

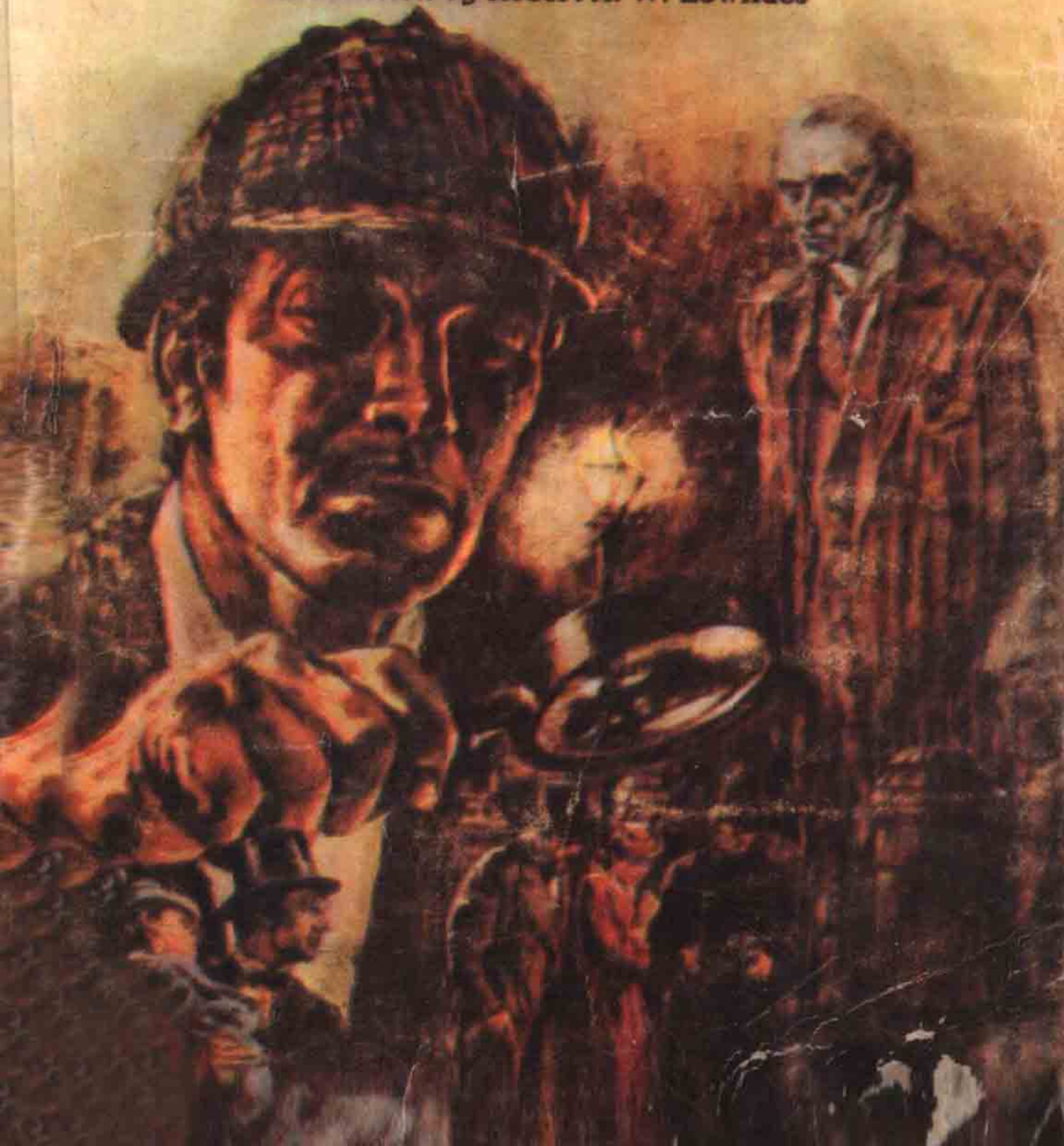
A. CONAN DOYLE

THE

ADVENTURES OF

Sherlock Holmes

Introduction by Robert A. W. Lowndes



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Sherlock Holmes

A. CONAN DOYLE

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Introduction

To the historian of Britain whose eye is fixed on politics, war, economics, and technology, the year 1887 is memorable for such events as the resignation of Lord Randolph Churchill from the Cabinet—which certainly altered the course of public policy—and the official report which indicated that British science and technology were lagging far behind Germany's achievements in these fields and that the educational system needed overhauling. Such a historian might have noted, too, that this was the year which saw the publication of a collection of short stories, *Plain Tales From the Hills*, by a young man named Rudyard Kipling, who would later become an unofficial spokesman for Imperial philosophy.

