd in qwiyet evver cins, nowing wel dhat if the Brutherhood nu whare he wauz not a weke wood paas befoer justice wood be dun.”

The oald man reecht out a trembling hand and helpt himcelf too a ciggaret. “I am in yor handz, Annaa,” ced he. “U wer aulwase good too me.”

“I hav not yet toald u the hite ov hiz villany,” ced she.

“Among our comraidz ov the Order, dhare wauz wun whoo wauz the frend ov mi hart. He wauz nobel, uncelfish, luvving—aul dhat mi huzband wauz not. He hated viyolens. We wer aul ghilty—if dhat iz ghilt—but he wauz not. He rote forevver diswading us from such a coers. These letterz wood hav saivd him. So wood mi diyary, in which, from da too da, I had enterd boath mi felingz toowordz

him and the vu which eche ov us had taken. Mi huzband found and kept boath diyary and letterz. He hid them, and he tride hard too sware awa the yung manz life. In this he faild, but Alexis wauz cent a convict too Cibereyaa, whare nou, at this moment, he werx in a sault mine. Thhinc ov dhat, u villane, u villane!—nou, nou, at this verry moment, Alexis, a man whoose name u ar not werthy too speke, werx and livz like a slave, and yet I hav yor life in mi handz, and I let u go.”

“U wer aulwase a nobel woomman, Annaa,” ced the oald man, puffing at hiz ciggaret.

She had rizsen, but she fel bac agane withe a littel cri ov pane.

“I must finnish,” she ced. “When mi term wauz over I cet micelf too ghet the diyary and letterz which, if cent too the Rushan guvvernment, wood procure mi frendz relece. I nu dhat mi huzband had cum too In’ gland. Aafter munths ov cerching I discuverd whare he wauz. I nu dhat he stil had the diyary, for when I wauz in Cibereyaa I had a letter from him wuns, reproching me and qwoting sum passagez from its pagez. Yet I wauz shure dhat, withe hiz revenjfool nachure, he wood nevver ghiv it too me ov hiz one fre-wil. I must ghet it for micelf. Withe this obgett I en’gajjd an agent from a private detective ferm, whoo enterd mi huzbandz hous az a secretery—it wauz yor cecond secretery, Cerjus, the wun whoo left u so hurreedly. He found dhat paperz wer kept in the cubbord, and he got an impreshon ov the ke. He wood not go farther. He fernisht me withe a plan ov the hous, and he toald me dhat in the foernoone the studdy wauz aulwase empty, az the secretery wauz emploid up here. So at laast I tooc mi currage in boath handz, and I came down too ghet the paperz for micelf. I suxeded; but at whaut a cost!

“I had just taken the paper; and wauz locking the cubbord, when

the yung man ceezd me. I had cene him aulreddy dhat morning. He had met me on the rode, and I had aasct him too tel me whare Professor Coram livd, not nowing dhat he wauz in hiz employi."

"Exactly! Exactly!" ced Hoamz. "The cecretary came bac, and toald hiz employier ov the woomman he had met. Then, in hiz laast breth, he tride too cend a message dhat it wauz she—the she whoome he had just discust withe him."

"U must let me speke," ced the woomman, in an imperrative vois, and her face contracted az if in pane. "When he had faulen I rusht from the roome, chose the rong doer, and found micelf in mi huzbandz roome. He spoke ov ghivving me up. I shode him dhat if he did so, hiz life wauz in mi handz. If he gave me too the lau, I cood ghiv him too the Brutherhood. It wauz not dhat I wisht too liv for mi one sake, but it wauz dhat I desiard too acumplish mi perpoce. He nu dhat I wood doo whaut I ced—dhat hiz one fate wauz involvd in mine. For dhat rezon, and for no uther, he sheelded me. He thrust me intoo dhat darc hiding-place—a rellic ov oald dase, none oonly too himcelf. He tooc hiz meelz in hiz one roome, and so wauz abel too ghiv me part ov hiz foode. It wauz agrede dhat when the polece left the hous I shood slip awa bi nite and cum bac no moer. But in sum wa u hav red our planz." She toer from the boozom ov her dres a smaual packet. "These ar mi laast werdz," ced she; "here iz the packet which wil save Alexis. I confide it too yor onnor and too yor luv ov justice. Take it! U wil delivver it at the Rushan Embacy. Nou, I hav dun mi juty, and——"

"Stop her!" cride Hoamz. He had bounded acros the roome and had rencht a smaual fiyal from her hand.

"Too late!" she ced, cinking bac on the bed. "Too late! I tooc the poizon befoer I left mi hiding-place. Mi hed swimz! I am

gowing! I charj u, cer, too remember the packet.”

“A cimpel cace, and yet, in sum wase, an instructive wun,”
Hoamz remarct, az we travveld bac too toun. “It hinjd from
the outcet uppon the pans-na. But for the forchunate chaans ov
the dying man havving ceezd these, I am not shure dhat we cood
evver hav reecht our solueshon. It wauz clere too me, from the
strength ov the glaacez, dhat the warer must hav bene verry
bliand and helples when depriavd ov them. When u aasct me too
beleve dhat she wauct along a narro strip ov graas widhout
wuns making a fauls step, I remarct, az u ma remember, dhat
it wauz a noatwerthy performans. In mi miand I cet it doun az an
imposcibel performans, save in the unliacly cace dhat she had a
cecond pare ov glaacez. I wauz foerst, dhaerfoer, too concidder
cereyously the hipothhecis dhat she had remaind within the hous.
On perceving the cimilarrity ov the too coridorz, it became
clere dhat she mite verry esily hav made such a mistake, and,
in dhat cace, it wauz evvident dhat she must hav enterd the
professorz roome. I wauz keenly on the alert, dhaerfoer, for
whautevver wood bare out this suposishon, and I exammiand the
roome
narroly for ennithhing in the shape ov a hiding-place. The carpet
ceemd continnuwous and fermly naild, so I dismiss the ideyaa ov a
trap-doer. Dhare mite wel be a reces behiand the boox. Az u
ar aware, such devicez ar common in oald liabrarese. I observd
dhat boox wer piald on the floer at aul uther points, but dhat
wun booc’cace wauz left clere. This, then, mite be the doer. I
cood ce no marx too ghide me, but the carpet wauz ov a dun
cullor, which lendz itcelf verry wel too examinaishon. I dhaerfoer
smoact a grate number ov dhose exelent ciggarets, and I
dropt the ash aul over the space in frunt ov the suspected
booc’cace. It wauz a cimpel tric, but exedingly efective. I
then went dounstaerz, and I ascertaind, in yor prezsens,
Wautson, widhout yor perceving the drift ov mi remarx, dhat

Professor Coramz consumpshon ov foode had increest—az wun wood expect when he iz supliying a cecond person. We then acended too the roome agane, when, bi upcetting the ciggaret-box, I obtaind a verry exelent vu ov the floer, and wauz abel too ce qwite cleerly, from the tracez uppon the ciggaret ash, dhat the prizzoner had in our abcens cum out from her retrete. Wel, Hopkinz, here we ar at Charing Cros, and I con'gratchulate u on havving braut yor cace too a suxesfool concluezhon. U ar gowing too hedqworterz, no dout. I thhinc, Wautson, u and I wil drive tooghether too the Rushan Embacy."

THE ADVENCHURE OV THE MISCING THRE-QWORTER

We wer faerly acustomd too receve weerd tellegramz at Baker Strete, but I hav a particcular recolecshon ov wun which reecht us on a gloomy Februwary morning, sum cevven or ate yeerz ago, and gave Mr. Sherloc Hoamz a puzseld qworter ov an our. It wauz adrest too him, and ran dhus:

Plese awate me. Terribel misforchune. Rite wing thre-qworter miscing, indispensabel too-moro. OVERTON.

"Strand poastmarc, and dispacht ten thherty-cix," ced Hoamz, reding it over and over. "Mr. Overton wauz evvidently concidderably exited when he cent it, and sumwhaut incoherent in conceqwens. Wel, wel, he wil be here, I daersa, bi the time I hav looct throo *The Tiamz*, and then we shal no aul about it. Even the moast incignificant problem wood be welcum in these stagnant dase."

Thhingz had indede bene verry slo withe us, and I had lernd too dred such pereyodz ov inacshon, for I nu bi expereyens dhat mi companyonz brane wauz so abnormaly active dhat it wauz dain'gerous

too leve it widhout matereyal uppon which too werc. For yeerz I had gradjuwaly weend him from dhat drug mainyaa which had threttend wuns too chec hiz remarcabel carere. Nou I nu dhat under ordinary condishonz he no lon'gher craivd for this artifishal stimmulus, but I wauz wel aware dhat the feend wauz not ded but sleping, and I hav none dhat the slepe wauz a lite wun and the waking nere when in pereyodz ov idelnes I hav cene the draun looc uppon Hoamsez acettic face, and the brooding ov hiz depe-cet and inscrutabel ise. Dhaerfoer I blest this Mr. Overton whoowevver he mite be, cins he had cum withe hiz enigmattic message too brake dhat dain'gerous caalm which braut moer perril too mi frend dhan aul the stormz ov hiz tempeschuwous life.

Az we had expected, the tellegram wauz soone follode bi its cender, and the card ov Mr. Cirril Overton, Trinnity College, Caimbrij, anounst the arival ov an enormous yung man, cixtene stone ov sollid bone and muscel, whoo spand the doerwa withe hiz braud shoalderz, and looct from wun ov us too the uther withe a cumly face which wauz haggard withe anxiyety.

“Mr. Sherloc Hoamz?”

Mi companyon boud.

“Ive bene doun too Scotland Yard, Mr. Hoamz. I sau Inspector Stanly Hopkinz. He adviazd me too cum too u. He ced the cace, so far az he cood ce, wauz moer in yor line dhan in dhat ov the reggular polece.”

“Pra cit doun and tel me whaut iz the matter.”

“Its afool, Mr. Hoamz—cimply afool I wunder mi hare iznt gra. Godfry Staunton—uve herd ov him, ov coers? Hese cimply the hinj dhat the whole teme ternz on. Ide raather spare too from the

pac, and hav Godfry for mi thre-qworter line. Whether its paacing, or tacling, or dribling, dhaerz no wun too tuch him, and then, hese got the hed, and can hoald us aul toogheter. Whaut am I too doo? Dhats whaut I aasc u, Mr. Hoamz. Dhaerz Moorhous, ferst reserv, but he iz traird az a haaf, and he aulwase edgez rite in on too the scrum insted ov keping out on the tuchline. Hese a fine place-kic, its tru, but then he haz no jujment, and he caant sprint for nuts. Whi, Morton or Jonson, the Oxford fliyerz, cood romp round him. Stevenson iz faast enuf, but he coodnt drop from the twenty-five line, and a thre-qworter whoo caant iather punt or drop iznt werth a place for pace alone. No, Mr. Hoamz, we ar dun unles u can help me too fiand Godfry Staunton."

Mi frend had liscend withe amuezd cerprise too this long speche, which wauz poerd foerth withe extrordinary viggor and ernestnes, evvery point beying drivven home bi the slapping ov a brauny hand uppon the spekerz ne. When our vizsitor wauz cilent Hoamz strecht out hiz hand and tooc doun letter "S" ov hiz commonplace booc. For wuns he dug in vane intoo dhat mine ov varede informaishon.

"Dhare iz Arthher H. Staunton, the rising yung foerger," ced he, "and dhare wauz Henry Staunton, whoome I helpt too hang, but Godfry Staunton iz a nu name too me."

It wauz our vizsitorz tern too looc cerpriazd.

"Whi, Mr. Hoamz, I thaut u nu thhingz," ced he. "I suppose, then, if u hav nevr herd ov Godfry Staunton, u doant no Cirril Overton iather?"

Hoamz shooc hiz hed good humordly.

“Grate Scot!” cride the athlete. “Whi, I wauz ferst reserv for In’gland against Wailz, and Ive skipperd the Varcity aul this yere. But dhats nuthhing! I didnt thhinc dhare wauz a sole in In’gland whoo didnt no Godfry Staunton, the crac thre-qworter, Caimbrij, Blac’heeth, and five Internashonalz. Good Lord! Mr. Hoamz, whare *hav* u livd?”

Hoamz laaft at the yung giyants niyeve astonishment.

“U liv in a different werld too me, Mr. Overton—a sweter and helthheyer wun. Mi ramificaishonz stretch out intoo menny cecshonz ov society, but nevver, I am happy too sa, intoo ammater spoert, which iz the best and soundest thhing in In’gland. Houwevver, yor unexpected vizsit this morning shose me dhat even in dhat werld ov fresh are and fare pla, dhare ma be werc for me too doo. So nou, mi good cer, I beg u too cit down and too tel me, sloly and qwiyetly, exactly whaut it iz dhat haz okerd, and hou u desire dhat I shood help u.”

Yung Overtonz face ashuemd the botherd looc ov the man whoo iz moer acustomd too using hiz muscelz dhan hiz wits, but bi degrese, withe menny repetishonz and obscuritese which I ma omit from hiz narrative, he lade hiz strainj stoery befoer us.

“Its this wa, Mr. Hoamz. Az I hav ced, I am the skipper ov the Ruggher teme ov Caimbrij Varcity, and Godfry Staunton iz mi best man. Too-moro we pla Oxford. Yesterda we aul came up, and we cetteld at Bentlese private hotel. At ten oacloc I went round and sau dhat aul the fellose had gon too ruist, for I beleve in strict traning and plenty ov slepe too kepe a teme fit. I had a werd or too withe Godfry befoer he ternd in. He ceemd too me too be pale and botherd. I aasct him whaut wauz the

matter. He ced he wauz aul rite—just a tuch ov heddake. I bad him good-nite and left him. Haaf an our later, the poerter telz me dhat a ruf-loocking man withe a beard cauld withe a note for Godfry. He had not gon too bed, and the note wauz taken too hiz roome. Godfry red it, and fel bac in a chare az if he had bene pole-axt. The poerter wauz so scaerd dhat he wauz gowing too fech me, but Godfry stopt him, had a drinc ov wauter, and poold himcelf tooghether. Then he went dounstaerz, ced a fu werdz too the man whoo wauz wating in the haul, and the too ov them went of tooghether. The laast dhat the poerter sau ov them, dha wer aulmoast running down the strete in the direcshon ov the Strand. This morning Godfrese roome wauz empty, hiz bed had nevver bene slept in, and hiz thhingz wer aul just az I had cene them the nite befoer. He had gon of at a moments notice withe this strain'ger, and no werd haz cum from him cins. I doant beleve he wil evver cum bac. He wauz a spoertsmen, wauz Godfry, doun too hiz marro, and he woodnt hav stopt hiz traning and let in hiz skipper if it wer not for sum cauz dhat wauz too strong for him. No: I fele az if he wer gon for good, and we shood nevver ce him agane."

Sherloc Hoamz liscend withe the depest atenshon too this cin'gular narrative.

"Whaut did u doo?" he aasct.

"I wiard too Caimbrij too lern if ennithhing had bene herd ov him dhare. I hav had an aancer. No wun haz cene him."

"Cood he hav got bac too Caimbrij?"

"Yes, dhare iz a late trane—qworter-paast elevven."

"But, so far az u can ascertain, he did not take it?"

“No, he haz not bene cene.”

“Whaut did u doo next?”

“I wiard too Lord Mount-Jaimz.”

“Whi too Lord Mount-Jaimz?”

“Godfry iz an orfan, and Lord Mount-Jaimz iz hiz nerest rellative—hiz unkel, I beleve.”

“Indede. This throse nu lite uppon the matter. Lord Mount-Jaimz iz wun ov the rithest men in In’gland.”

“So Ive herd Godfry sa.”

“And yor frend wauz cloasly related?”

“Yes, he wauz hiz are, and the oald boi iz neerly aty—cram fool ov gout, too. Dha sa he cood chauc hiz billeyard-cu withe hiz nuckelz. He nevver aloud Godfry a shilling in hiz life, for he iz an absolute miser, but it wil aul cum too him rite enuf.”

“Hav u herd from Lord Mount-Jaimz?”

“No.”

“Whaut motive cood yor frend hav in gowing too Lord Mount-Jaimz?”

“Wel, sumthhing wauz wurreying him the nite befoer, and if it wauz too doo withe munny it iz poscibel dhat he wood make for hiz nerest rellative, whoo had so much ov it, dho from aul I hav

herd he wood not hav much chaans ov ghetting it. Godfry wauz not fond ov the oald man. He wood not go if he cood help it."

"Wel, we can soone determine dhat. If yor frend wauz gowing too hiz rellative, Lord Mount-Jaimz, u hav then too explane the vizesit ov this ruf-loocking fello at so late an our, and the agitaishon dhat wauz cauzd bi hiz cumming."

Cirril Overton prest hiz handz too hiz hed. "I can make nuthhing ov it," ced he.

"Wel, wel, I hav a clere da, and I shal be happy too looc intoo the matter," ced Hoamz. "I shood strongly recomend u too make yor preparaishonz for yor mach widhout refferens too this yung gentelman. It must, az u sa, hav bene an overpouwering necescity which toer him awa in such a fashon, and the same necescity iz liacly too hoald him awa. Let us step round toogheter too the hotel, and ce if the poerter can thro enny fresh lite uppon the matter."

Sherloc Hoamz wauz a paast-maaster in the art ov pooting a humbel witnes at hiz ese, and verry soone, in the privacy ov Godfry Stauntonz abandond roome, he had extracted aul dhat the poerter had too tel. The vizesitor ov the nite befoer wauz not a gentelman, niather wauz he a werkingman. He wauz cimply whaut the poerter descriabd az a "mejum-loocking chap," a man ov fifty, beard grizseld, pale face, qwiyetly drest. He ceemd himcelf too be adgitated. The poerter had observd hiz hand trembling when he had held out the note. Godfry Staunton had cramd the note intoo hiz pocket. Staunton had not shaken handz withe the man in the haul. Dha had exchainjd a fu centencez, ov which the poerter had oanly distin'gwisht the wun werd "time." Then dha had hurrede of in the manner descriabd. It wauz just haaf-paast ten bi the haul cloc.

"Let me ce," ced Hoamz, ceting himcelf on Stauntonz bed.

"U ar the da poerter, ar u not?"

"Yes, cer, I go of juty at elevven."

"The nite poerter sau nuthhing, I suppose?"

"No, cer, wun ththeyater party came in late. No wun els."

"Wer u on juty aul da yesterda?"

"Yes, cer."

"Did u take enny messagez too Mr. Staunton?"

"Yes, cer, wun tellegram."

"Aa! dhats interesting. Whaut oacloc wauz this?"

"About cix."

"Whare wauz Mr. Staunton when he receevd it?"

"Here in hiz roome."

"Wer u prezsent when he opend it?"

"Yes, cer, I wated too ce if dhare wauz an aancer."

"Wel, wauz dhare?"

"Yes, cer, he rote an aancer."

“Did u take it?”

“No, he tooc it himcelf.”

“But he rote it in yor prezsens.”

“Yes, cer. I wauz standing bi the doer, and he withe hiz bac ternd at dhat tabel. When he had ritten it, he ced: ‘Aul rite, poerter, I wil take this micelf.’”

“Whaut did he rite it withe?”

“A pen, cer.”

“Wauz the telegraffic form wun ov these on the tabel?”

“Yes, cer, it wauz the top wun.”

Hoamz rose. Taking the formz, he carrede them over too the windo and caerfooly exammiand dhat which wauz uppermoast.

“It iz a pitty he did not rite in pencil,” ced he, throwing them doun agane withe a shrug ov disapointment. “Az u hav no dout freeqwently observd, Wautson, the impreshon uezhuwaly gose throo—a fact which haz dizolvd menny a happy marrage. Houwevver, I can fiand no trace here. I rejois, houwevver, too perceve dhat he rote withe a braud-pointed qwil pen, and I can hardly dout dhat we wil fiand sum impreshon uppon this blotting-pad. Aa, yes, shuerly this iz the verry thhing!”

He toer of a strip ov the blotting-paper and ternd toowordz us the following hiyerogliffic:

hiyerogliffic

Cirril Overton wauz much exited. "Hoald it too the glaas!" he cride.

"Dhat iz un'necesary," ced Hoamz. "The paper iz thhin, and the revers wil ghiv the message. Here it iz." He ternd it over, and we rede:

the revers

"So dhat iz the tale end ov the tellegram which Godfry Staunton dispacht within a fu ourz ov hiz disaperans. Dhare ar at leest cix werdz ov the message which hav escaipt us; but whaut remainz—'Stand bi us for Godz sake!'—pruivz dhat this yung man sau a formiddabel dain'ger which aproacht him, and from which sumwun els cood protect him. 'Us,' marc u! Anuther person wauz involvd. Whoo shood it be but the pale-faist, bearded man, whoo ceemd himcelf in so nervous a state? Whaut, then, iz the conecshon betwene Godfry Staunton and the bearded man? And whaut iz the thherd soers from which eche ov them saut for help against prescing dain'ger? Our inqwiry haz aulreddy narrode down too dhat."

"We hav oanly too fiand too whoome dhat tellegram iz adrest," I sugested.

"Exactly, mi dere Wautson. Yor reflecshon, dho profound, had aulreddy crost mi miand. But I daersa it ma hav cum too yor notice dhat, counterfoil ov anuther manz message, dhare ma be sum dicinclinaishon on the part ov the ofishalz too oblige u. Dhare iz so much red tape in these matterz. Houwevver, I hav no dout dhat withe a littel dellicacy and fines the end ma be ataind. Meenwhile, I shood like in yor prezsens, Mr. Overton, too go throo these paperz which hav bene left uppon the tabel."

Dhare wer a number ov letterz, bilz, and noatboox, which Hoamz ternd over and exammiand withe qwic, nervous fin'gherz and darting, pennetrating ise. "Nuthhing here," he ced, at laast. "Bi the wa, I supose yor frend wauz a helthhy yung fello—nuthhing amis withe him?"

"Sound az a bel."

"Hav u evver none him il?"

"Not a da. He haz bene lade up withe a hac, and wuns he slipt hiz ne-cap, but dhat wauz nuthhing."

"Perhaps he wauz not so strong az u supose. I shood thhinc he ma hav had sum ceecret trubbel. Withe yor acent, I wil poot wun or too ov these paperz in mi pocket, in cace dha shood bare uppon our fuchure inqwiry."

"Wun moment—wun moment!" cride a qwerrulous vois, and we looct up too fiand a qwere littel oald man, gerking and twitching in the doerwa. He wauz drest in rusty blac, withe a verry braud-brimd top-hat and a looce white necti—the whole efect beying dhat ov a verry rustic parson or ov an undertakerz mute. Yet, in spite ov hiz shabby and even abcerd aperans, hiz vois had a sharp crackel, and hiz manner a qwic intencity which comaanded atenshon.

"Whoo ar u, cer, and bi whaut rite doo u tuch this gentelmann paperz?" he aasct.

"I am a private detective, and I am endeuvoring too explane hiz disaperans."

“O, u ar, ar u? And whoo instructed u, a?”

“This gentelman, Mr. Stauntonz frend, wauz referd too me bi Scotland Yard.”

“Whoo ar u, cer?”

“I am Cirril Overton.”

“Then it iz u whoo cent me a tellegram. Mi name iz Lord Mount-Jaimz. I came round az qwicly az the Baizwauter bus wood bring me. So u hav instructed a detective?”

“Yes, cer.”

“And ar u prepaerd too mete the cost?”

“I hav no dout, cer, dhat mi frend Godfry, when we fiand him, wil be prepaerd too doo dhat.”

“But if he iz nevver found, a? Aancer me dhat!”

“In dhat cace, no dout hiz fammily——”

“Nuthhing ov the sort, cer!” screemd the littel man. “Doant looc too me for a penny—not a penny! U understand dhat, Mr. Detective! I am aul the fammily dhat this yung man haz got, and I tel u dhat I am not responcebel. If he haz enny expectaishonz it iz ju too the fact dhat I hav nevver waisted munny, and I doo not propose too beghin too doo so nou. Az too dhose paperz withe which u ar making so fre, I ma tel u dhat in cace dhare shood be ennithhing ov enny vallu amung them, u wil be held strictly too acount for whaut u doo withe them.”

“Verry good, cer,” ced Sherloc Hoamz. “Ma I aasc, in the meenwhile, whether u hav yorcelf enny ththeyory too acount for this yung manz disaperans?”

“No, cer, I hav not. He iz big enuf and oald enuf too looc aafter himcelf, and if he iz so foolish az too loose himcelf, I entiarly refuse too axept the responcebillyty ov hunting for him.”

“I qwite understand yor posishon,” ced Hoamz, withe a mischevous twinkel in hiz ise. “Perhaps u doant qwite understand mine. Godfry Staunton apeerz too hav bene a poor man. If he haz bene kidnapt, it cood not hav bene for ennithhing which he himcelf posescez. The fame ov yor welth haz gon abraud, Lord Mount-Jaimz, and it iz entiarly poscibel dhat a gang ov thheevz hav cecuerd yor neffu in order too gane from him sum informaishon az too yor hous, yor habbits, and yor trezhure.”

The face ov our unplezzant littel vizsitor ternd az white az hiz necloth.

“Hevvenz, cer, whaut an ideyaa! I nevver thaut ov such villany! Whaut inhuman roagz dhare ar in the werld! But Godfry iz a fine lad—a staunch lad. Nuthhing wood injuce him too ghiv hiz oald unkel awa. Ile hav the plate muivd over too the banc this evening. In the meentime spare no painz, Mr. Detective! I beg u too leve no stone unternd too bring him saifly bac. Az too munny, wel, so far az a fiver or even a tenner gose u can aulwase looc too me.”

Even in hiz chacend frame ov miand, the nobel miser cood ghiv us no informaishon which cood help us, for he nu littel ov the private life ov hiz neffu. Our oonly clu la in the truncated tellegram, and withe a cobby ov this in hiz hand Hoamz cet foerth too fiand a cecond linc for hiz chane. We had shaken of Lord

Mount-Jaimz, and Overton had gon too consult withe the uther memberz ov hiz teme over the misforchune which had befaulen them.

Dhare wauz a tellegraaf-office at a short distans from the hotel. We haulted outside it.

"Its werth triying, Wautson," ced Hoamz. "Ov coers, withe a worant we cood demaand too ce the counterfoilz, but we hav not reecht dhat stage yet. I doant supose dha remember facez in so bizsy a place. Let us venchure it."

"I am sorry too trubbel u," ced he, in hiz blandest manner, too the yung woomman behiand the grating; "dhare iz sum smaul mistake about a telegram I cent yesterda. I hav had no aancer, and I verry much fere dhat I must hav omitted too poot mi name at the end. Cood u tel me if this wauz so?"

The yung woomman ternd over a shefe ov counterfoilz.

"Whaut oacloc wauz it?" she aasct.

"A littel aafter cix."

"Whoome wauz it too?"

Hoamz poot hiz fin'gher too hiz lips and glaanst at me. "The laast werdz in it wer 'For Godz sake,'" he whisperd, confidenshaly; "I am verry ancshous at ghetting no aancer."

The yung woomman ceperated wun ov the formz.

"This iz it. Dhare iz no name," ced she, smuithing it out uppon the counter.

“Then dhat, ov coers, accounts for mi ghetting no aancer,” ced Hoamz. “Dere me, hou verry schupid ov me, too be shure! Good-morning, mis, and menny thanx for havving releevd mi miand.” He chuckeld and rubd hiz handz when we found ourcelvz in the strete wuns moer.

“Wel?” I aasct.

“We progres, mi dere Wautson, we progres. I had cevven different skeemz for ghetting a glimps ov dhat tellegram, but I cood hardly hope too suxede the verry ferst time.”

“And whaut hav u gaind?”

“A starting-point for our investigaishon.” He haild a cab. “Kingz Cros Staishon,” ced he.

“We hav a gerny, then?”

“Yes, I thhinc we must run doun too Caimbrij tooghether. Aul the indicaishonz ceme too me too point in dhat direcshon.”

“Tel me,” I aasct, az we ratteld up Grase In Rode, “hav u enny suspishon yet az too the cauz ov the disaperans? I doant thhinc dhat amung aul our cacez I hav none wun whare the motiavz ar moer obscure. Shuerly u doant reyaly imadgine dhat he ma be kidnapt in order too ghiv informaishon against hiz welthhy unkel?”

“I confes, mi dere Wautson, dhat dhat duz not apele too me az a verry probbabel explanaishon. It struc me, houwevver, az beying the wun which wauz moast liacly too interest dhat exedingly unplezzant oald person.”

“It certainly did dhat; but whaut ar yor aulternatiavz?”

“I cood menshon cevveral. U must admit dhat it iz cureyous and sugestive dhat this incident shood oker on the eve ov this important mach, and shood involv the oonly man whoose prezsens ceemz ecenshal too the suxes ov the cide. It ma, ov coers, be a cowincidens, but it iz interesting. Ammater spoert iz fre from betting, but a good dele ov outcide betting gose on amung the public, and it iz poscibel dhat it mite be werth sumwunz while too ghet at a player az the ruffeyanz ov the terf ghet at a race-hors. Dhare iz wun explanaishon. A cecond verry obveyous wun iz dhat this yung man reyaly iz the are ov a grate propperty, houwever moddest hiz meenz ma at prezsent be, and it iz not imposcibel dhat a plot too hoald him for ransom mite be concocted.”

“These ththeyorese take no acount ov the tellegram.”

“Qwite tru, Wautson. The tellegram stil remainz the oonly sollid thhing withe which we hav too dele, and we must not permit our atenshon too waunder awa from it. It iz too gane lite uppon the perpoce ov this tellegram dhat we ar nou uppon our wa too Caimbrij. The paath ov our investigaishon iz at prezsent obscure, but I shal be verry much cerpriazd if befoer evening we hav not cleerd it up, or made a concidderabel advaans along it.”

It wauz aulreddy darc when we reecht the oald univercity citty. Hoamz tooc a cab at the staishon and orderd the man too drive too the hous ov Dr. Lezly Armstrong. A fu minnuets later, we had stopt at a larj manshon in the bizseyest thurrofare. We wer shone in, and aafter a long wate wer at laast admitted intoo the consulting-roome, whare we found the doctor ceted behiand hiz tabel.

It arguse the degry in which I had lost tuch withe mi profeshon dhat the name ov Lezly Armstrong wauz un'none too me. Nou I am aware dhat he iz not oonly wun ov the hedz ov the meddical scoole ov the univercity, but a thhinker ov Uropeyan reputaishon in moer dhan wun braanch ov ciyens. Yet even widhout nowing hiz brilleyant reccord wun cood not fale too be imprest bi a mere glaans at the man, the sqware, mascive face, the brooding ise under the thacht brouz, and the grannite moalding ov the inflexibel jau. A man ov depe carracter, a man withe an alert miand, grim, acettic, celf-containd, formiddabel—so I rede Dr. Lezly Armstrong. He held mi frendz card in hiz hand, and he looct up withe no verry pleezd expreshon uppon hiz door fechuerz.

“I hav herd yor name, Mr. Sherloc Hoamz, and I am aware ov yor profeshon—wun ov which I bi no meenz aproove.”

“In dhat, Doctor, u wil fiand yorcelf in agrement withe evvery crimminal in the cuntry,” ced mi frend, qwiyetly.

“So far az yor efforts ar directed toowordz the supreshon ov crime, cer, dha must hav the supoert ov evvery rezonabel member ov the comunity, dho I canot dout dhat the ofishal mashenery iz amply sufishent for the perpoce. Whare yor caulng iz moer open too critticism iz when u pri intoo the ceecrets ov private individjuwalz, when u rake up fammily matterz which ar better hidden, and when u incidentaly waist the time ov men whoo ar moer bizsy dhan yorcelf. At the prezsent moment, for exaampel, I shoold be riting a tretese insted ov convercing withe u.”

“No dout, Doctor; and yet the conversaishon ma prove moer important dhan the tretese. Incidental, I ma tel u dhat we ar doowing the revers ov whaut u verry justly blame, and dhat we ar endevvoring too prevent ennithhing like public expoazhure ov

private matterz which must necesarily follo when wuns the cace iz faerly in the handz ov the ofishal polece. U ma looc uppon me cimply az an ireggular piyonere, whoo gose in frunt ov the reggular foercez ov the cuntry. I hav cum too aasc u about Mr. Godfry Staunton."

"Whaut about him?"

"U no him, doo u not?"

"He iz an intimate frend ov mine."

"U ar aware dhat he haz disapeerd?"

"Aa, indede!" Dhare wauz no chainj ov expreshon in the rugged fechuerz ov the doctor.

"He left hiz hotel laast nite—he haz not bene herd ov."

"No dout he wil retern."

"Too-moro iz the Varcity footbaul mach."

"I hav no cimpathy withe these chialdish gaimz. The yung manz fate interests me deeply, cins I no him and like him. The footbaul mach duz not cum within mi horizon at aul."

"I clame yor cimpathy, then, in mi investigaishon ov Mr. Stauntonz fate. Doo u no whare he iz?"

"Certainly not."

"U hav not cene him cins yesterda?"

"No, I hav not."

"Wauz Mr. Staunton a helthhy man?"

"Absoluetly."

"Did u evver no him il?"

"Nevver."

Hoamz popt a shete ov paper befoer the doctorz ise. "Then perhaps u wil explane this receted bil for thertene ghinnese, pade bi Mr. Godfry Staunton laast munth too Dr. Lezly Armstrong, ov Caimbrij. I pict it out from among the paperz uppon hiz desc."

The doctor flusht withe an' gher.

"I doo not fele dhat dhare iz enny rezon whi I shood render an explanaishon too u, Mr. Hoamz."

Hoamz replaist the bil in hiz noatbooc. "If u prefer a public explanaishon, it must cum sooner or later," ced he. "I hav aulreddy toald u dhat I can hush up dhat which utherz wil be bound too publish, and u wood reyaly be wiser too take me intoo yor complete confidens."

"I no nuthhing about it."

"Did u here from Mr. Staunton in Lundon?"

"Certainly not."

"Dere me, dere me—the poastoffice agane!" Hoamz cide, werily.

“A moast ergent tellegram wauz dispacht too u from Lundon bi Godfry Staunton at cix-fiftene yesterda evening—a tellegram which iz undoutedly asoasheyated withe hiz disaperans—and yet u hav not had it. It iz moast culpabel. I shal certainly go doun too the office here and redgister a complaint.”

Dr. Lezly Armstrong sprang up from behiand hiz desc, and hiz darc face wauz crimzon withe fury.

“Ile trubbel u too wauc out ov mi hous, cer,” ced he. “U can tel yor employer, Lord Mount-Jaimz, dhat I doo not wish too hav ennithhing too doo iather withe him or withe hiz agents. No, cer—not anuther werd!” He rang the bel fureyously. “Jon, sho these gentelmen out!” A pompous butler usherd us ceveerly too the doer, and we found ourcelvz in the strete. Hoamz berst out laafing.

“Dr. Lezly Armstrong iz certainly a man ov ennergy and carracter,” ced he. “I hav not cene a man whoo, if he ternz hiz tallents dhat wa, wauz moer calculated too fil the gap left bi the ilustreyous Moreyarty. And nou, mi poor Wautson, here we ar, stranded and frendles in this inhospittabel toun, which we canot leve widhout abandoning our cace. This littel in just opposite Armstrongz hous iz cin’gularly adapted too our needz. If u wood en’gage a frunt roome and perchace the nescesarese for the nite, I ma hav time too make a fu inqwirese.”

These fu inqwirese pruivd, houwevver, too be a moer lengthhy proceding dhan Hoamz had imadgiand, for he did not retern too the in until neerly nine oacloc. He wauz pale and degedted, staind withe dust, and exausted withe hun’gher and fateghe. A coald supper wauz reddy uppon the tabel, and when hiz needz wer sattisfide and hiz pipe alite he wauz reddy too take dhat haaf commic and wholly filosoffic vu which wauz natchural too him when hiz afaerz wer

gowing ari. The sound ov carrage wheelz cauzd him too rise and glaans out ov the windo. A broowam and pare ov grase, under the glare ov a gas-lamp, stood befoer the doctorz doer.

“Its bene out thre ourz,” ced Hoamz; “started at haaf-paast cix, and here it iz bac agane. Dhat ghivz a rajus ov ten or twelv mialz, and he duz it wuns, or sumtiamz twice, a da.”

“No unnuezhuwal thhing for a doctor in practice.”

“But Armstrong iz not reyaly a doctor in practice. He iz a lecchurer and a consultant, but he duz not care for genneral practice, which distracts him from hiz litterary werc. Whi, then, duz he make these long gernese, which must be exedingly erxum too him, and whoo iz it dhat he vizsits?”

“Hiz coachman——”

“Mi dere Wautson, can u dout dhat it wauz too him dhat I ferst aplide? I doo not no whether it came from hiz one inate depravvity or from the promptingz ov hiz maaster, but he wauz rude enuf too cet a dog at me. Niather dog nor man liact the looc ov mi stic, houwevver, and the matter fel throo. Relaishonz wer straind aafter dhat, and ferther inqwirese out ov the qweschon. Aul dhat I hav lernd I got from a frendly native in the yard ov our one in. It wauz he whoo toald me ov the doctorz habbits and ov hiz daly gerny. At dhat instant, too ghiv point too hiz werdz, the carrage came round too the doer.”

“Cood u not follo it?”

“Exelent, Wautson! U ar cintilating this evening. The ideyaa did cros mi miand. Dhare iz, az u ma hav observd, a bicikel shop next too our in. Intoo this I rusht, en’gaijd a bicikel, and

wauz abel too ghet started befoer the carrage wauz qwhite out ov cite. I rappidly overtooc it, and then, keping at a discrete distans ov a hundred yardz or so, I follode its liats until we wer clere ov the toun. We had got wel out on the cuntry rode, when a sumwhaut mortifiying incident okerd. The carrage stopt, the doctor alited, wauct swiftly bac too whare I had aulso halted, and toald me in an exelent sardonnice fashon dhat he feerd the rode wauz narro, and dhat he hoapt hiz carrage did not impede the passage ov mi bicikel. Nuthhing cood hav bene moer admirabel dhan hiz wa ov pootting it. I at wuns rode paast the carrage, and, keping too the mane rode, I went on for a fu mialz, and then halted in a conveyent place too ce if the carrage paast. Dhare wauz no cine ov it, houwever, and so it became evvident dhat it had ternd down wun ov cevveral cide roadz which I had observd. I rode bac, but agane sau nuthhing ov the carrage, and nou, az u perceve, it haz reternd aafter me. Ov coers, I had at the outcet no particcular rezon too conect these gernese withe the disaperans ov Godfry Staunton, and wauz oonly incliand too investigate them on the genneral groundz dhat evverithhing which concernz Dr. Armstrong iz at prezsent ov interest too us, but, nou dhat I fiand he keeps so kene a looc-out uppon enniwun whoo ma follo him on these exkerzhonz, the afare apeerz moer important, and I shal not be satisfide until I hav made the matter clere."

"We can follo him too-moro."

"Can we? It iz not so esy az u ceme too thhinc. U ar not famillyar withe Caimbriyshire cenery, ar u? It duz not lend itcelf too conceelment. Aul this cuntry dhat I paast over too-nite iz az flat and clene az the paalm ov yor hand, and the man we ar following iz no foole, az he verry cleerly shode too-nite. I hav wiard too Overton too let us no enny fresh Lunden devellopments at this adres, and in the meentime we can oonly

concentrate our atenshon uppon Dr. Armstrong, whose name the obliging yung lady at the office aloud me too rede uppon the counterfoil ov Stauntonz ergent message. He nose whare the yung man iz—too dhat Ile sware, and if he nose, then it must be our one fault if we canot mannage too no aulso. At prezsent it must be admitted dhat the od tric iz in hiz poseshon, and, az u ar aware, Wautson, it iz not mi habbit too leve the game in dhat condishon.”