Yet none of the events which our historian would consider vital for that year had so wonderful an effect upon the world as did the appearance, around Christmas 1887, of a small paperback book entitled *Beeton's Christmas Annual*. Purchasers of this edition found therein a story entitled *A Study in Scarlet*, its subtitle reading: "Being a Reprint from the Reminiscences of John H. Watson, M.D., Late of the Army Medical Department." The story was reviewed in the various newspapers, not unfavorably, but not enthusiastically, as Vincent Starrett notes in his introduction to the definitive Heritage Press edition of the complete Sherlock Holmes.

He quotes from the *Graphic*, December 10, 1887, which said of the story, in part, "It is not at all a bad imitation but it would never have been written but for Poe, Gaboriau, and R. L. Stevenson. . . . Those who like detective stories and have not read the great originals will find the tale full of

interest. It hangs together well and finishes ingeniously." Starrett further quotes three errors which appeared in this review, the most important being that the reviewer claimed *A Study in Scarlet* was published anonymously. It was not published anonymously; it appeared under the name of A. Conan Doyle, and it would not be many years before enchanted readers all over the world would be asking, "Who is A. Conan Doyle?"

Arthur Conan Doyle was born on May 22, 1859, and was the eldest son of Charles Doyle, painter and architect, of genteel lineage. Persons born at this time are supposed to be very alert mentally, studious, and possessed of mild and vacillating temperaments. Whether this be true of all, it was certainly true of Doyle. His mother gave him a thorough romantic education—heraldry, the code of feudal knighthood, etc.—before he was old enough to attend school; his early formal education in Roman Catholic preparatory schools, which stressed algebra, Latin, and Greek, was augmented by the novels of Sir Walter Scott and the works of Macaulay—read surreptitiously, even as later youths would read the tales of Sherlock Holmes. This would not only affect his recourse to fiction writing as a means of augmenting his income, but also the choice of subject matter in which he hoped to achieve lasting fame.

The Doyle family was ever in a precarious position economically, but despite her romantic leanings, Mary Foyle Doyle was a woman of extraordinary competence when it came to the practical business of feeding, clothing, and educating her children. Young Arthur, successful in his studies, won a scholarship to a Jesuit school in Austria; thereafter, he enrolled in a medical school. His father wanted him to follow a business career, but his mother envisioned her son as a doctor. It is not difficult to deduce who ruled the Doyle roost.

The Doyles were Irish, living in Scotland. Arthur entered the University at Edinburgh for his medical education and there came under the aegis of the man who surely must be considered the grandfather of Sherlock Holmes: Joseph Bell, M.D., F.R.C.S., consulting surgeon to the Royal Infirmary and Royal Hospital for Sick Children. In *A Study in Scarlet*, Sherlock Holmes is described by Dr. Watson thus: "His very person and appearance were such as to strike the attention of the most casual observer. In height he was rather over six feet, and so excessively lean that he seemed to be considerably taller. His eyes were sharp and piercing . . . and his thin, hawklike nose gave his whole expression an air of alertness and decision. His chin, too, had the prominence and squareness which mark the man of determination . . . yet he was possessed of extraordinary delicacy of touch . . ."

This is not far from a description of Dr. Bell, but more important is the quality which made Bell a legend of the University. In later life, Doyle wrote of his mentor, "He would sit in his

receiving room, with a face like a red Indian, and diagnose the patients as they came through the door—sometimes before they had opened their mouths. He would tell them their symptoms and even give them details of their past life, and very seldom was he in error.”