And yet the next da braut us no nerer too the solueshon ov the mistery. A note wauz handed in aafter breakfast, which Hoamz paast acros too me withe a smile.

CER [it ran],—I can ashure u dhat u ar waisting yor time in dogghing mi muivments. I hav, az u discuvverd laast nite, a windo at the bac ov mi broowam, and if u desire a twenty-mile ride which wil lede u too the spot from which u started, u hav oonly too follo me. Meenwhile, I can inform u dhat no spiying uppon me can in enny wa help Mr. Godfry Staunton, and I am convinst dhat the best cervice u can doo too dhat gentelman iz too retern at wuns too Lunden and too repoert too yor employer dhat u ar unnabel too trace him. Yor time in Caimbrij wil certainly be waisted.

Yorz faithfooly,
LEZLY ARMSTRONG.

“An outspoken, onnest antaggonist iz the doctor,” ced Hoamz.
“Wel, wel, he exiats mi cureyosity, and I must reyaly no befoer I leve him.”

“Hiz carrage iz at hiz doer nou,” ced I. “Dhare he iz stepping intoo it. I sau him glaans up at our windo az he did so. Suppose I tri mi luc uppon the bicikel?”

“No, no, mi dere Wautson! Withe aul respect for yor natchural accumen, I doo not thhinc dhat u ar qwite a mach for the werthy doctor. I thhinc dhat poscibly I can atane our end bi sum independent exploraishonz ov mi one. I am afrade dhat I must leve u too yor one devicez, az the aperans ov *too* inqwiring strain'gerz uppon a slepy cuntricide mite exite moer goscip dhan I care for. No dout u wil fiand sum ciats too amuse u in this vennerabel citty, and I hope too bring bac a moer favorabel repoert too u befoer evening.”

Wuns moer, houwevver, mi frend wauz destiand too be disapointed. He came bac at nite wery and unsuxesfool.

“I hav had a blanc da, Wautson. Havving got the doctorz genneral direcshon, I spent the da in vizsiting aul the villagez uppon dhat cide ov Caimbrij, and comparing noats withe publicanz and uther local nuse agencese. I hav cuvverd sum ground. Chesterton, Histon, Wauterbeche, and Okington hav eche bene exploerd, and hav eche pruid disapointing. The daly aperans ov a broowam and pare cood hardly hav bene overlooct in such Slepy Hollose. The doctor haz scoerd wuns moer. Iz dhare a tellegram for me?”

“Yes, I opend it. Here it iz:

“Aasc for Pompy from Gerremy Dixon, Trinnity College.”

“I doant understand it.”

“O, it iz clere enuf. It iz from our frend Overton, and iz in aancer too a qweschon from me. Ile just cend round a note too Mr. Gerremy Dixon, and then I hav no dout dhat our luc wil tern.

Bi the wa, iz dhare enny nuse ov the mach?"

"Yes, the local evening paper haz an exelent acount in its laast edishon. Oxford wun bi a gole and too trise. The laast centencez ov the descripshon sa:

"The defete ov the Lite Bluse ma be entiarly atribbuted too the unforchunate abcens ov the crac Internashonal, Godfry Staunton, whoose waunt wauz felt at evvery instant ov the game. The lac ov combinaishon in the thre-qworter line and dhare weecnes boath in atac and defens moer dhan nuetraliazd the efforts ov a hevvy and hard-werking pac."

"Then our frend Overtonz foerbodingz hav bene justifide," ced Hoamz. "Personaly I am in agrement withe Dr. Armstrong, and footbaul duz not cum within mi horizon. Erly too bed too-nite, Wautson, for I foercy dhat too-moro ma be an eventfool da."

I wauz horifide bi mi ferst glimps ov Hoamz next morning, for he sat bi the fire hoalding hiz tiny hipodermic cirinj. I asoasheyated dhat instrument withe the cin'ghel weecnes ov hiz nachure, and I feerd the werst when I sau it glittering in hiz hand. He laaft at mi expreshon ov disma and lade it uppon the tabel.

"No, no, mi dere fello, dhare iz no cauz for alarm. It iz not uppon this ocaizhon the instrument ov evil, but it wil raather prove too be the ke which wil unloc our mistery. On this cirinj I bace aul mi hoaps. I hav just reternd from a smaual scouting expedishon, and evverithhing iz favorabel. Ete a good breccast, Wautson, for I propose too ghet uppon Dr. Armstrongz trale too-da, and wuns on it I wil not stop for rest or foode until I run him too hiz burro."

“In dhat cace,” ced I, “we had best carry our breccast withe us, for he iz making an erly start. Hiz carrage iz at the doer.”

“Nevver miand. Let him go. He wil be clevver if he can drive whare I canot follo him. When u hav finnisht, cum dounstaerz withe me, and I wil introjuce u too a detective whoo iz a verry emminent speshalist in the werc dhat lise befoer us.”

When we decended I follode Hoamz intoo the stabel yard, whare he opend the doer ov a looce-box and led out a sqwaut, lop-eerd, white-and-tan dog, sumthhing betwene a beghel and a foxhound.

“Let me introjuce u too Pompy,” ced he. “Pompy iz the pride ov the local drag’houndz—no verry grate fliyer, az hiz bild wil sho, but a staunch hound on a cent. Wel, Pompy, u ma not be faast, but I expect u wil be too faast for a cuppel ov middel-aijd Lundon gentelmen, so I wil take the libberty ov faacening this lether leesh too yor collar. Nou, boi, cum along, and sho whaut u can doo.” He led him acros too the doctorz doer. The dog snift round for an instant, and then withe a shril whine ov exiatment started of doun the strete, tugging at hiz leesh in hiz efforts too go faaster. In haaf an our, we wer clere ov the toun and hacening doun a cuntry rode.

“Whaut hav u dun, Hoamz?” I aasct.

“A thredbare and vennerabel device, but uesfool uppon ocaizhon. I wauct intoo the doctorz yard this morning, and shot mi cirinj fool ov annicede over the hiand whele. A drag’hound wil follo annicede from here too Jon oGroats, and our frend, Armstrong, wood hav too drive throo the Cam befoer he wood shake Pompy of hiz trale. O, the cunning raascal! This iz hou he gave me the slip the uther nite.”

The dog had suddenly ternd out ov the mane rode intoo a graas-grone lane. Haaf a mile farther this opend intoo anuther braud rode, and the trale ternd hard too the rite in the direcshon ov the toun, which we had just qwitted. The rode tooc a swepe too the south ov the toun, and continnude in the opposite direcshon too dhat in which we started.

“This *detoor* haz bene entiarly for our bennefit, then?” ced Hoamz. “No wunder dhat mi inqwirese amung dhose villagerz led too nuthhing. The doctor haz certainly plade the game for aul it iz werth, and wun wood like too no the rezon for such elaborate decepshon. This shood be the village ov Trumpington too the rite ov us. And, bi Jove! here iz the broowam cumming round the corner. Qwic, Wautson—qwic, or we ar dun!”

He sprang throo a gate intoo a feeld, dragghing the reluctant Pompy aafter him. We had hardly got under the shelter ov the hej when the carrage ratteld paast. I caut a glimps ov Dr. Armstrong within, hiz shoalderz boud, hiz hed sunc on hiz handz, the verry immagine ov distres. I cood tel bi mi companyonz graver face dhat he aulso had cene.

“I fere dhare iz sum darc ending too our qwest,” ced he. “It cannot be long befoer we no it. Cum, Pompy! Aa, it iz the cottage in the feeld!”

Dhare cood be no dout dhat we had reecht the end ov our gerny. Pompy ran about and whiand egherly outside the gate, where the marx ov the broowamz wheelz wer stil too be cene. A footpaath led acros too the loanly cottage. Hoamz tide the dog too the hej, and we hacend onword. Mi frend noct at the littel rustic doer, and noct agane widhout respons. And yet

the cottage wauz not deserted, for a lo sound came too our eertz—a kiand ov drone ov mizsery and despare which wauz indescribably mellancoly. Hoamz pauzd irezzolute, and then he glaanst bac at the rode which he had just traverst. A broowam wauz cumming down it, and dhare cood be no mistaking dhose gra horcez.

“Bi Jove, the doctor iz cumming bac!” cride Hoamz. “Dhat cettelz it. We ar bound too ce whaut it meenz befoer he cumz.”

He opend the doer, and we stept intoo the haul. The droning sound sweld louder uppon our eertz until it became wun long, depe wale ov distres. It came from upstaerz. Hoamz darted up, and I follode him. He poosht open a haaf-cloazd doer, and we both stood apauld at the cite befoer us.

A woomman, yung and butifool, wauz liying ded uppon the bed. Her caalm pale face, withe dim, wide-opens blu ise, looct upword from amid a grate tan’ghel ov goalden hare. At the foot ov the bed, haaf citting, haaf neling, hiz face berrede in the cloadhz, wauz a yung man, whose frame wauz ract bi hiz sobz. So abzorbd wauz he bi hiz bitter grefe, dhat he nevvver looct up until Hoamsez hand wauz on hiz shoalder.

“Ar u Mr. Godfry Staunton?”

“Yes, yes, I am—but u ar too late. She iz ded.”

The man wauz so daizd dhat he cood not be made too understand dhat we wer ennithing but doctorz whoo had bene cent too hiz acistans. Hoamz wauz endevvoring too utter a fu werdz ov consolaishon and too explane the alarm which had bene cauzd too hiz frendz bi hiz sudden disaperans when dhare wauz a step uppon the staerz, and dhare wauz the hevvy, stern, qweschoning face ov Dr. Armstrong at the doer.

“So, gentelmen,” ced he, “u hav ataind yor end and hav certainly chosen a particcularly dellicate moment for yor intruezhon. I wood not braul in the prezsens ov deth, but I can ashure u dhat if I wer a yun’gher man yor monstrous conduct wood not paas withe impunity.”

“Excuse me, Dr. Armstrong, I thhinc we ar a littel at cros-perpocez,” ced mi frend, withe dignity. “If u cood step dounstaerz withe us, we ma eche be abel too ghiv sum lite too the uther uppon this mizserabel afare.”

A minnute later, the grim doctor and ourcelvz wer in the citting-roome belo.

“Wel, cer?” ced he.

“I wish u too understand, in the ferst place, dhat I am not employd bi Lord Mount-Jaimz, and dhat mi cimpathese in this matter ar entiarly against dhat nobelman. When a man iz lost it iz mi juty too ascertain hiz fate, but havving dun so the matter endz so far az I am concernd, and so long az dhare iz nuthhing crimminal I am much moer ancshous too hush up private scandalz dhan

too ghiv them publiscity. If, az I imadgine, dhare iz no breche ov the lau in this matter, u can absolutly depend uppon mi disreshon and mi cowoperaishon in keping the facts out ov the paperz.”

Dr. Armstrong tooc a qwic step forword and rung Hoamz bi the hand.

“U ar a good fello,” ced he. “I had misjujd u. I thanc hevven dhat mi compuncshon at leving poor Staunton aul alone in

this plite cauzd me too tern mi carrage bac and so too make yor aqwaintans. Nowing az much az u doo, the cichuwaishon iz verry esily explaind. A yere ago Godfry Staunton lojd in Lundon for a time and became pashonaitly atacht too hiz landladese dauter, whoome he marrede. She wauz az good az she wauz butifool and az intelligent az she wauz good. No man nede be ashaimd ov such a wife. But Godfry wauz the are too this crabd oald nobelman, and it wauz qwite certane dhat the nuse ov hiz marrage wood hav bene the end ov hiz inherritans. I nu the lad wel, and I luvd him for hiz menny exelent qwaulitese. I did aul I cood too help him too kepe thhingz strate. We did our verry best too kepe the thhing from evveriwun, for, when wuns such a whisper ghets about, it iz not long befoer evveriwun haz herd it. Thanx too this loanly cottage and hiz one discredishon, Godfry haz up too nou suxeded. Dhare ceecret wauz none too no wun save too me and too wun exelent cervant, whoo haz at prezsent gon for acistans too Trumpington. But at laast dhare came a terribel blo in the shape ov dain'gerous ilnes too hiz wife. It wauz consumpshon ov the moast virulent kiand. The poor boi wauz haaf craizd withe grefe, and yet he had too go too Lundon too pla this mach, for he cood not ghet out ov it widhout explanaishonz which wood expose hiz ceecret. I tride too chere him up bi wire, and he cent me wun in repli, imploering me too doo aul I cood. This wauz the tellegram which u apere in sum inexpliccabel wa too hav cene. I did not tel him hou ergent the dain'ger wauz, for I nu dhat he cood doo no good here, but I cent the trueth too the gherlz faather, and he verry injudishously comunicated it too Godfry. The rezult wauz dhat he came strate awa in a state bordering on frensy, and haz remaind in the same state, neling at the end ov her bed, until this morning deth poot an end too her sufferingz. Dhat iz aul, Mr. Hoamz, and I am shure dhat I can reli uppon yor discredishon and dhat ov yor frend."

Hoamz graaspt the doctorz hand.

“Cum, Wautson,” ced he, and we paast from dhat hous ov grefe intoo the pale sunlite ov the winter da.

THE ADVENCHURE OV THE ABBY GRAINJ

It wauz on a bitterly coald and frosty morning, toowordz the end ov the winter ov '97, dhat I wauz awakend bi a tugging at mi shoalder. It wauz Hoamz. The candel in hiz hand shon uppon hiz egher, stooping face, and toald me at a glaans dhat sumthhing wauz amis.

“Cum, Wautson, cum!” he cride. “The game iz afoot. Not a werd! Intoo yor cloadhz and cum!”

Ten minnuets later we wer boath in a cab, and ratling throo the cilent streets on our wa too Charing Cros Staishon. The ferst faint winterz daun wauz beghinning too apere, and we cood dimly ce the ocaizhonal figgure ov an erly wercman az he paast us, blerd and indistinct in the opalescent Lundon reke. Hoamz nesceld in cilens intoo hiz hevvy cote, and I wauz glad too doo the same, for the are wauz moast bitter, and niather ov us had broken our faast.

It wauz not until we had conshuemd sum hot te at the staishon and taken our placez in the Kentish trane dhat we wer sufishmently thaud, he too speke and I too liscen. Hoamz dru a note from hiz pocket, and rede aloud:

Abby Grainj, Marsham, Kent, 3:30 A.M.
MI DERE MR. HOAMZ:

I shood be verry glad ov yor imejate acistans in whaut prommicez too be a moast remarcabel cace. It iz sumthhing qwite in

yor line. Exept for relecing the lady I wil ce dhat evverithhing iz kept exactly az I hav found it, but I beg u not too loose an instant, az it iz difficult too leve Cer Uestace dhare.

Yorz faithfooly,
STANLY HOPKINZ.

“Hopkinz haz cauld me in cevven tiamz, and on eche ocaizhon hiz summonz haz bene entiarly justifide,” ced Hoamz. “I fancy dhat evvery wun ov hiz cacez haz found its wa intoo yor colecshon, and I must admit, Wautson, dhat u hav sum pouwer ov celecshon, which atoanz for much which I deploer in yor narratiavz. Yor fatal habbit ov loocking at evverithhing from the point ov vu ov a stoery insted ov az a ciyentiffic exercise haz ruwind whaut mite hav bene an instructive and even clascical cerese ov demonstraishonz. U sler over werc ov the utmoast fines and dellicacy, in order too dwel uppon censaishonal detailz which ma exite, but canot poscibly instruct, the reder.”

“Whi doo u not rite them yorcelf?” I ced, withe sum bitternes.

“I wil, mi dere Wautson, I wil. At prezsent I am, az u no, faerly bizsy, but I propose too devote mi declining yeerz too the composishon ov a textbooc, which shal focus the whole art ov detecshon intoo wun vollume. Our prezsent recerch apeerz too be a cace ov merder.”

“U thhinc this Cer Uestace iz ded, then?”

“I shood sa so. Hopkinsez riting shose concidderabel agitaishon, and he iz not an emoashonal man. Yes, I gather dhare haz bene viyolens, and dhat the boddy iz left for our inspecshon. A mere

suwicide wood not hav cauzd him too cend for me. Az too the relece ov the lady, it wood apere dhat she haz bene loct in her roome juring the tradgedy. We ar mooving in hi life, Wautson, cracling paper, 'E.B.' monnogram, cote-ov-armz, picchuresc adres. I thhinc dhat frend Hopkinz wil liv up too hiz reputaishon, and dhat we shal hav an interesting morning. The crime wauz comitted befoer twelv laast nite."

"Hou can u poscibly tel?"

"Bi an inspecshon ov the trainz, and bi recconing the time. The local polece had too be cauld in, dha had too comunicate withe Scotland Yard, Hopkinz had too go out, and he in tern had too cend for me. Aul dhat maix a fare niats werc. Wel, here we ar at Chizsel'herst Staishon, and we shal soone cet our douts at rest."

A drive ov a cuppel ov mialz throo narro cuntry lainz braut us too a parc gate, which wauz opend for us bi an oald loj-keper, whose haggard face boer the reflecschon ov sum grate dizaaster. The avvenu ran throo a nobel parc, betwene lianz ov ainshent elmz, and ended in a lo, wiadspred hous, pillard in frunt aafter the fashon ov Palajo. The central part wauz evvidently ov a grate age and shrouded in ivy, but the larj windose shode dhat moddern chain'gez had bene carrede out, and wun wing ov the hous apeerd too be entiarly nu. The uethfool figgure and alert, egher face ov Inspector Stanly Hopkinz confrunted us in the open doerwa.

"Ime verry glad u hav cum, Mr. Hoamz. And u, too, Dr. Wautson. But, indede, if I had mi time over agane, I shoood not hav trubbeld u, for cins the lady haz cum too hercelf, she haz ghivven so clere an acount ov the afare dhat dhare iz not much left for us too doo. U remember dhat Luwisham gang ov berglarz?"

“Whaut, the thre Randalz?”

“Exactly; the faather and too sunz. Its dhare werc. I hav not a dout ov it. Dha did a job at Ciddenam a fortnite ago and wer cene and descriabd. Raather coole too doo anuther so soone and so nere, but it iz dha, beyond aul dout. Its a hanging matter this time.”

“Cer Uestace iz ded, then?”

“Yes, hiz hed wauz noct in withe hiz one poker.”

“Cer Uestace Brackenstaul, the driver telz me.”

“Exactly—wun ov the ritcheest men in Kent—Lady Brackenstaul iz in the morning-roome. Poor lady, she haz had a moast dredfool expereyens. She ceemd haaf ded when I sau her ferst. I thhinc u had best ce her and here her acount ov the facts. Then we wil exammine the dining-roome tooghether.”

Lady Brackenstaul wauz no ordinary person. Celdom hav I cene so graisfool a figgure, so woommanly a prezsens, and so butifool a face. She wauz a blond, goalden-haerd, blu-ide, and wood no dout hav had the perfect complecshon which gose withe such culloring, had not her recent expereyens left her draun and haggard. Her sufferingz wer fizensal az wel az mental, for over wun i rose a hidjous, plum-cullord swelling, which her made, a taul, austere woomman, wauz baithing acidjuwously withe vinnegar and

wauter. The lady la bac exausted uppon a couch, but her qwic, observant gase, az we enterd the roome, and the alert expreshon ov her butifool fechuerz, shode dhat niather her wits nor her currage had bene shaken bi her terribel expereyens. She wauz

envellopt in a looce drescing-goun ov blu and cilver, but a blac ceeqwin-cuvverd dinner-dres la uppon the couch beside her.

“I hav toald u aul dhat happend, Mr. Hopkinz,” she ced, werily. “Cood u not repete it for me? Wel, if u thhinc it nescenary, I wil tel these gentelmen whaut okerd. Hav dha bene in the dining-roome yet?”

“I thaut dha had better here yor ladships stoery ferst.”

“I shal be glad when u can arainj matterz. It iz horibel too me too thhinc ov him stil liying dhare.” She shudderd and berrede her face in her handz. Az she did so, the looce gown fel bac from her foerarmz. Hoamz utterd an exclamaishon.

“U hav uther injurese, maddam! Whaut iz this?” Too vivvid red spots stood out on wun ov the white, round limz. She haistily cuvverd it.

“It iz nuthhing. It haz no conecshon withe this hidjous biznes too-nite. If u and yor frend wil cit down, I wil tel u aul I can.

“I am the wife ov Cer Uestace Brackenstaul. I hav bene marrede about a yere. I supose dhat it iz no uce mi atempting too concele dhat our marrage haz not bene a happy wun. I fere dhat aul our naborz wood tel u dhat, even if I wer too atempt too deni it. Perhaps the fault ma be partly mine. I wauz braut up in the frere, les convenshonal atmosfere ov South Australeyaa, and this In’GLISH life, withe its propriyetese and its primnes, iz not con’geenyal too me. But the mane rezon lise in the wun fact, which iz notoereyous too evveriwun, and dhat iz dhat Cer Uestace wauz a confermd druncard. Too be withe such a man for an our iz

unplezzant. Can u imadgine whaut it meenz for a cencitive and hi-spirrited woomman too be tide too him for da and nite? It iz a sacrilege, a crime, a villany too hoald dhat such a marrage iz bianding. I sa dhat these monstrous lauz ov yorz wil bring a kers uppon the land—God wil not let such wickednes enjure.” For an instant she sat up, her cheex flusht, and her ise blasing from under the terribel marc uppon her brou. Then the strong, suithing hand ov the austere made dru her hed down on too the cooshon, and the wiald an’gher dide awa intoo pashonate sobbing. At laast she continnude:

“I wil tel u about laast nite. U ar aware, perhaps, dhat in this hous aul the cervants slepe in the moddern wing. This central bloc iz made up ov the dwelling-ruimz, withe the kitchen behiand and our bedroome abuv. Mi made, Terezaa, sleeps abuv mi roome. Dhare iz no wun els, and no sound cood alarm dhose whoo ar in the farther wing. This must hav bene wel-none too the robberz, or dha wood not hav acted az dha did.

“Cer Uestace retiard about haaf-paast ten. The cervants had aulreddy gon too dhare qworterz. Oanly mi made wauz up, and she had

remaind in her roome at the top ov the hous until I neded her cervicez. I sat until aafter elevven in this roome, abzorbd in a booc. Then I wauct round too ce dhat aul wauz rite befoer I went upstaerz. It wauz mi custom too doo this micelf, for, az I hav explaind, Cer Uestace wauz not aulwase too be trusted. I went intoo the kitchen, the butlerz pantry, the gun-roome, the billeyard-roome, the drauwing-roome, and finaly the dining-roome. Az I aproacht the windo, which iz cuverd withe thhic kertainz, I suddenly felt the wind blo uppon mi face and reyaliazd dhat it wauz open. I flung the kertane acide and found micelf face too face withe a braud-shoalderd elderly man, whoo had just stept intoo the roome. The windo iz a long French wun, which reyaly formz a

doer leding too the laun. I held mi bedroome candel lit in mi hand, and, bi its lite, behiand the ferst man I sau too utherz, whoo wer in the act ov entering. I stept bac, but the fello wauz on me in an instant. He caut me ferst bi the rist and then bi the throte. I opend mi mouth too screme, but he struc me a savvage blo withe hiz fist over the i, and feld me too the ground. I must hav bene unconshous for a fu minnuets, for when I came too micelf, I found dhat dha had toern down the bel-rope, and had cecuerd me tiatly too the oken chare which standz at the hed ov the dining-tabel. I wauz so fermly bound dhat I cood not moove, and a hankerchefe round mi mouth prevented me from uttering a sound. It wauz at this instant dhat mi unforchunate huzband enterd the roome. He had evvidently herd sum suspishous soundz, and he came prepaerd for such a cene az he found. He wauz drest in niatshert and trouserz, withe hiz favorite blacthorn cudgel in hiz hand. He rusht at the berglarz, but anuther—it wauz an elderly man—stuipt, pict the poker out ov the grate and struc him a horibel blo az he paast. He fel withe a grone and nevver muivd agane. I fainted wuns moer, but agane it cood oanly hav bene for a verry fu minnuets juring which I wauz incencibel. When I opend mi ise I found dhat dha had colected the cilver from the ciadboerd, and dha had draun a bottel ov wine which stood dhare. Eche ov them had a glaas in hiz hand. I hav aulreddy toald u, hav I not, dhat wun wauz elderly, withe a beard, and the utherz yung, haerles ladz. Dha mite hav bene a faather withe hiz too sunz. Dha tauct tooghether in whisperz. Then dha came over and made shure dhat I wauz cecuerly bound. Finaly dha widhdru, closing the windo aafter them. It wauz qwite a qworter ov an our befoer I got mi mouth fre. When I did so, mi screemz braut the made too mi acistans. The uther cervants wer soone alarmd, and we cent for the local polece, whoo instantly comunicated withe Lundon. Dhat iz reyaly aul dhat I can tel u, gentelmen, and I trust dhat it wil not be nescenary for me too go over so painfool a stoery agane.”

“Enny qweschonz, Mr. Hoamz?” aasct Hopkinz.

“I wil not impose enny ferther tax uppon Lady Brackenstaulz paishens and time,” ced Hoamz. “Befoer I go intoo the dining-roome, I shood like too here yor expereyens.” He looct at the made.

“I sau the men befoer evver dha came intoo the hous,” ced she. “Az I sat bi mi bedroome windo I sau thre men in the muinlite doun bi the loj gate yonder, but I thaut nuthhing ov it at the time. It wauz moer dhan an our aafter dhat I herd mi mistres screme, and doun I ran, too fiand her, poor lam, just az she cez, and him on the floer, withe hiz blud and brainz over the roome. It wauz enuf too drive a woomman out ov her wits, tide dhare, and her verry dres spotted withe him, but she nevver waunted currage, did Mis Mary Fraser ov Adelaide and Lady Brackenstaul ov Abby Grainj haznt lernd nu wase. Uve qweschond her long enuf, u gentelmen, and nou she iz cumming too her one roome, just withe her oald Terezaa, too ghet the rest dhat she badly needz.”

Withe a mutherly tendernes the gaunt woomman poot her arm round her mistres and led her from the roome.

“She haz bene withe her aul her life,” ced Hopkinz. “Nerst her az a baby, and came withe her too In’gland when dha ferst left Australeyaa, atene munths ago. Terezaa Rite iz her name, and the kiand ov made u doant pic up nouwadase. This wa, Mr. Hoamz, if u plese!”

The kene interest had paast out ov Hoamsez exprescive face, and I nu dhat withe the mistery aul the charm ov the cace had departed. Dhare stil remaind an arest too be efected, but whaut

wer these commonplace roagz dhat he shood soil hiz handz withe them? An abstruce and lerned speshalist whoo fiandz dhat he haz bene cauld in for a cace ov meselz wood expereyens sumthhing ov the anoiyans which I red in mi frendz ise. Yet the cene in the dining-roome ov the Abby Grainj wauz sufishly strainj too arest hiz atenshon and too recaul hiz waning interest.

It wauz a verry larj and hi chaimber, withe carvd oke celing, oken panneling, and a fine ara ov deerz hedz and ainshent wepponz around the waulz. At the ferther end from the doer wauz the hi French windo ov which we had herd. Thre smauler windose on the rite-hand cide fild the apartment withe coald winter sunshine. On the left wauz a larj, depe fiarplace, withe a mascive, overhanging oke mantelpece. Becide the fiarplace wauz a hevvy oken chare withe armz and cros-barz at the bottom. In and out throo the open woodwerc wauz woven a crimzon cord, which wauz cecuerd at eche cide too the crospece belo. In relicing the lady, the cord had bene slipt of her, but the nots withe which it had bene cecuerd stil remaind. These detailz oanly struc our atenshon aafterwordz, for our thauts wer entiarly abzorbd bi the terribel obgett which la uppon the tigherskin harthrug in frunt ov the fire.

It wauz the boddy ov a taul, wel-made man, about forty yeerz ov age. He la uppon hiz bac, hiz face upternd, withe hiz white teeth grinning throo hiz short, blac beard. Hiz too clencht handz wer raizd abuv hiz hed, and a hevvy, blacthorn stic la acros them. Hiz darc, handsum, aqwiline fechuerz wer convulst intoo a spazm ov vindictive haitred, which had cet hiz ded face in a terribly feendish expreshon. He had evvidently bene in hiz bed when the alarm had broken out, for he woer a foppish, embroiderd niatshert, and hiz bare fete proected from hiz trouserz. Hiz hed wauz horibly injuerd, and the whole roome boer witnes too the savvage ferocity ov the blo which had struc

him doun. Becide him la the hevvy poker, bent intoo a kerv bi the concushon. Hoamz exammiand boath it and the indescribabel rec which it had raut.

“He must be a pouwerfool man, this elder Randal,” he remarct.

“Yes,” ced Hopkinz. “I hav sum reccord ov the fello, and he iz a ruf customer.”

“U shood hav no difficulty in ghetting him.”

“Not the slitest. We hav bene on the looc-out for him, and dhare wauz sum ideyaa dhat he had got awa too Amerricaa. Nou dhat we

no dhat the gang ar here, I doant ce hou dha can escape. We hav the nuse at evvery cepoert aulreddy, and a reword wil be offerd befoer evening. Whaut beets me iz hou dha cood hav dun so mad a thhing, nowing dhat the lady cood describe them and dhat we cood not fale too reccognise the descripshon.”

“Exactly. Wun wood hav expected dhat dha wood cilens Lady Brackenstaul az wel.”

“Dha ma not hav reyaliazd,” I sugested, “dhat she had recuvverd from her faint.”

“Dhat iz liacly enuf. If she ceemd too be censles, dha wood not take her life. Whaut about this poor fello, Hopkinz? I ceme too hav herd sum qwere stoerese about him.”

“He wauz a good-harted man when he wauz sober, but a perfect feend when he wauz drunc, or raather when he wauz haaf drunc, for he celdom reyaly went the whole wa. The devvil ceemd too be in him at such tiamz, and he wauz capabel ov ennithhing. From whaut I here,

in spite ov aul hiz welth and hiz titel, he verry neerly came our wa wuns or twice. Dhare wauz a scandal about hiz drenching a dog withe petroleyum and cetting it on fire—her ladships dog, too make the matter wers—and dhat wauz oonly husht up withe difficulty. Then he thru a decanter at dhat made, Terezaa Rite—dhare wauz trubbel about dhat. On the whole, and betwene ourselvz, it wil be a briter hous widhout him. Whaut ar u loocking at nou?”

Hoamz wauz doun on hiz nese, exammining withe grate atenshon the nots uppon the red cord withe which the lady had bene cecuerd. Then he caerfooly scrutiniazd the broken and frade end whare it had snapt of when the berglar had dragd it doun.

“When this wauz poold doun, the bel in the kitchen must hav rung loudly,” he remarct.

“No wun cood here it. The kitchen standz rite at the bac ov the hous.”

“Hou did the berglar no no wun wood here it? Hou daerd he pool at a bel-rope in dhat recles fashon?”

“Exactly, Mr. Hoamz, exactly. U poot the verry qweschon which I hav aasct micelf agane and agane. Dhare can be no dout dhat this fello must hav none the hous and its habbits. He must hav perfectly understood dhat the cervants wood aul be in bed at dhat comparratiavly erly our, and dhat no wun cood poscibly here a bel ring in the kitchen. Dhaerfoer, he must hav bene in cloce leghe withe wun ov the cervants. Shuerly dhat iz evvident. But dhare ar ate cervants, and aul ov good carracter.”

“Uther thhingz beying eequal,” ced Hoamz, “wun wood suspect the wun at whose hed the maaster thru a decanter. And yet dhat wood

involv tretchery toowordz the mistres too whoome this woomman
ceemz

devoted. Wel, wel, the point iz a minor wun, and when u hav
Randal u wil probbably fiand no difficulty in cecuring hiz
acumplice. The ladese stoery certainly ceemz too be corobborated,
if it neded coroboraishon, bi evvery detale which we ce befoer
us." He wauct too the French windo and thru it open. "Dhare ar
no cianz here, but the ground iz iarn hard, and wun wood not
expect them. I ce dhat these candelz in the mantelpece hav
bene lited."

"Yes, it wauz bi dhare lite and dhat ov the ladese bedroome
candel, dhat the berglarz sau dhare wa about."

"And whaut did dha take?"

"Wel, dha did not take much—oonly haaf a duzsen artikelz ov plate
of the ciadboerd. Lady Brackenstaul thhinx dhat dha wer
themcelvz so disterbd bi the deth ov Cer Uestace dhat dha did
not ransac the hous, az dha wood uthewise hav dun."

"No dout dhat iz tru, and yet dha dranc sum wine, I
understand."

"Too stedly dhare nervz."

"Exactly. These thre glaacez uppon the ciadboerd hav bene
untucht, I supose?"

"Yes, and the bottel standz az dha left it."

"Let us looc at it. Hallo, hallo! Whaut iz this?"

The thre glaacez wer griupt tooghether, aul ov them tinjd withe

wine, and wun ov them contaning sum dregz ov beezwing. The bottel stood nere them, too-thherdz fool, and beside it la a long, deeply staind corc. Its aperans and the dust uppon the bottel shode dhat it wauz no common vintage which the merdererz had enjoid.

A chainj had cum over Hoamsez manner. He had lost hiz listles expreshon, and agane I sau an alert lite ov interest in hiz kene, depe-cet ise. He raizd the corc and exammiand it minuetly.

“Hou did dha drau it?” he aasct.

Hopkinz pointed too a haaf-opens drauwer. In it la sum tabel linnen and a larj corxcru.

“Did Lady Brackenstaul sa dhat scru wauz uezd?”

“No, u remember dhat she wauz censles at the moment when the bottel wauz opend.”

“Qwite so. Az a matter ov fact, dhat scru wauz *not* uezd. This bottel wauz opend bi a pocket scru, probbably containd in a nife, and not moer dhan an inch and a haaf long. If u wil examine the top ov the corc, u wil observ dhat the scru wauz drivven in thre tiamz befoer the corc wauz extracted. It haz nevver bene traansfixt. This long scru wood hav traansfixt it and draun it up withe a cin’ghel pool. When u cach this fello, u wil fiand dhat he haz wun ov these multiplex niavz in hiz poseshon.”

“Exelent!” ced Hopkinz.

“But these glaacez doo puzsel me, I confes. Lady Brackenstaul

acchuwaly *sau* the thre men drinking, did she not?"

"Yes; she wauz clere about dhat."

"Then dhare iz an end ov it. Whaut moer iz too be ced? And yet, u must admit, dhat the thre glaacez ar verry remarcel, Hopkinz. Whaut? U ce nuthhing remarcel? Wel, wel, let it paas. Perhaps, when a man haz speshal nollej and speshal pouwerz like mi one, it raather encurragez him too ceke a complex explanaishon when a cimpler wun iz at hand. Ov coers, it must be a mere chaans about the glaacez. Wel, good-morning, Hopkinz. I doant ce dhat I can be ov enny uce too u, and u apere too hav yor cace verry clere. U wil let me no when Randal iz arested, and enny ferther devellopments which ma oker. I trust dhat I shal soone hav too con'gratchulate u uppon a suxesfool concluezhon. Cum, Wautson, I fancy dhat we ma emploi ourcelvz moer proffitably at home."

Juring our retern gerny, I cood ce bi Hoamsez face dhat he wauz much puzseld bi sumthhing which he had observd. Evvery nou and then, bi an effort, he wood thro of the impreshon, and tauc az if the matter wer clere, but then hiz douts wood cettel doun uppon him agane, and hiz nitted brouz and abstracted ise wood sho dhat hiz thauts had gon bac wuns moer too the grate dining-roome ov the Abby Grainj, in which this midnite tradgedy had bene enacted. At laast, bi a sudden impuls, just az our trane wauz crawling out ov a suberban staishon, he sprang on too the platform and poold me out aafter him.

"Excuse me, mi dere fello," ced he, az we waucht the rere carragez ov our trane disapering round a kerv, "I am sory too make u the victim ov whaut ma ceme a mere whim, but on mi life, Wautson, I cimply *caant* leve dhat cace in this condishon. Evvery

instinct dhat I poses crise out against it. Its rong—its aul rong—Ile sware dhat its rong. And yet the ladese stoery wauz complete, the maidz coroboraishon wauz sufishent, the detale wauz faerly exact. Whaut hav I too poot up against dhat? Thre wine-glaacez, dhat iz aul. But if I had not taken thhingz for graanted, if I had exammiand evverithing withe the care which I shood hav shone had we aproacht the cace *de novo* and had no cut-and-dride stoery too worp mi miand, shood I not then hav found sumthhing moer deffinite too go uppon? Ov coers I shood. Cit down on this bench, Wautson, until a trane for Chizsel'herst ariavz, and alou me too la the evvidens befoer u, imploering u in the ferst instans too dismis from yor miand the ideyaa dhat ennithing which the made or her mistres ma hav ced must necesarily be tru. The ladese charming personallity must not be permitted too worp our jujment.

“Shuerly dhare ar detailz in her stoery which, if we looct at in coald blud, wood exite our suspishon. These berglarz made a concidderabel haul at Ciddenam a fortnite ago. Sum acount ov them and ov dhare aperans wauz in the paperz, and wood natchuraly oker too enniwun whoo wisht too invent a stoery in which imadginary robberz shood pla a part. Az a matter ov fact, berglarz whoo hav dun a good stroke ov biznes ar, az a rule, oonly too glad too enjoi the proceedz in pece and qwiyet widhout embarking on anuther perrilous undertaking. Agane, it iz unnuezhuwal for berglarz too opperate at so erly an our, it iz unnuezhuwal for berglarz too strike a lady too prevent her screming, cins wun wood imadgine dhat wauz the shure wa too make her screme, it iz unnuezhuwal for them too comit merder when dhare numberz ar sufishent too overpouwer wun man, it iz unnuezhuwal for them too be content withe a limmited plunder when dhare wauz much moer within dhare reche, and finaly, I shood sa, dhat it wauz verry unnuezhuwal for such men too leve a bottel haaf empty. Hou doo aul these

unnuezhualz strike u, Wautson?"

"Dhare cumulative efect iz certainly concidderabel, and yet eche ov them iz qwite poscibel in itself. The moast unnuezhual thhing ov aul, az it ceemz too me, iz dhat the lady shood be tide too the chare."

"Wel, I am not so clere about dhat, Wautson, for it iz evvident dhat dha must iather kil her or els ceure her in such a wa dhat she cood not ghiv imejate notice ov dhare escape. But at enny rate I hav shone, hav I not, dhat dhare iz a certane ellement ov improbability about the ladese stoery? And nou, on the top ov this, cumz the incident ov the wian' glaacez."

"Whaut about the wian' glaacez?"

"Can u ce them in yor miandz i?"

"I ce them cleerly."

"We ar toald dhat thre men dranc from them. Duz dhat strike u az liacly?"

"Whi not? Dhare wauz wine in eche glaas."

"Exactly, but dhare wauz beezwing oonly in wun glaas. U must hav notiaist dhat fact. Whaut duz dhat sugest too yor miand?"

"The laast glaas fild wood be moast liacly too contane beezwing."

"Not at aul. The bottel wauz fool ov it, and it iz inconcevabel dhat the ferst too glaacez wer clere and the thherd hevvely charjd withe it. Dhare ar too poscibel explanaishonz, and oonly too. Wun iz dhat aafter the cecond glaas wauz fild the bottel wauz

violently agitated, and so the third glass received the beezwing. Dhat duz not apere probbabel. No, no, I am shure dhat I am rite."

"Whaut, then, doo u suppose?"

"Dhat oanly too glaacez wer uezd, and dhat the dregz ov boath wer poerd intoo a thherd glaas, so az too ghiv the fauls impreshon dhat thre pepel had bene here. In dhat wa aul the beezwing wood be in the laast glaas, wood it not? Yes, I am convinst dhat this iz so. But if I hav hit uppon the tru explanaishon ov this wun smaul fenommenon, then in an instant the cace risez from the commonplace too the exedingly remarcabel, for it can oanly mene dhat Lady Brackenstaul and her made hav delibberaitly lide too us, dhat not wun werd ov dhare stoery iz too be beleevd, dhat dha hav sum verry strong rezon for cuvvering the reyal crimminal, and dhat we must construct our cace for ourcelvz widhout enny help from them. Dhat iz the mishon which nou lise befoer us, and here, Wautson, iz the Ciddenam trane."

The hous'hoald at the Abby Grainj wer much cerpriazd at our retern, but Sherloc Hoamz, fianding dhat Stanly Hopkinz had gon of too repoert too hedqworterz, tooc poseshon ov the dining-roome, loct the doer uppon the incide, and devoted himself for too ourz too wun ov dhose minute and laboereyous investigaishonz which form the sollid bacis on which hiz brilleyant eddificez ov deducshon wer reerd. Ceted in a corner like an interested schudent whoo observz the demonstraishon ov hiz professor, I follode evvery step ov dhat remarcabel recerch. The windo, the kertainz, the carpet, the chare, the rope—eche in tern wauz minuetly exammiand and july ponderd. The boddy ov the unforchunate

barronet had bene remuivd, and aul els remaind az we had cene it in the morning. Finaly, too mi astonishment, Hoamz cliamd up on

too the mascive mantelpece. Far abuv hiz hed hung the fu inchez ov red cord which wer stil atacht too the wire. For a long time he gaizd upword at it, and then in an atempt too ghet nerer too it he rested hiz ne uppon a woodden bracket on the waul. This braut hiz hand within a fu inchez ov the broken end ov the rope, but it wauz not this so much az the bracket itcelf which ceemd too en'gage hiz atenshon. Finaly, he sprang down withe an ejaculaishon ov satisfacshon.

"Its aul rite, Wautson," ced he. "We hav got our cace—wun ov the moast remarcabel in our colecshon. But, dere me, hou slo-witted I hav bene, and hou neerly I hav comitted the blunder ov mi liaftime! Nou, I thhinc dhat, withe a fu miscing linx, mi chane iz aulmoast complete."

"U hav got yor men?"

"Man, Wautson, man. Oanly wun, but a verry formiddabel person. Strong az a liyon—witnes the blo dhat bent dhat poker! Cix foot thre in hite, active az a sqwirrel, dexterous withe hiz fin'gherz, finaly, remarcably qwic-witted, for this whole in'geenyous stoery iz ov hiz concocshon. Yes, Wautson, we hav cum uppon the handiwerc ov a verry remarcabel individjuwal. And yet, in dhat bel-rope, he haz ghivven us a clu which shood not hav left us a dout."

"Whare wauz the clu?"

"Wel, if u wer too pool doun a bel-rope, Wautson, whare wood u expect it too brake? Shuerly at the spot whare it iz atacht too the wire. Whi shood it brake thre inchez from the top, az this wun haz dun?"

“Becaüz it iz frade dhare?”

“Exactly. This end, which we can exammine, iz frade. He wauz cunning enuf too doo dhat withe hiz nife. But the uther end iz not frade. U cood not observ dhat from here, but if u wer on the mantelpece u wood ce dhat it iz cut clene of widhout enny marc ov fraying whautevver. U can reconstruct whaut okerd. The man neded the rope. He wood not tare it doun for fere ov ghivving the alarm bi ringing the bel. Whaut did he doo? He sprang up on the mantelpece, cood not qwite reche it, poot hiz ne on the bracket—u wil ce the impreshon in the dust—and so got hiz nife too bare uppon the cord. I cood not reche the place bi at leest thre inchez—from which I infer dhat he iz at leest thre inchez a biggher man dhan I. Looc at dhat marc uppon the cete ov the oken chare! Whaut iz it?”

“Blud.”

“Undoutedly it iz blud. This alone poots the ladese stoery out ov coert. If she wer ceted on the chare when the crime wauz dun, hou cumz dhat marc? No, no, she wauz plaist in the chare *aafter* the deth ov her huzband. Ile wager dhat the blac dres shose a coresponding marc too this. We hav not yet met our Wauterloo, Wautson, but this iz our Maren‘go, for it beghinz in defete and endz in victory. I shood like nou too hav a fu werdz withe the ners, Terezaa. We must be wary for a while, if we ar too ghet the informaishon which we waunt.”

She wauz an interesting person, this stern Australeyan ners—tascitern, suspishous, un‘graishous, it tooc sum time befoer Hoamsez plezzant manner and franc axeptans ov aul dhat she ced thaud her intoo a coresponding ameyabillity. She did not atempt too concele her haitred for her late employier.

“Yes, cer, it iz tru dhat he thru the decanter at me. I herd him caul mi mistres a name, and I toald him dhat he wood not dare too speke so if her bruther had bene dhare. Then it wauz dhat he thru it at me. He mite hav throne a duzsen if he had but left mi bonny berd alone. He wauz forevver il-treting her, and she too proud too complane. She wil not even tel me aul dhat he haz dun too her. She nevver toald me ov dhose marx on her arm dhat u sau this morning, but I no verry wel dhat dha cum from a stab withe a hatpin. The sli devvil—God forghiv me dhat I shood speke ov him so, nou dhat he iz ded! But a devvil he wauz, if evver wun wauct the erth. He wauz aul hunny when ferst we met him—oonly atene munths ago, and we boath fele az if it wer atene yeeرز. She had oonly just ariavd in Lunden. Yes, it wauz her ferst voiyage—she had nevver bene from home befoer. He wun her withe hiz titel and hiz munny and hiz fauls Lunden wase. If she made a mistake she haz pade for it, if evver a woomman did. Whaut munth did we mete him? Wel, I tel u it wauz just aafter we ariavd. We ariavd in June, and it wauz Juli. Dha wer marrede in Jannuuary ov laast yere. Yes, she iz doun in the morning-roome agane, and I hav no dout she wil ce u, but u must not aasc too much ov her, for she haz gon throo aul dhat flesh and blud wil stand.”

Lady Brackenstaul wauz reclining on the same couch, but looct briter dhan befoer. The made had enterd withe us, and began wuns moer too foment the bruse uppon her mistrecez brou.

“I hope,” ced the lady, “dhat u hav not cum too cros-examine me agane?”

“No,” Hoamz aancerd, in hiz gentlest vois, “I wil not cauz u enny un’nescesary trubbel, Lady Brackenstaul, and mi whole desire iz too make thhingz esy for u, for I am convinst dhat u ar a much-tride woomman. If u wil trete me az a frend and

trust me, u ma fiand dhat I wil justifi yor trust.”

“Whaut doo u waunt me too doo?”

“Too tel me the trueth.”

“Mr. Hoamz!”

“No, no, Lady Brackenstaul—it iz no uce. U ma hav herd ov enny littel reputaishon which I poses. I wil stake it aul on the fact dhat yor stoery iz an absolute fabricaishon.”

Mistres and made wer boath staring at Hoamz withe pale facez and fritend ise.

“U ar an impudent fello!” cride Terezaa. “Doo u mene too sa dhat mi mistres haz toald a li?”

Hoamz rose from hiz chare.

“Hav u nuthhing too tel me?”

“I hav toald u evverithhing.”

“Thhinc wuns moer, Lady Brackenstaul. Wood it not be better too be franc?”

For an instant dhare wauz hesitaishon in her butifool face. Then sum nu strong thaut cauzd it too cet like a maasc.

“I hav toald u aul I no.”

Hoamz tooc hiz hat and shrugd hiz shoalderz. “I am sorry,” he ced, and widhout anuther werd we left the roome and the hous.

Dhare wauz a pond in the parc, and too this mi frend led the wa. It wauz frosen over, but a cin'ghel hole wauz left for the conveenyens ov a sollitary swaun. Hoamz gaizd at it, and then paast on too the loj gate. Dhare he scribbeld a short note for Stanly Hopkinz, and left it withe the loj-keper.

“It ma be a hit, or it ma be a mis, but we ar bound too doo sumthhing for frend Hopkinz, just too justifi this cecond vizsit,” ced he. “I wil not qwite take him intoo mi confidens yet. I thhinc our next cene ov operaishonz must be the shipping office ov the Adelaide-Southampton line, which standz at the end ov Pal Mal, if I remember rite. Dhare iz a cecond line ov stemerz which conect South Australeyaa withe In'gland, but we wil drau the larger cuvver ferst.”

Hoamsez card cent in too the mannager enshuerd instant atenshon, and he wauz not long in aqwiring aul the informaishon he neded. In June ov '95, oanly wun ov dhare line had reecht a home poert. It wauz the *Roc ov Gibraultar*, dhare largest and best bote. A refferens too the pascen'ger list shode dhat Mis Fraser, ov Adelaide, withe her made had made the voiyage in her. The bote wauz nou sumwhare south ov the Suwez Canal on her wa too Australeyaa. Her officerz wer the same az in '95, withe wun exepshon. The ferst officer, Mr. Jac Crocker, had bene made a captane and wauz too take charj ov dhare nu ship, the *Bas Roc*, saling in too dase' time from Southampton. He livd at Ciddenam, but he wauz liacly too be in dhat morning for instrucshonz, if we caerd too wate for him.

No, Mr. Hoamz had no desire too ce him, but wood be glad too no moer about hiz reccord and carracter.

Hiz reccord wauz magnifficent. Dhare wauz not an officer in the flete

too tuch him. Az too hiz carracter, he wauz reliyabel on juty, but a wiald, desperate fello of the dec ov hiz ship—hot-hedded, exitabel, but loiyal, onnest, and kiand-harted. Dhat wauz the pith ov the informaishon withe which Hoamz left the office ov the Adelade-Southampton cumpany. Thens he drove too Scotland Yard, but, insted ov entering, he sat in hiz cab withe hiz brouz draun doun, lost in profound thaut. Finaly he drove round too the Charing Cros tellegraaf office, cent of a message, and then, at laast, we made for Baker Strete wuns moer.

“No, I coodnt doo it, Wautson,” ced he, az we reyenterd our roome. “Wuns dhat worant wauz made out, nuthhing on erth wood save him. Wuns or twice in mi carere I fele dhat I hav dun moer reyal harm bi mi discuvvery ov the crimminal dhan evver he had dun bi hiz crime. I hav lernd caushon nou, and I had raather pla trix withe the lau ov In’gland dhan withe mi one conspens. Let us no a littel moer befoer we act.”

Befoer evening, we had a vizsit from Inspector Stanly Hopkinz. Thhingz wer not gowing verry wel withe him.

“I beleve dhat u ar a wizzard, Mr. Hoamz. I reyaly doo sumtiamz thhinc dhat u hav pouwerz dhat ar not human. Nou, hou on erth cood u no dhat the stolen cilver wauz at the bottom ov dhat pond?”

“I didnt no it.”

“But u toald me too exammine it.”

“U got it, then?”

“Yes, I got it.”

"I am verry glad if I hav helpt u."

"But u havnt helpt me. U hav made the afare far moer difficult. Whaut sort ov berglarz ar dha whoo stele cilver and then thro it intoo the nerest pond?"

"It wauz certainly raather exentric behaveyor. I wauz meerly gowing on the ideyaa dhat if the cilver had bene taken bi personz whoo did not waunt it—whoo meerly tooc it for a bliand, az it wer—then dha wood natchurally be ancshous too ghet rid ov it."

"But whi shood such an ideyaa cros yor miand?"

"Wel, I thaut it wauz poscibel. When dha came out throo the French windo, dhare wauz the pond withe wun tempting littel hole in the ice, rite in frunt ov dhare nosez. Cood dhare be a better hiding-place?"

"Aa, a hiding-place—dhat iz better!" cride Stanly Hopkinz. "Yes, yes, I ce it aul nou! It wauz erly, dhare wer foke uppon the roadz, dha wer afrade ov beying cene withe the cilver, so dha sanc it in the pond, intending too retern for it when the coast wauz clere. Exelent, Mr. Hoamz—dhat iz better dhan yor ideyaa ov a bliand."

"Qwite so, u hav got an admirabel thheyory. I hav no dout dhat mi one ideyaaaz wer qwite wiald, but u must admit dhat dha hav ended in discuvvering the cilver."

"Yes, cer—yes. It wauz aul yor doowing. But I hav had a bad cetbac."

"A cetbac?"

“Yes, Mr. Hoamz. The Randal gang wer arested in Nu Yorc this morning.”

“Dere me, Hopkinz! Dhat iz certainly raather against yor ththeyory dhat dha comitted a merder in Kent laast nite.”

“It iz fatal, Mr. Hoamz—absoluetly fatal. Stil, dhare ar uther gangz ov thre beciadz the Randalz, or it ma be sum nu gang ov which the polece hav nevver herd.”

“Qwite so, it iz perfectly poscibel. Whaut, ar u of?”

“Yes, Mr. Hoamz, dhare iz no rest for me until I hav got too the bottom ov the biznes. I supose u hav no hint too ghiv me?”

“I hav ghivven u wun.”

“Which?”

“Wel, I sugested a bliand.”

“But whi, Mr. Hoamz, whi?”

“Aa, dhats the qweschon, ov coers. But I comend the ideyaa too yor miand. U mite poscibly fiand dhat dhare wauz sumthhing in it. U woant stop for dinner? Wel, good-bi, and let us no hou u ghet on.”

Dinner wauz over, and the tabel cleerd befoer Hoamz aluded too the matter agane. He had lit hiz pipe and held hiz slipperd fete too the cheerfool blase ov the fire. Suddenly he looct at hiz wauch.

“I expect devellopments, Wautson.”

“When?”

“Nou—within a fu minnuets. I dare sa u thaut I acted raather badly too Stanly Hopkinz just nou?”

“I trust yor jujment.”

“A verry cencibel repli, Wautson. U must looc at it this wa: whaut I no iz unnofishal, whaut he nose iz ofishal. I hav the rite too private jujment, but he haz nun. He must disclose aul, or he iz a trator too hiz cervice. In a doutfool cace I wood not poot him in so painfool a posishon, and so I reserv mi informaishon until mi one miand iz clere uppon the matter.”

“But when wil dhat be?”

“The time haz cum. U wil nou be prezsent at the laast cene ov a remarcabel littel draamaa.”

Dhare wauz a sound uppon the staerz, and our doer wauz opend too admit az fine a spescimen ov manhood az evver paast throo it. He wauz a verry taul yung man, goalden-moostaasht, blu-ide, withe a skin which had bene bernd bi troppical sunz, and a springy step, which shode dhat the huge frame wauz az active az it wauz strong. He cloazd the doer behiand him, and then he stood withe clencht handz and heving brest, choking doun sum overmaastering emoashon.

“Cit doun, Captane Crocker. U got mi tellegram?”

Our vizsitor sanc intoo an armchare and looct from wun too the uther ov us withe qweschoning ise.

“I got yor tellegram, and I came at the our u ced. I herd dhat u had bene doun too the office. Dhare wauz no ghetting awa from u. Lets here the werst. Whaut ar u gowing too doo withe me? Arest me? Speke out, man! U caant cit dhare and pla withe me like a cat withe a mous.”

“Ghiv him a cigar,” ced Hoamz. “Bite on dhat, Captane Crocker, and doant let yor nervz run awa withe u. I shood not cit here smoking withe u if I thaut dhat u wer a common crimminal, u ma be shure ov dhat. Be franc withe me and we ma doo sum good. Pla trix withe me, and Ile crush u.”

“Whaut doo u wish me too doo?”

“Too ghiv me a tru acount ov aul dhat happend at the Abby Grainj laast nite—a *tru* acount, miand u, withe nuthhing added and nuthhing taken of. I no so much aulreddy dhat if u go wun inch of the strate, Ile blo this polece whiscel from mi windo and the afare gose out ov mi handz forevver.”

The salor thaut for a littel. Then he struc hiz leg withe hiz grate sunbernd hand.

“Ile chaans it,” he cride. “I beleve u ar a man ov yor werd, and a white man, and Ile tel u the whole stoery. But wun thhing I wil sa ferst. So far az I am concernd, I regret nuthhing and I fere nuthhing, and I wood doo it aul agane and be proud ov the job. Dam the beest, if he had az menny liavz az a cat, he wood o them aul too me! But its the lady, Mary—Mary Fraser—for nevver wil I caul her bi dhat akerst name. When I thhinc ov ghetting her intoo trubbel, I whoo wood ghiv mi life just too bring wun smile too her dere face, its dhat dhat ternz mi sole intoo wauter. And yet—and yet—whaut les cood I doo? Ile tel u

mi stoery, gentelmen, and then Ile aasc u, az man too man, whaut les cood I doo?

“I must go bac a bit. U ceme too no evverithhing, so I expect dhat u no dhat I met her when she wauz a pascen’ger and I wauz ferst officer ov the *Roc ov Gibraultar*. From the ferst da I met her, she wauz the oanly woomman too me. Evvery da ov dhat voiyage I luvd her moer, and menny a time cins hav I neeld down in the darcnes ov the nite wauch and kist the dec ov dhat ship becauz I nu her dere fete had trod it. She wauz nevver en’gaijd too me. She treted me az faerly az evver a woomman treted a man. I hav no complaint too make. It wauz aul luv on mi cide, and aul good comraidship and frendship on herz. When we parted she wauz a fre woomman, but I cood nevver agane be a fre man.

“Next time I came bac from ce, I herd ov her marrage. Wel, whi shoodnt she marry whoome she liact? Titel and munny—whoo cood carry them better dhan she? She wauz born for aul dhat iz butifool and dainty. I didnt greve over her marrage. I wauz not such a celfish hound az dhat. I just rejoist dhat good luc had cum her wa, and dhat she had not throne hercelf awa on a penniles salor. Dhats hou I luvd Mary Fraser.

“Wel, I nevver thaut too ce her agane, but laast voiyage I wauz promoted, and the nu bote wauz not yet launcht, so I had too wate for a cuppel ov munths withe mi pepel at Ciddenam. Wun da out in a cuntry lane I met Terezaa Rite, her oald made. She toald me aul about her, about him, about evverithhing. I tel u, gentelmen, it neerly drove me mad. This drunken hound, dhat he shood dare too rase hiz hand too her, whoose buits he wauz not werthy too lic! I met Terezaa agane. Then I met Mary hercelf—and

met her agane. Then she wood mete me no moer. But the uther da I had a notice dhat I wauz too start on mi voyyage within a weke, and I determiand dhat I wood ce her wuns befoer I left. Terezaa wauz aulwase mi frend, for she luvd Mary and hated this villane aulmoast az much az I did. From her I lernd the wase ov the hous. Mary uest too cit up reding in her one littel roome dounstaerz. I crept round dhare laast nite and scracht at the windo. At ferst she wood not open too me, but in her hart I no dhat nou she luvz me, and she cood not leve me in the frosty nite. She whisperd too me too cum round too the big frunt windo, and I found it open befoer me, so az too let me intoo the dining-roome. Agane I herd from her one lips thhingz dhat made mi blud boil, and agane I kerst this brute whoo mis'handeld the woomman I luvd. Wel, gentlemen, I wauz standing withe her just incide the windo, in aul innocens, az God iz mi juj, when he rusht like a madman intoo the roome, cauld her the vilest name dhat a man cood use too a woomman, and welted her acros the face withe the stic he had in hiz hand. I had sprung for the poker, and it wauz a fare fite betwene us. Ce here, on mi arm, ware hiz ferst blo fel. Then it wauz mi tern, and I went throo him az if he had bene a rotten pumpkin. Doo u thhinc I wauz sorry? Not I! It wauz hiz life or mine, but far moer dhan dhat, it wauz hiz life or herz, for hou cood I leve her in the pouwer ov this madman? Dhat wauz hou I kild him. Wauz I rong? Wel, then, whaut wood iather ov u gentlemen hav dun, if u had bene in mi posishon?

“She had screemd when he struc her, and dhat braut oald Terezaa doun from the roome abuv. Dhare wauz a bottel ov wine on the ciadboerd, and I opend it and poerd a littel betwene Marese lips, for she wauz haaf ded withe shoc. Then I tooc a drop micelf. Terezaa wauz az coole az ice, and it wauz her plot az much az mine. We must make it apere dhat berglarz had dun the thhing. Terezaa kept on repeting our stoery too her mistres, while I

swormd up and cut the rope ov the bel. Then I lasht her in her chare, and frade out the end ov the rope too make it looc natchural, els dha wood wunder hou in the werld a berglar cood hav got up dhare too cut it. Then I gatherd up a fu plaits and pots ov silver, too carry out the ideyaa ov the robbery, and dhare I left them, withe orderz too ghiv the alarm when I had a qworter ov an ourz start. I dropt the silver intoo the pond, and made of for Ciddenam, feling dhat for wuns in mi life I had dun a reyal good niats werc. And dhats the trueth and the whole trueth, Mr. Hoamz, if it costs me mi nec.”

Hoamz smoact for sum time in cilens. Then he crost the roome, and shooc our vizsitor bi the hand.

“Dhats whaut I thhinc,” ced he. “I no dhat evvery werd iz tru, for u hav hardly ced a werd which I did not no. No wun but an acrobat or a salor cood hav got up too dhat bel-rope from the bracket, and no wun but a salor cood hav made the nots withe which the cord wauz faacend too the chare. Oonly wuns had this lady bene braut intoo contact withe salorz, and dhat wauz on her voiyage, and it wauz sumwun ov her one claas ov life, cins she wauz trying hard too sheeld him, and so showing dhat she luvd him. U ce hou esy it wauz for me too la mi handz uppon u when wuns I had started uppon the rite trale.”

“I thaut the polece nevver cood hav cene throo our doj.”

“And the polece havnt, nor wil dha, too the best ov mi belefe. Nou, looc here, Captane Crocker, this iz a verry cereyous matter, dho I am willing too admit dhat u acted under the moast extreme provocaishon too which enny man cood be subjected. I am not shure dhat in defens ov yor one life yor acshon wil not be pronounst legittimate. Houwevver, dhat iz for a Brittish jury too decide. Meenwhile I hav so much cimpathy for u dhat, if u

chuse too disapere in the next twenty-foer ourz, I wil prommice u dhat no wun wil hinder u."

"And then it wil aul cum out?"

"Certainly it wil cum out."

The salor flusht withe an'gher.

"Whaut sort ov propozal iz dhat too make a man? I no enuf ov lau too understand dhat Mary wood be held az acumpllice. Doo u thhinc I wood leve her alone too face the music while I slunc awa? No, cer, let them doo dhare werst uppon me, but for hevvenz sake, Mr. Hoamz, fiand sum wa ov keping mi poor Mary out ov the coerts."

Hoamz for a cecond time held out hiz hand too the salor.

"I wauz oanly testing u, and u ring tru evvery time. Wel, it iz a grate responcibillity dhat I take uppon micelf, but I hav ghivven Hopkinz an exelent hint and if he caant avale himself ov it I can doo no moer. Ce here, Captane Crocker, wele doo this in ju form ov lau. U ar the prizzoner. Wautson, u ar a Brittish jury, and I nevver met a man whoo wauz moer emminently fitted too represent wun. I am the juj. Nou, gentelman ov the jury, u hav herd the evvidens. Doo u fiand the prizzoner ghilty or not ghilty?"

"Not ghilty, mi lord," ced I.

"*Vox populi, vox Day*. U ar aqwitted, Captane Crocker. So long az the lau duz not fiand sum uther victim u ar safe from me. Cum bac too this lady in a yere, and ma her fuchure and

yorz justifi us in the jujment which we hav pronounst this nite!"

THE ADVENCHURE OV THE CECCOND STANE

I had intended "The Advenchure ov the Abby Grainj" too be the laast ov dhose exploits ov mi frend, Mr. Sherloc Hoamz, which I shood evver comunicate too the public. This rezolueshon ov mine wauz not ju too enny lac ov matereyal, cins I hav noats ov menny hundredz ov cacez too which I hav nevver aluded, nor wauz it cauzd bi enny waning interest on the part ov mi rederz in the cin'gular personallity and uneke methodz ov this remarcabel man. The reyal rezon la in the reluctans which Mr. Hoamz haz shone too the continnude publicaishon ov hiz expereyencez. So long az he wauz in acchuwal profeshonal practice the reccordz ov hiz suxescez wer ov sum practical vallu too him, but cins he haz deffiniatly retiard from Lundon and betaken himcelf too studdy and be-farming on the Suscex Dounz, notoriyety haz becum haitfool too him, and he haz peremptorily reqwested dhat hiz wishez in this matter shood be strictly observd. It wauz oonly uppon mi representing too him dhat I had ghivven a prommice dhat "The Advenchure ov the Ceccond Stane" shood be publisht when the tiamz wer ripe, and pointing out too him dhat it iz oonly aproapreyate dhat this long cerese ov eppisoadz shood culminate in the moast important internashonal cace which he haz evver bene cauld uppon too handel, dhat I at laast suxeded in obtaning hiz concent dhat a caerfooly garded acount ov the incident shood at laast be lade befoer the public. If in telling the stoery I ceme too be sumwhaut vaghe in certane detailz, the public wil reddily understand dhat dhare iz an exelent rezon for mi retticens.

It wauz, then, in a yere, and even in a deccade, dhat shal be naimles, dhat uppon wun Chuezd morning in autum we found too vizsitorz ov Uropeyan fame within the waulz ov our humbel roome in

Baker Strete. The wun, austere, hi-noazd, eghel-ide, and dominant, wauz nun uther dhan the ilustreyous Lord Bellinger, twice Premeyer ov Brittain. The uther, darc, clere-cut, and elegant, hardly yet ov middel age, and endoud withe evvery buty ov boddy and ov miand, wauz the Rite Onnorabel Trelauny Hope, Secretary for Uropeyan Afaerz, and the moast rising staitzman in the cuntry. Dha sat cide bi cide uppon our paper-litterd cetty, and it wauz esy too ce from dhare woern and ancshous facez dhat it wauz biznes ov the moast prescing importans which had braut them. The Premeyerz thhin, blu-vaind handz wer claaapt tiatly over the ivory hed ov hiz umbrellaa, and hiz gaunt, acetic face looct gloomily from Hoamz too me. The Uropeyan Secretary poold nervously at hiz moostaash and fidgeted withe the ceelz ov hiz wauch-chane.

“When I discuvverd mi los, Mr. Hoamz, which wauz at ate oacloc this morning, I at wuns informd the Prime Minnister. It wauz at hiz sugeschon dhat we hav boath cum too u.”

“Hav u informd the polece?”

“No, cer,” ced the Prime Minnister, withe the qwic, decicive manner for which he wauz famous. “We hav not dun so, nor iz it poscibel dhat we shood doo so. Too inform the polece must, in the long run, mene too inform the public. This iz whaut we particularly desire too avoid.”

“And whi, cer?”

“Becauz the document in qweschon iz ov such imens importans dhat its publicaishon mite verry esily—I mite aulmoast sa probbably—lede too Uropeyan complicaishonz ov the utmoast moment. It

iz not too much too sa dhat pece or wor ma hang uppon the ishu.

Unles its recuvvery can be atended withe the utmoast ceecrecy, then it ma az wel not be recuvverd at aul, for aul dhat iz aimd at bi dhose whoo hav taken it iz dhat its contents shood be genneraly none."

"I understand. Nou, Mr. Trelauny Hope, I shood be much obliajd if u wood tel me exactly the cercumstaancez under which this doocment disapeerd."

"Dhat can be dun in a verry fu werdz, Mr. Hoamz. The letter—for it wauz a letter from a forane potentate—wauz receevd cix dase ago. It wauz ov such importans dhat I hav nevver left it in mi safe, but hav taken it acros eche evening too mi hous in Whiat'haul Terrace, and kept it in mi bedroome in a loct despach-box. It wauz dhare laast nite. Ov dhat I am certane. I acchuwaly opend the box while I wauz drescing for dinner and sau the doocment incide. This morning it wauz gon. The despach-box had stood beside the glaas uppon mi drescing-tabel aul nite. I am a lite sleper, and so iz mi wife. We ar boath prepaerd too sware dhat no wun cood hav enterd the roome juring the nite. And yet I repete dhat the paper iz gon."

"Whaut time did u dine?"

"Haaf-paast cevven."

"Hou long wauz it befoer u went too bed?"

"Mi wife had gon too the ththeyater. I wated up for her. It wauz haaf-paast elevven befoer we went too our roome."

"Then for foer ourz the despach-box had lane un'garded?"

"No wun iz evver permitted too enter dhat roome save the hous-made

in the morning, and mi valla, or mi wiafs made, juring the rest ov the da. Dha ar boath trusty cervants whoo hav bene withe us for sum time. Beciadz, niather ov them cood poscibly hav none dhat dhare wauz ennithhing moer vallubel dhan the ordinary departmental paperz in mi despach-box."

"Whoo did no ov the existens ov dhat letter?"

"No wun in the hous."

"Shuerly yor wife nu?"

"No, cer. I had ced nuthhing too mi wife until I mist the paper this morning."

The Premeyer nodded aproovingly.

"I hav long none, cer, hou hi iz yor cens ov public juty," ced he. "I am convinst dhat in the cace ov a ceecret ov this importans it wood rise supereyor too the moast intimate domestic tise."

The Uropeyan Cecretary boud.

"U doo me no moer dhan justice, cer. Until this morning I hav nevver breedhd wun werd too mi wife uppon this matter."

"Cood she hav ghest?"

"No, Mr. Hoamz, she cood not hav ghest—nor cood enniwun hav ghest."

"Hav u lost enny documents befoer?"

“No, cer.”

“Whoo iz dhare in In’gland whoo did no ov the existens ov this letter?”

“Eche member ov the Cabbinet wauz informd ov it yesterda, but the plej ov ceecrecy which atendz evvery Cabbinet meting wauz increest bi the sollem worning which wauz ghivven bi the Prime Minnister. Good hevvenz, too thhinc dhat within a fu ourz I shood micelf hav lost it!” Hiz handsum face wauz distorted withe a spazm ov despare, and hiz handz toer at hiz hare. For a moment we caut a glimps ov the natchural man, impulcive, ardent, keenly cencitive. The next the aristocrattic maasc wauz replaist, and the gentel vois had reternd. “Beciadz the memberz ov the Cabbinet dhare ar too, or poscibly thre, departmental ofishalz whoo no ov the letter. No wun els in In’gland, Mr. Hoamz, I ashure u.”

“But abraud?”

“I beleve dhat no wun abraud haz cene it save the man whoo rote it. I am wel convinst dhat hiz Minnisterz—dhat the uezhuwal ofishal channelz hav not bene emploid.”

Hoamz concidderd for sum littel time.

“Nou, cer, I must aasc u moer particcularly whaut this document iz, and whi its disaperans shood hav such momentous conceqwencez?”

The too staitsmen exchainjd a qwic glaans and the Premeyerz shagghy iabrouz gatherd in a froun.

“Mr. Hoamz, the envelope iz a long, thhin wun ov pale blu cullor. Dhare iz a cele ov red wax stampt withe a crouching liyon.

It iz adrest in larj, boald handriting too——”

“I fere, cer,” ced Hoamz, “dhat, interesting and indede ecenshal az these detailz ar, mi inqwirese must go moer too the roote ov thhingz. Whaut *wauz* the letter?”

“Dhat iz a State ceecret ov the utmoast importans, and I fere dhat I canot tel u, nor doo I ce dhat it iz nescesary. If bi the ade ov the pouwerz which u ar ced too poses u can fiand such an envelope az I describe withe its encloazhure, u wil hav deservd wel ov yor cuntry, and ernd enny reword which it lise in our pouwer too besto.”

Sherloc Hoamz rose withe a smile.

“U ar too ov the moast bizsy men in the cuntry,” ced he, “and in mi one smaul wa I hav aulso a good menny caulz uppon me. I regret exedingly dhat I canot help u in this matter, and enny continuwaishon ov this intervü wood be a waist ov time.”

The Premeyer sprang too hiz fete withe dhat qwic, feers gleme ov hiz depe-cet ise befoer which a Cabbinet haz couwerd. “I am not acustomd, cer,” he began, but maasterd hiz an’gher and rezhuemd hiz cete. For a minnute or moer we aul sat in cilens. Then the oald staitzman shrugd hiz shoalderz.

“We must axept yor termz, Mr. Hoamz. No dout u ar rite, and it iz unrezonabel for us too expect u too act unles we ghiv u our entire confidens.”

“I agry withe u,” ced the yun’gher staitzman.

“Then I wil tel u, relying entiarly uppon yor onnor and dhat

ov yor colleghe, Dr. Wautson. I ma apele too yor patreyotizm aulso, for I cood not imadgine a grater misforchune for the cuntry dhan dhat this afare shood cum out."

"U ma saifly trust us."

"The letter, then, iz from a certane forane potentate whoo haz bene ruffeld bi sum recent Coloanyal devellopments ov this cuntry. It haz bene ritten hurreedly and uppon hiz one responcibillity entiarly. Inqwirse hav shone dhat hiz Minnisterz no nuthhing ov the matter. At the same time it iz coucht in so unforchunate a manner, and certane frasez in it ar ov so provocative a carracter, dhat its publicaishon wood undoubtedly lede too a moast dain'gerous state ov feling in this cuntry. Dhare wood be such a ferment, cer, dhat I doo not hezsitate too sa dhat within a weke ov the publicaishon ov dhat letter this cuntry wood be involvd in a grate wor."

Hoamz rote a name uppon a slip ov paper and handed it too the Premeyer.

"Exactly. It wauz he. And it iz this letter—this letter which ma wel mene the expendichure ov a thouzand milleyonz and the liavz ov a hundred thouzand men—which haz becum lost in this unnacountabel fashon."

"Hav u informd the cender?"

"Yes, cer, a cifer tellegram haz bene despacht."

"Perhaps he desiarz the publicaishon ov the letter."

"No, cer, we hav strong rezon too beleve dhat he aulreddy understandz dhat he haz acted in an indiscrete and hot-hedded

manner. It woud be a grater blo too him and too hiz cuntry dhan too us if this letter wer too cum out."

"If this iz so, whoose interest iz it dhat the letter shood cum out? Whi shood enniwun desire too stele it or too publish it?"

"Dhare, Mr. Hoamz, u take me intoo rejonz ov hi internashonal pollitix. But if u concidder the Uropeyan cichuwaishon u wil hav no difficulty in perceving the motive. The whole ov Urope iz an armd camp. Dhare iz a dubbel leghe which maix a fare ballans ov millitary pouwer. Grate Brittane hoaldz the scailz. If Brittane wer drivven intoo wor withe wun confedderacy, it woud ashure the supremmacy ov the uther confedderacy, whether dha joint in the wor or not. Doo u follo?"

"Verry cleerly. It iz then the interest ov the ennemese ov this potentate too ceure and publish this letter, so az too make a breche betwene hiz cuntry and ourz?"

"Yes, cer."

"And too whoome woud this document be cent if it fel intoo the handz ov an ennemy?"

"Too enny ov the grate Chancellereze ov Urope. It iz probbably speding on its wa thither at the prezsent instant az faast az steme can take it."

Mr. Trelauny Hope dropt hiz hed on hiz chest and groand aloud. The Premeyer plaist hiz hand kiandy uppon hiz shoalder.

"It iz yor misforchune, mi dere fello. No wun can blame u. Dhare iz no precaushon which u hav neglected. Nou, Mr. Hoamz, u ar in fool poseshon ov the facts. Whaut coers doo u

recomend?"

Hoamz shooc hiz hed moernfooly.

"U thhinc, cer, dhat unles this document iz recuvverd dhare wil be wor?"

"I thhinc it iz verry probbabel."

"Then, cer, prepare for wor."

"Dhat iz a hard saying, Mr. Hoamz."

"Concidder the facts, cer. It iz inconcevable dhat it wauz taken aafter elevven-thherty at nite, cins I understand dhat Mr. Hope and hiz wife wer boath in the roome from dhat our until the los wauz found out. It wauz taken, then, yesterda evening betwene cevven-thherty and elevven-thherty, probbably nere the erleyer our, cins whoowevver tooc it evvidently nu dhat it wauz dhare and wood natchuraly cecure it az erly az poscibel. Nou, cer, if a doccument ov this importans wer taken at dhat our, whare can it be nou? No wun haz enny rezon too retane it. It haz bene paast rappidly on too dhose whoo nede it. Whaut chaans hav we nou too overtake or even too trace it? It iz beyond our reche."

The Prime Minnister rose from the cetty.

"Whaut u sa iz perfectly lodgical, Mr. Hoamz. I fele dhat the matter iz indede out ov our handz."

"Let us prezhume, for arguments sake, dhat the doccument wauz taken bi the made or bi the valla——"

"Dha ar boath oald and tride cervants."

“I understand u too sa dhat yor roome iz on the cecond floer, dhat dhare iz no entrans from widhout, and dhat from within no wun cood go up unnobservd. It must, then, be sumbody in the hous whoo haz taken it. Too whoome wood the thhefe take it? Too wun ov cevveral internashonal spise and ceecret agents, whoose naimz ar tollerably familleyar too me. Dhare ar thre whoo ma be ced too be the hedz ov dhare profeshon. I wil beghin mi recerch bi gowing round and fianding if eche ov them iz at hiz poast. If wun iz miscing—espeshaly if he haz disapeerd cins laast nite—we wil hav sum indicaishon az too whare the doccument haz gon.”

“Whi shood he be miscing?” aasct the Uropeyan Ceecretary. “He wood take the letter too an Embacy in Lundoon, az liacly az not.”

“I fancy not. These agents werc independently, and dhare relaishonz withe the Embacese ar often straind.”

The Prime Minnister nodded hiz aqweyescens.

“I beleve u ar rite, Mr. Hoamz. He wood take so vallubel a prise too hedqworterz withe hiz one handz. I thhinc dhat yor coers ov acshon iz an exelent wun. Meenwhile, Hope, we canot neglect aul our uther jutese on acount ov this wun misforchune. Shood dhare be enny fresh devellopments juring the da we shal comunicate withe u, and u wil no dout let us no the rezults ov yor one inqwirse.”

The too staitsmen boud and wauct graivly from the roome.

When our ilustreyous vizitorz had departed Hoamz lit hiz pipe in cilens and sat for sum time lost in the depest thaut. I had opend the morning paper and wauz imerst in a censaishonal crime which had okerd in Lundoon the nite befoer, when mi frend

gave an exclamaishon, sprang too hiz fete, and lade hiz pipe doun uppon the mantelpece.

“Yes,” ced he, “dhare iz no better wa ov aproching it. The cichuwaishon iz desperate, but not hoaples. Even nou, if we cood be shure which ov them haz taken it, it iz just poscibel dhat it haz not yet paast out ov hiz handz. Aafter aul, it iz a qweschon ov munny withe these fellose, and I hav the Brittish trezhury behiand me. If its on the market Ile bi it—if it meenz anuther penny on the incum-tax. It iz concevabel dhat the fello mite hoald it bac too ce whaut bidz cum from this cide befoer he trise hiz luc on the uther. Dhare ar oonly dhose thre capabel ov playing so boald a game—dhare ar Oberstine, Laa Roteyare, and Edwardo Lucas. I wil ce eche ov them.”

I glaanst at mi morning paper.

“Iz dhat Edwardo Lucas ov Godolfin Strete?”

“Yes.”

“U wil not ce him.”

“Whi not?”

“He wauz merderd in hiz hous laast nite.”

Mi frend haz so often astonnisht me in the coers ov our advenchuerz dhat it wauz withe a cens ov exultaishon dhat I reyaliagd hou compleetly I had astonnisht him. He staerd in amaizment, and then snacht the paper from mi handz. This wauz the parragraaf which I had bene en’gaijd in reding when he rose from hiz chare:

MERDER IN WESTMINSTER

A crime ov mistereyous carracter wauz comitted laast nite at 16, Godolfin Strete, wun ov the oald-fashond and cecluded rose ov ateenth cenchury housez which li betwene the rivver and the Abby, aulmoast in the shaddo ov the grate Touwer ov the Housez ov Parlament. This smaul but celect manshon haz bene inhabbited for sum yeerz bi Mr. Edwardo Lucas, wel-none in sociyety cerkelz boath on acount ov hiz charming personallity and becauz he haz the wel-deservd reputaishon ov beying wun ov the best ammater tennorz in the cuntry. Mr. Lucas iz an unmarrede man, thherty-foer yeerz ov age, and hiz establishment concists ov Mrs. Prin'ghel, an elderly houskeper, and ov Mitton, hiz valla. The former retiarz erly and sleeps at the top ov the hous. The valla wauz out for the evening, vizsiting a frend at Hammersmith. From ten oacloc onword Mr. Lucas had the hous too himcelf. Whaut okerd juring dhat time haz not yet traanspiard, but at a qworter too twelv Polece-cunstabel Barret, paacing along Godolfin Strete observd dhat the doer ov No. 16 wauz ajar. He noct, but receevd no aancer. Perceving a lite in the frunt roome, he advaanst intoo the passage and agane noct, but widhout repli. He then poosht open the doer and enterd. The roome wauz in a state ov wiald disorder, the fernichure beying aul swept too wun cide, and wun chare liying on its bac in the center. Becide this chare, and stil graasping wun ov its legz, la the unforchunate tennant ov the hous. He had bene stabd too the hart and must hav dide instantly. The nife withe which the crime had bene comitted wauz a kervd Injan daggher, pluct down from a trofy ov Oreyental armz which adornd wun ov the waulz. Robbery duz not apere too hav bene the motive ov the crime, for dhare had bene no atempt too remoove the vallubel contents ov the roome. Mr. Edwardo Lucas wauz so wel-none and poppular dhat hiz viyolent and mistereyous fate wil arouz painfool interest and intens cimpathhy in a wiadspred cerkel ov frendz.

“Wel, Wautson, whaut doo u make ov this?” aasct Hoamz, aafter a long pauz.

“It iz an amasing cowincidens.”

“A cowincidens! Here iz wun ov the thre men whoome we had naimd
az

poscibel actorz in this draamaa, and he meets a viyolent deth juring the verry ourz when we no dhat dhat draamaa wauz beying enacted. The odz ar enormous against its beying cowincidens. No figguerz cood expres them. No, mi dere Wautson, the too events ar conected—*must* be conected. It iz for us too fiand the conecshon.”

“But nou the ofishal polece must no aul.”

“Not at aul. Dha no aul dha ce at Godolfin Strete. Dha no—and shal no—nuthhing ov Whiat’haul Terrace. Oanly *we* no ov boath events, and can trace the relaishon betwene them. Dhare iz wun obveyous point which wood, in enny cace, hav ternd mi suspishonz against Lucas. Godolfin Strete, Westminster, iz oanly a fu minnuets’ wauc from Whiat’haul Terrace. The uther ceecret agents whoome I hav naimd liv in the extreme West End. It wauz eseyer, dhaerfoer, for Lucas dhan for the utherz too establish a conecshon or receive a message from the Uropeyan Ceecretarese hous’hoald—a smaul thhing, and yet whare events ar comprest intoo a fu ourz it ma proove ecenshal. Hallo! whaut hav we here?”

Mrs. Hudson had apeerd withe a ladese card uppon her salver. Hoamz glaanst at it, raizd hiz iabrouz, and handed it over too me.

“Aasc Lady Hildaa Trelauny Hope if she wil be kiand enuf too step

up," ced he.

A moment later our moddest apartment, aulreddy so distin'gwisht dhat morning, wauz ferther onnord bi the entrans ov the moast luvly woomman in Lundon. I had often herd ov the buty ov the yun'ghest dauter ov the Juke ov Belminster, but no descripshon ov it, and no contemplaishon ov cullorles fotograafs, had prepaerd me for the suttel, dellicate charm and the butifool culloring ov dhat exqwizsite hed. And yet az we sau it dhat autum morning, it wauz not its buty which wood be the ferst thhing too impres the observer. The cheke wauz luvly but it wauz paild withe emoashon, the ise wer brite but it wauz the briatnes ov fever, the cencitive mouth wauz tite and draun in an effort aafter celf-comaand. Terror—not buty—wauz whaut sprang ferst too the i az our fare vizsitor stood fraimd for an instant in the open doer.

"Haz mi huzband bene here, Mr. Hoamz?"

"Yes, maddam, he haz bene here."

"Mr. Hoamz. I imploer u not too tel him dhat I came here."
Hoamz boud coaldly, and moashond the lady too a chare.

"Yor ladiship placez me in a verry dellicate posishon. I beg dhat u wil cit doun and tel me whaut u desire, but I fere dhat I canot make enny uncondishonal prommice."

She swept acros the roome and ceted hercelf withe her bac too the windo. It wauz a qweenly prezsens—taul, graisfool, and intensly woommanly. "Mr. Hoamz," she ced—and her white-glugd handz claaspt and unclaaspt az she spoke—"I wil speke francly too u in the hoaps dhat it ma injuce u too speke francly in retern. Dhare iz complete confidens betwene mi huzband and me on aul

matterz save wun. Dhat wun iz pollitix. On this hiz lips ar ceeld. He telz me nuthhing. Nou, I am aware dhat dhare wauz a moast deplorabel occurs in our hous laast nite. I no dhat a paper haz disapeerd. But becauz the matter iz polittical mi huzband refusez too take me intoo hiz complete confidens. Nou it iz ecenshal—ecenshal, I sa—dhat I shood thurroly understand it. U ar the oonly uther person, save oonly these politishanz, whoo nose the tru facts. I beg u then, Mr. Hoamz, too tel me exactly whaut haz happend and whaut it wil lede too. Tel me aul, Mr. Hoamz. Let no regard for yor cliyents interests kepe u cilent, for I ashure u dhat hiz interests, if he wood oonly ce it, wood be best cervd bi taking me intoo hiz complete confidens. Whaut wauz this paper which wauz stolen?”

“Maddam, whaut u aasc me iz reyaly imposcibel.”

She groand and sanc her face in her handz.

“U must ce dhat this iz so, maddam. If yor huzband thhinx fit too kepe u in the darc over this matter, iz it for me, whoo haz oonly lernd the tru facts under the plej ov profeshonal ceecrecy, too tel whaut he haz widhheld? It iz not fare too aasc it. It iz him whoome u must aasc.”

“I hav aasct him. I cum too u az a laast rezoers. But widhout yor telling me ennithhing deffinite, Mr. Hoamz, u ma doo a grate cervice if u wood enliten me on wun point.”

“Whaut iz it, maddam?”

“Iz mi huzbandz polittical carere liacly too suffer throo this incident?”

“Wel, maddam, unles it iz cet rite it ma certainly hav a verry

unforchunate efect.”

“Aa!” She dru in her breth sharply az wun whoose douts ar rezolvd.

“Wun moer qweschon, Mr. Hoamz. From an expreshon which mi huzband dropt in the ferst shoc ov this dizaaster I understood dhat terribel public conceqwencez mite arise from the los ov this document.”

“If he ced so, I certainly canot deni it.”

“Ov whaut nachure ar dha?”

“Na, maddam, dhare agane u aasc me moer dhan I can poscibly aancer.”

“Then I wil take up no moer ov yor time. I canot blame u, Mr. Hoamz, for havving refuezd too speke moer frely, and u on yor cide wil not, I am shure, thhinc the wers ov me becauz I desire, even against hiz wil, too share mi huzbandz anxyetese. Wuns moer I beg dhat u wil sa nuthhing ov mi vizsit.”

She looct bac at us from the doer, and I had a laast impreshon ov dhat butifool haunted face, the starteld ise, and the draun mouth. Then she wauz gon.

“Nou, Wautson, the fare cex iz yor department,” ced Hoamz, withe a smile, when the dwindling *froo-froo* ov skerts had ended in the slam ov the frunt doer. “Whaut wauz the fare ladese game? Whaut did she reyaly waunt?”

“Shuerly her one staitment iz clere and her anxyety verry natchural.”

“Hum! Thhinc ov her aperans, Wautson—her manner, her suprest exiatment, her restlesnes, her tenascity in aasking qweschonz. Remember dhat she cumz ov a caast whoo doo not liatly sho emoashon.”

“She wauz certainly much muivd.”

“Remember aulso the cureyous ernestnes withe which she ashuerd us dhat it wauz best for her huzband dhat she shood no aul. Whaut did she mene bi dhat? And u must hav observd, Wautson, hou she manuverd too hav the lite at her bac. She did not wish us too rede her expreshon.”

“Yes, she chose the wun chare in the roome.”

“And yet the motiavz ov wimmen ar so inscrutabel. U remember the woomman at Margate whoome I suspected for the same rezon. No pouders on her nose—dhat pruivd too be the corect solueshon. Hou can u bild on such a qwixand? Dhare moast trivveyal acshon ma mene volluemz, or dhare moast extraordinary conduct ma depend uppon a haerpin or a kerling tongz. Good-morning, Wautson.”

“U ar of?”

“Yes, I wil while awa the morning at Godolfin Strete withe our frendz ov the reggular establishment. Withe Edwardo Lucas lise the solueshon ov our problem, dho I must admit dhat I hav not an incling az too whaut form it ma take. It iz a cappital mistake too ththeyorise in advaans ov the facts. Doo u sta on gard, mi good Wautson, and receve enny fresh vizsitorz. Ile join u at lunch if I am abel.”

Aul dhat da and the next and the next Hoamz wauz in a moode which hiz frendz wood caul tascitern, and utherz moroce. He ran out and ran in, smoact incessantly, plade snatchez on hiz viyolin, sanc intoo revverese, devourd sandwichez at ireggular ourz, and hardly aancerd the cazhuwal qweschonz which I poot too him. It wauz evvident too me dhat thhingz wer not gowing wel withe him or hiz qwest. He wood sa nuthhing ov the cace, and it wauz from the paperz dhat I lernd the particcularz ov the inqwest, and the arest withe the subceqwent relece ov Jon Mitton, the valla ov the deceest. The coronerz jury braut in the obveyous Wilfool Merder, but the partese remaind az un'none az evver. No motive wauz sugested. The roome wauz fool ov artikelz ov vallu, but nun had bene taken. The ded manz paperz had not bene tamperd withe. Dha wer caerfooly exammiand, and shode dhat he wauz a kene schudent ov internashonal pollitix, an indefattigabel goscip, a remarcabel lin'gwist, and an untiring letter riter. He had bene on intimate termz withe the leding politishanz ov cevveral cuntrese. But nuthhing censaishonal wauz discuvverd among the documents which fild hiz drauwerz. Az too hiz relaishonz withe wimmen, dha apeerd too hav bene promiscuwous but superfisal. He had menny aqwaintancez among them, but fu frendz, and no wun whoome he luvd. Hiz habbits wer reggular, hiz conduct inofencive. Hiz deth wauz an absolute mistery and liacly too remane so.

Az too the arest ov Jon Mitton, the valla, it wauz a council ov despare az an aulternative too absolute inacshon. But no cace cood be sustaind against him. He had vizsited frendz in Hammersmith dhat nite. The *alibi* wauz complete. It iz tru dhat he started home at an our which shood hav braut him too Westminster befoer the time when the crime wauz discuvverd, but hiz one explanaishon dhat he had wauct part ov the wa ceemd probbabel enuf in vu ov the fian'nes ov the nite. He had acchuwaly ariavd at twelv oacloc, and apeerd too be overwhelmed bi the

unnexpected tragedy. He had always been on good terms with his master. Several of the dead man's possessions—notably a small case of razors—had been found in the valise boxes, but he explained that they had been presents from the deceased, and the housekeeper was able to corroborate the story. Mitton had been in Lucas's employment for three years. It was noticeable that Lucas did not take Mitton on the Continent with him. Summertime he visited Parris for three months on end, but Mitton was left in charge of the Godolphin Street house. As to the housekeeper, she had heard nothing on the night of the crime. If her master had a visitor he had himself admitted him.

So for three mornings the mystery remained, so far as I could follow it in the papers. If Hoamz nu moer, he kept his one counsel, but, as he told me that Inspector Lestrade had taken him into his confidence in the case, I too had he was in close touch with every development. Upon the fourth day there appeared a long telegram from Parris which seemed to solve the whole question.

A discovery has just been made by the *Pareezhan* police (see the *Daily Telegraph*) which raises the veil which hung round the tragic fate of Mr. Edwardo Lucas, who met his death by violence last Monday night at Godolphin Street, Westminster. Our readers will remember that the deceased gentleman was found stabbed in his room, and that some suspicion attached to his valet, but that the case broke down on an *alibi*. Yesterday a lady, who has been none other than Mme. Onry Forna, occupying a small villa in the Rue Austerlitz, was reported to the authorities by her servants as being insane. An examination showed she had indeed developed mania of a dangerous and permanent form. On inquiry, the police have discovered that Mme. Onry Forna only returned from a journey to London on Tuesday last, and there is evidence too

conect her withe the crime at Westminster. A comparrison ov fotograafs haz pruivd concluciavly dhat M. Onry Forna and Edwardo Lucas wer reyaly wun and the same person, and dhat the deceest had for sum rezon livd a dubbel life in Lundon and Parris. Mme. Forna, whoo iz ov Creyole origin, iz ov an extreemly exitabel nachure, and haz sufferd in the paast from atax ov gelloucy which hav amounted too frensy. It iz con'gechuerd dhat it wauz in wun ov these dhat she comitted the terribel crime which haz cauzd such a censaishon in Lundon. Her muivments uppon the Munda nite hav not yet bene traist, but it iz undouted dhat a woomman aancering too her descriphon atracted much atenshon at Charing Cros Staishon on Chuezd morning bi the wialdnes ov her aperans and the viyolens ov her geschuerz. It iz probbabel, dhaerfoer, dhat the crime wauz iather comitted when insane, or dhat its imejate efect wauz too drive the unhappy woomman out ov her miand. At prezsent she iz unnabel too ghiv enny coherent account ov the paast, and the doctorz hoald out no hoaps ov the reyestablishment ov her rezon. Dhare iz evvidens dhat a woomman, whoo mite hav bene Mme. Forna, wauz cene for sum ourz uppon Munda nite wauching the hous in Godolfin Strete.

“Whaut doo u thhinc ov dhat, Hoamz?” I had red the account aloud too him, while he finnisht hiz breccfast.

“Mi dere Wautson,” ced he, az he rose from the tabel and paist up and doun the roome, “U ar moast long-suffering, but if I hav toald u nuthhing in the laast thre dase, it iz becauz dhare iz nuthhing too tel. Even nou this repoert from Parris duz not help us much.”

“Shuerly it iz final az regardz the manz deth.”

“The manz deth iz a mere incident—a trivveyal eppisode—in comparrison withe our reyaly taasc, which iz too trace this document

and save a Uropeyan catastrofy. Oonly wun important thhing haz happend in the laast thre dase, and dhat iz dhat nuthhing haz happend. I ghet repoerts aulmoast ourly from the guvvernment, and it iz certane dhat noawhare in Urope iz dhare enny cine ov trubbel. Nou, if this letter wer looce—no, it *caant* be looce—but if it iznt looce, whare can it be? Whoo haz it? Whi iz it held bac? Dhats the qweschon dhat beets in mi brane like a hammer. Wauz it, indede, a cowincidens dhat Lucas shood mete hiz deth on the nite when the letter disapeerd? Did the letter evver reche him? If so, whi iz it not amung hiz paperz? Did this mad wife ov hiz carry it of withe her? If so, iz it in her hous in Parris? Hou cood I cerch for it widhout the French polece havving dhare suspishonz arouzd? It iz a cace, mi dere Wautson, whare the lau iz az dain'gerous too us az the crimminalz ar. Evvery manz hand iz against us, and yet the interests at stake ar colossal. Shood I bring it too a suxesfool concluezhon, it wil certainly represent the crouning gloery ov mi carere. Aa, here iz mi latest from the frunt!" He glaanst hurreedly at the note which had bene handed in. "Hallo! Lestrade ceemz too hav observd sumthhing ov interest. Poot on yor hat, Wautson, and we wil strole down tooghether too Westminster."

It wauz mi ferst vizsit too the cene ov the crime—a hi, din'gy, narro-chested hous, prim, formal, and sollid, like the cenchury which gave it berth. Lestradez booldog fechuerz gaizd out at us from the frunt windo, and he greted us wormly when a big cunstabel had opend the doer and let us in. The roome intoo which we wer shone wauz dhat in which the crime had bene comitted, but no trace ov it nou remaind save an ugly, ireggular stane uppon the carpet. This carpet wauz a smaul sqware drugghet in the center ov the roome, surrounded bi a braud expans ov butifool, oald-fashond wood-floering in sqware blox, hily pollisht. Over the fiarplace wauz a magnifficent trofy ov wepponz, wun ov

which had bene uezd on dhat tradgic nite. In the windo wauz a sumpshous riting-desc, and evvery detale ov the apartment, the picchuerz, the rugz, and the hangingz, aul pointed too a taist which wauz lucshureyous too the verj ov efemminacy.

“Cene the Parris nuse?” aasct Lestrade.

Hoamz nodded.

“Our French frendz ceme too hav tucht the spot this time. No dout its just az dha sa. She noct at the doer—cerprise vizsit, I ghes, for he kept hiz life in wauter-tite compartments—he let her in, coodnt kepe her in the strete. She toald him hou she had traist him, reproacht him. Wun thhing led too anuther, and then withe dhat daggher so handy the end soone came. It wauznt aul dun in an instant, dho, for these chaerz wer aul swept over yonder, and he had wun in hiz hand az if he had tride too hoald her of withe it. Weve got it aul clere az if we had cene it.”

Hoamz raizd hiz iabrouz.

“And yet u hav cent for me?”

“Aa, yes, dhats anuther matter—a mere trifel, but the sort ov thhing u take an interest in—qwere, u no, and whaut u mite caul frekish. It haz nuthhing too doo withe the mane fact—caant hav, on the face ov it.”

“Whaut iz it, then?”

“Wel, u no, aafter a crime ov this sort we ar verry caerfool too kepe thhingz in dhare posishon. Nuthhing haz bene muivd. Officer in charj here da and nite. This morning, az the man wauz berrede

and the investigaishon over—so far az this roome iz concernd—we thaut we cood tidy up a bit. This carpet. U ce, it iz not faacend doun, oanly just lade dhare. We had ocaizhon too rase it. We found——”

“Yes? U found——”

Hoamsez face gru tens withe anxiyety.

“Wel, Ime shure u wood nevver ghes in a hundred yeerz whaut we did fiand. U ce dhat stane on the carpet? Wel, a grate dele must hav soact throo, must it not?”

“Undoutedly it must.”

“Wel, u wil be cerpriazd too here dhat dhare iz no stane on the white woodwerc too corespond.”

“No stane! But dhare must——”

“Yes, so u wood sa. But the fact remainz dhat dhare iznt.”

He tooc the corner ov the carpet in hiz hand and, terning it over, he shode dhat it wauz indede az he ced.

“But the under cide iz az staind az the upper. It must hav left a marc.”

Lestrade chuckeld withe delite at havving puzseld the famous expert.

“Nou, Ile sho u the explanaishon. Dhare *iz* a cecond stane, but it duz not corespond withe the uther. Ce for yorcelf.” Az

he spoke he ternd over anuther porshon ov the carpet, and dhare, shure enuf, wauz a grate crimzon spil uppon the sqware white facing ov the oald-fashond floer. "Whaut doo u make ov dhat, Mr. Hoamz?"

"Whi, it iz cimpel enuf. The too stainz did corespond, but the carpet haz bene ternd round. Az it wauz sqware and unfaacend it wauz esily dun."

"The ofishal polece doant nede u, Mr. Hoamz, too tel them dhat the carpet must hav bene ternd round. Dhats clere enuf, for the stainz li abuv eche uther—if u la it over this wa. But whaut I waunt too no iz, whoo shifted the carpet, and whi?"

I cood ce from Hoamsez ridgid face dhat he wauz viabrating withe inword exiatment.

"Looc here, Lestrade," ced he, "haz dhat cunstabel in the passage bene in charj ov the place aul the time?"

"Yes, he haz."

"Wel, take mi advice. Exammine him caerfooly. Doant doo it befoer us. Wele wate here. U take him intoo the bac roome. Ule be moer liacly too ghet a confeshon out ov him alone. Aasc him hou he daerd too admit pepel and leve them alone in this roome. Doant aasc him if he haz dun it. Take it for graanted. Tel him u *no* sumwun haz bene here. Pres him. Tel him dhat a fool confeshon iz hiz oonly chaans ov forghivnes. Doo exactly whaut I tel u!"

"Bi Jorj, if he nose Ile hav it out ov him!" cride Lestrade. He darted intoo the haul, and a fu moments later hiz boolleying

vois sounded from the bac roome.

“Nou, Wautson, nou!” cride Hoamz withe frensede eghernes. Aul the demoanyacal foers ov the man maasct behiand dhat listles manner berst out in a parroxizm ov ennergy. He toer the drugghet from the floer, and in an instant wauz doun on hiz handz and nese clauwing at eche ov the sqwaerz ov wood beneeth it. Wun ternd ciadwase az he dug hiz nailz intoo the ej ov it. It hinjd bac like the lid ov a box. A smaul blac cavvity opend beneeth it. Hoamz plunjed hiz egher hand intoo it and dru it out withe a bitter snarl ov an’gher and disapointment. It wauz empty.

“Qwic, Wautson, qwic! Ghet it bac agane!” The wooden lid wauz replaist, and the drugghet had oanly just bene draun strate when Lestraidz vois wauz herd in the passage. He found Hoamz lening lan’gwidly against the mantelpece, resiand and paishent, endevvoring too concele hiz ireprescibel yaunz.

“Sory too kepe u wating, Mr. Hoamz, I can ce dhat u ar boerd too deth withe the whole afare. Wel, he haz confest, aul rite. Cum in here, MacFerson. Let these gentelmen here ov yor moast inexcuzabel conduct.”

The big cunstabel, verry hot and pennitent, cideld intoo the roome.

“I ment no harm, cer, Ime shure. The yung woomman came too the doer laast evening—mistoooc the hous, she did. And then we got tauking. Its loansum, when yor on juty here aul da.”

“Wel, whaut happend then?”

“She waunted too ce whare the crime wauz dun—had red about it in the paperz, she ced. She wauz a verry respectabel, wel-spoken yung woomman, cer, and I sau no harm in letting her hav a pepe.

When she saw that mark on the carpet, down she dropped on the floor, and la az if she were dead. I ran too the back and got some water, but I could not bring her too. Then I went round the corner too the Ivy Plant for some brandy, and by the time I had brought it back the young woman had recovered and was of—ashamed of herself, I daresay, and dared not face me.”

“How about moving that drugget?”

“Well, certainly, it was a bit rumpled, certainly, when I came back. U see, she fell on it and it lay on a polished floor with nothing too keep it in place. I straightened it out afterwards.”

“It’s a lesson too you that you cannot deceive me, Cunstabel MacFerson,” said Lestrade, with dignity. “No doubt you thought that your breach of duty could never be discovered, and yet a mere glance at that drugget was enough too convince me that someone had been admitted too the room. It’s lucky for you, my man, that nothing is missing, or you would find yourself in Queen’s Street. I’m sorry too have caught you down over such a petty business, Mr. Hoams, but I thought the point of the second stone not corresponding with the first would interest you.”

“Certainly, it was most interesting. Has this woman only been here weeks, Cunstabel?”

“Yes, certainly, only weeks.”

“Who was she?”

“Do not give the name, certainly. Was answering an advertisement about typewriting and came too the wrong number—very pleasant, genteel young woman, certainly.”

“Taul? Handsom?”

“Yes, cer, she wauz a wel-grone yung woomman. I supose u mite sa she wauz handsom. Perhaps sum wood sa she wauz verry handsom. ‘O, officer, doo let me hav a pepe!’ cez she. She had pritty, coaxing wase, az u mite sa, and I thaut dhare wauz no harm in letting her just poot her hed throo the doer.”

“Hou wauz she drest?”

“Qwiyet, cer—a long mantel doun too her fete.”

“Whaut time wauz it?”

“It wauz just growing dusc at the time. Dha wer liting the lamps az I came bac withe the brandy.”

“Verry good,” ced Hoamz. “Cum, Wautson, I thhinc dhat we hav moer important werc elswhare.”

Az we left the hous Lestrade remaind in the frunt roome, while the repentant cunstabel opend the doer too let us out. Hoamz ternd on the step and held up sumthhing in hiz hand. The cunstabel staerd intently.

“Good Lord, cer!” he cride, withe amaizment on hiz face. Hoamz poot hiz fin’gher on hiz lips, replaist hiz hand in hiz brest pocket, and berst out laafing az we ternd doun the strete. “Exelent!” ced he. “Cum, frend Wautson, the kertane ringz up for the laast act. U wil be releevd too here dhat dhare wil be no wor, dhat the Rite Onnorabel Trelauny Hope wil suffer no cetbac in hiz brilleyant carere, dhat the indiscrete Sovverane wil receve no punnishment for hiz indisreshon, dhat the Prime Minnister wil hav no Uropeyan complicaishon too dele withe, and

dhat withe a littel tact and mannaiment uppon our part nobody wil be a penny the wers for whaut mite hav bene a verry ugly incident."

Mi miand filed withe admiraishon for this extraordinary man.

"U hav solvd it!" I cride.

"Hardly dhat, Wautson. Dhare ar sum points which ar az darc az evver. But we hav so much dhat it wil be our one fault if we canot ghet the rest. We wil go strate too Whiat'haul Terrace and bring the matter too a hed."

When we ariavd at the rezidens ov the Uropeyan Cecretary it wauz for Lady Hilda Trelauny Hope dhat Sherloc Hoamz inqwiard. We wer shone intoo the morning-roome.

"Mr. Hoamz!" ced the lady, and her face wauz pinc withe her indignaishon. "This iz shuerly moast unfare and un'gennerous uppon
yor

part. I desiard, az I hav explaind, too kepe mi vizsit too u a cecret, lest mi huzband shood thhinc dhat I wauz intruding intoo hiz afaerz. And yet u compromise me bi cumming here and so showing dhat dhare ar biznes relaishonz betwene us."

"Unforchunaitly, maddam, I had no poscibel aulternative. I hav bene comishond too recuvver this imensly important paper. I must dhaerfoer aasc u, maddam, too be kiand enuf too place it in mi handz."

The lady sprang too her fete, withe the cullor aul dasht in an instant from her butifool face. Her ise glaizd—she totterd—I thaut dhat she wood faint. Then withe a grand effort she rallede from the shoc, and a supreme astonishment and

indignation cast every other expression from her features.

"U—u insult me, Mr. Hoamz."

"Cum, cum, maddam, it iz uestles. Ghiv up the letter."

She darted to the bell.

"The butler shal sho u out."

"Doo not ring, Lady Hilda. If u doo, then aul mi earnest efforts too avoid a scandal wil be frustrated. Ghiv up the letter and aul wil be cet rite. If u wil werc withe me I can arainj evverithhing. If u werc against me I must expose u."

She stood grandly defiant, a queenly figure, her eye fixed upon him as if she would read his very soul. Her hand waz on the bell, but she had forbore to ring it.

"U ar trying too frighten me. It iz not a verry manly thing, Mr. Hoamz, too cum here and brouete a woman. U sa dhat u no sumthing. Whaut iz it dhat u no?"

"Pra sit down, maddam. U wil hurt yourself if u fail. I wil not speke until u sit down. Thank u."

"I ghiv u five minutes, Mr. Hoamz."

"Wun iz enuf, Lady Hilda. I no ov your visit too Edwardo Lucas, ov your giving him this document, ov your ingenious return too the room last night, and ov the manner in which u took the letter from the hiding-place under the carpet."

She stared at him with an ashen face and gulped twice before she

cood speke.

“U ar mad, Mr. Hoamz—u ar mad!” she cride, at laast.

He dru a smaull pece ov cardbord from hiz pocket. It wauz the face ov a woomman cut out ov a poertrate.

“I hav carrede this becauz I thaut it mite be uesfool,” ced he. “The poleesman haz reccogniazd it.”

She gave a gaasp, and her hed dropt bac in the chare.

“Cum, Lady Hilda. U hav the letter. The matter ma stil be ajusted. I hav no desire too bring trubbel too u. Mi juty endz when I hav reternd the lost letter too yor huzband. Take mi advice and be franc withe me. It iz yor oanly chaans.”

Her currence wauz admirabel. Even nou she wood not one defete.

“I tel u agane, Mr. Hoamz, dhat u ar under sum abcerd iluezhon.”

Hoamz rose from hiz chare.

“I am sorry for u, Lady Hilda. I hav dun mi best for u. I can ce dhat it iz aul in vane.”

He rang the bel. The butler enterd.

“Iz Mr. Trelauny Hope at home?”

“He wil be home, cer, at a qworter too wun.”

Hoamz glaanst at hiz wauch.

“Stil a qworter ov an our,” ced he. “Verry good, I shal wate.”

The butler had hardly cloazd the doer behiand him when Lady Hildaa wauz doun on her nese at Hoamsez fete, her handz outstrecht, her butifool face upternd and wet withe her teerz.

“O, spare me, Mr. Hoamz! Spare me!” she pleded, in a frensy ov suplicaishon. “For hevvenz sake, doant tel him! I luv him so! I wood not bring wun shaddo on hiz life, and this I no wood brake hiz nobel hart.”

Hoamz raizd the lady. “I am thancfool, maddam, dhat u hav cum too yor cencez even at this laast moment! Dhare iz not an instant too loose. Whare iz the letter?”

She darted acros too a riting-desc, unloct it, and dru out a long blu envelope.

“Here it iz, Mr. Hoamz. Wood too hevven I had nevver cene it!”

“Hou can we retern it?” Hoamz mutterd. “Qwic, qwic, we must thhinc ov sum wa! Whare iz the despach-box?”

“Stil in hiz bedroome.”

“Whaut a stroke ov luc! Qwic, maddam, bring it here!” A moment later she had apeerd withe a red flat box in her hand.

“Hou did u open it befoer? U hav a jueplicate ke? Yes, ov coers u hav. Open it!”

From out ov her boozzom Lady Hildaa had draun a smaual ke. The box flu open. It wauz stuft withe paperz. Hoamz thrust the blu

envelope depe doun intoo the hart ov them, betwene the leevz ov sum uther document. The box wauz shut, loct, and reternd too the bedroome.

“Nou we ar reddy for him,” ced Hoamz. “We hav stil ten minnuets. I am gowing far too screne u, Lady Hildaa. In retern u wil spend the time in telling me francly the reyal mening ov this extrordinary afare.”

“Mr. Hoamz, I wil tel u evverithhing,” cride the lady. “O, Mr. Hoamz, I wood cut of mi rite hand befoer I gave him a moment ov soro! Dhare iz no woomman in aul Lundon whoo luvz her huzband az I doo, and yet if he nu hou I hav acted—hou I hav bene compeld too act—he wood nevver forghiv me. For hiz one onnor standz so hi dhat he cood not forghet or pardon a laps in anuther. Help me, Mr. Hoamz! Mi happines, hiz happines, our verry liavz ar at stake!”

“Qwic, maddam, the time grose short!”

“It wauz a letter ov mine, Mr. Hoamz, an indiscrete letter ritten befoer mi marrage—a foolish letter, a letter ov an impulsive, luvving gherl. I ment no harm, and yet he wood hav thaut it crimminal. Had he red dhat letter hiz confidens wood hav bene forevver destroid. It iz yeerz cins I rote it. I had thaut dhat the whole matter wauz forgotten. Then at laast I herd from this man, Lucas, dhat it had paast intoo hiz handz, and dhat he wood la it befoer mi huzband. I imploerd hiz mercy. He ced dhat he wood retern mi letter if I wood bring him a certane document which he descriabd in mi huzbandz despach-box. He had sum spi in the office whoo had toald him ov its existens. He ashuerd me dhat no harm cood cum too mi huzband. Poot yorcelf in mi posishon, Mr. Hoamz! Whaut wauz I too doo?”

“Take yor huzband intoo yor confidens.”

“I cood not, Mr. Hoamz, I cood not! On the wun cide ceemd certane ruwin, on the uther, terribel az it ceemd too take mi huzbandz paper, stil in a matter ov pollitix I cood not understand the conceqwencez, while in a matter ov luv and trust dha wer oanly too clere too me. I did it, Mr. Hoamz! I tooc an impreshon ov hiz ke. This man, Lucas, fernisht a jueplicate. I opend hiz despach-box, tooc the paper, and convade it too Godolfin Strete.”

“Whaut happend dhare, maddam?”

“I tapt at the doer az agrede. Lucas opend it. I follode him intoo hiz roome, leving the haul doer ajar behiand me, for I feerd too be alone withe the man. I remember dhat dhare wauz a woomman outside az I enterd. Our biznes wauz soone dun. He had mi letter on hiz desc, I handed him the document. He gave me the letter. At this instant dhare wauz a sound at the doer. Dhare wer steps in the passage. Lucas qwicly ternd bac the drugghet, thrust the document intoo sum hiding-place dhare, and cuvverd it over.

“Whaut happend aafter dhat iz like sum feerfool dreme. I hav a vizhon ov a darc, frantic face, ov a woommanz vois, which screemd in French, ‘Mi wating iz not in vane. At laast, at laast I hav found u withe her!’ Dhare wauz a savvage strugghel. I sau him withe a chare in hiz hand, a nife gleemd in herz. I rusht from the horibel cene, ran from the hous, and oanly next morning in the paper did I lern the dredfool rezult. Dhat nite I wauz happy, for I had mi letter, and I had not cene yet whaut the fuchure wood bring.

“It wauz the next morning dhat I reyaliazd dhat I had oanly

exchainjd wun trubbel for anuther. Mi huzbandz an'gwish at the los ov hiz paper went too mi hart. I cood hardly prevent micelf from dhare and then neling doun at hiz fete and telling him whaut I had dun. But dhat agane wood mene a confeshon ov the paast. I came too u dhat morning in order too understand the fool enormity ov mi ofens. From the instant dhat I graaspt it mi whole miand wauz ternd too the wun thaut ov ghetting bac mi huzbandz paper. It must stil be whare Lucas had plaist it, for it wauz conceeld befoer this dredfool woomman enterd the roome. If it had not bene for her cumming, I shood not hav none whare hiz hiding-place wauz. Hou wauz I too ghet intoo the roome? For too dase I waucht the place, but the doer wauz nevver left open. Laast nite I made a laast atempt. Whaut I did and hou I suxeded, u hav aulreddy lernd. I braut the paper bac withe me, and thaut ov destroying it, cins I cood ce no wa ov reterning it widhout confescing mi ghilt too mi huzband. Hevvenz, I here hiz step uppon the stare!"

The Uropeyan Cecretary berst exitedly intoo the roome. "Enny nuse, Mr. Hoamz, enny nuse?" he cride.

"I hav sum hoaps."

"Aa, thanc hevven!" Hiz face became rajant. "The Prime Minnister iz lunching withe me. Ma he share yor hoaps? He haz nervz ov stele, and yet I no dhat he haz hardly slept cins this terribel event. Jacobz, wil u aasc the Prime Minnister too cum up? Az too u, dere, I fere dhat this iz a matter ov pollitix. We wil join u in a fu minnuets in the dining-roome."

The Prime Minnisterz manner wauz subjude, but I cood ce bi the gleme ov hiz ise and the twitchingz ov hiz bony handz dhat he shaerd the exiatment ov hiz yung colleghe.

"I understand dhat u hav sumthhing too repoert, Mr. Hoamz?"

"Puerly neggative az yet," mi frend aancerd. "I hav inqwiarid at evvery point whare it mite be, and I am shure dhat dhare iz no dain'ger too be apreghended."

"But dhat iz not enuf, Mr. Hoamz. We canot liv forevver on such a volcano. We must hav sumthhing deffinite."

"I am in hoaps ov ghetting it. Dhat iz whi I am here. The moer I thhinc ov the matter the moer convinst I am dhat the letter haz nevver left this hous."

"Mr. Hoamz!"

"If it had it wood certainly hav bene public bi nou."

"But whi shood enniwun take it in order too kepe it in hiz hous?"

"I am not convinst dhat enniwun did take it."

"Then hou cood it leve the despach-box?"

"I am not convinst dhat it evver did leve the despach-box."

"Mr. Hoamz, this joking iz verry il-tiamd. U hav mi ashurans dhat it left the box."

"Hav u exammiand the box cins Chuezda morning?"

"No. It wauz not nescenary."

"U ma concevably hav overlooct it."

“Imposcibel, I sa.”

“But I am not convinst ov it. I hav none such thhingz too happen. I prezhume dhare ar uther paperz dhare. Wel, it ma hav got mixt withe them.”

“It wauz on the top.”

“Sumwun ma hav shaken the box and displaist it.”

“No, no, I had evverithhing out.”

“Shuerly it iz esily decided, Hope,” ced the Premeyer. “Let us hav the despach-box braut in.”

The Cecretary rang the bel.

“Jacobz, bring doun mi despach-box. This iz a farcical waist ov time, but stil, if nuthhing els wil sattisfi u, it shal be dun. Thanc u, Jacobz, poot it here. I hav aulwase had the ke on mi wauch-chane. Here ar the paperz, u ce. Letter from Lord Merro, repoert from Cer Charlz Hardy, memorandum from Belgrade, note on the Russo-German grane taxez, letter from Madrid, note from Lord Flouwerz——Good hevvenz! whaut iz this? Lord Bellinger! Lord Bellinger!”

The Premeyer snacht the blu envelope from hiz hand.

“Yes, it iz it—and the letter iz intact. Hope, I con’gratchulate u.”

“Thanc u! Thanc u! Whaut a wate from mi hart. But this iz inconcevabel—imposcibel. Mr. Hoamz, u ar a wizzard, a sorcerer! Hou did u no it wauz dhare?”

“Becauz I nu it wauz noawhare els.”

“I canot beleve mi ise!” He ran wialdly too the doer. “Whare iz mi wife? I must tel her dhat aul iz wel. Hildaa! Hildaa!” we herd hiz vois on the staerz.

The Premeyer looct at Hoamz withe twincling ise.

“Cum, cer,” ced he. “Dhare iz moer in this dhan meets the i. Hou came the letter bac in the box?”

Hoamz ternd awa smiling from the kene scrutiny ov dhose wunderfool ise.

“We aulso hav our diplomattic ceecrets,” ced he and, picking up hiz hat, he ternd too the doer.

THE END

End ov the Prodgect Goottenberg EBooc ov The Retern ov Sherloc Hoamz
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