Doyle acquired his medical degree, and his wife, Louise Hawkins, in 1885. He did not acquire very many patients when he set up practice, however, and remembering Dr. Bell, he turned his hand to detective fiction, modeling his protagonist after his beloved instructor. One shudders to learn that the world's most famous fictional detective was almost christened Sherrinford Holmes; fortunately, Doyle discarded this name, and selected Sherlock before the manuscript of *A Study in Scarlet* was sent out to editors.

The response was not encouraging. There were many rejections before *A Study in Scarlet* was finally accepted by *Beeton's Christmas Annual* for the flat fee of £25, all rights being purchased. Doyle never received another shilling for the story.

His second novel about Holmes, *The Sign of the Four*, was far better received by readers and reviewers when it appeared in the February, 1890, issue of *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine*. Like its predecessor, this was a novel of the type which is called a “frame” story. The bulk of the work is a story-within-the-story. Doyle was not certain whether the public would accept a full-length detective novel; thus, *A Study in Scarlet* opens with Dr. Watson and Sherlock Holmes, and the presentation of a murder mystery; at the end of the sixth chapter, Holmes has solved the mystery and captured the culprit. We then go into part two, *The Country of the Saints*, a complete short novel of the Mormons, wherein we learn the story behind the murder mystery which Holmes has solved. Only at the end of this do we return to the Holmes and Watson frame. In *The Sign of the Four*, the story-within-the-story again takes us away from our protagonists, although this time it is less segregated.

But now, encouraged, Doyle started to write short stories wherein we never leave Holmes and Watson for any length of time or space. The first of these stories, *A Scandal in Bohemia*, received a tremendous response when it appeared in the July, 1891, issue of the *Strand Magazine*. Doyle wrote the first five short stories at the rate of one a week; at this point he was laid up with influenza and when he recovered he had made his decision to turn from medicine to writing as his vocation. Perhaps he would have become a fine doctor, but the world has never regretted his choice.

The first twelve tales were collected between hard covers and published as *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, both in London and New York, in 1892. But before this, Doyle had turned to what he considered more meaningful fiction—the romantic historical novel. *Micah Clarke*, a tale of Monmouth's rebellion,

appeared in 1888; *The White Company*, a romance of du Guesclin's time, followed. But it was the tales of Sherlock Holmes which the public seized upon with ever-increasing enthusiasm, and Doyle found himself up against a problem. Although by no means contemptuous of his famous character, his heart really lay in following the footsteps of Sir Walter Scott, and drawing upon the knightly lore he had drawn from his mother.

If Christmas 1887 was a bright one for lovers of detective fiction, Christmas 1893 must have been the blackest of the century. For in December of that year, readers of the *Strand Magazine* in Britain, and of *McClure's Magazine* in the United States, read—*The Final Problem*. Sherlock Holmes was dead! He and his great antagonist, Professor Moriarty, had met and struggled and died together in a plunge over Reichenbach Falls! The shot that was heard around the world at Lexington and Concord was as nothing compared to the outcry heard around the world in that frightful month. "You brute!" began the letter Doyle received from one tearful woman.

The besieged author hardened his heart, relenting only to the extent of writing *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (Airmont CL62), the only full-length novel of the four about Holmes and Watson which is completely concerned with the famous pair. This was in 1901. In 1902, Doyle was knighted for his writing in defense of the British conduct of the Boer War.

Doyle's saddened readers were pleased, but not satisfied, by the appearance of the novel; Holmes was still dead—this was an earlier case which Dr. Watson was describing.

In the fall of 1903, the *Strand Magazine* (and *Colliers* in the United States) published *The Adventure of the Empty House*; Doyle had capitulated; Watson had been deceived; Holmes had not fallen in the struggle after all. Despite his continued efforts to make a better mark with other fiction, and his conversion to Spiritualism, which involved psychic research and much writing on the subject, Doyle never sought to bury his famous character again. The final Sherlock Holmes story to be published appeared in 1927, three years before the author's death; and the last Holmes story, chronologically, brings Holmes and Watson out of retirement to foil a German spy shortly before the outbreak of the Great War.

There are two types of series-character stories, as James Blish has noted. One is the "template" series, wherein the repeating characters are the same in story to story; they grow no older and do not develop in any way, so that it makes little difference whether you read these tales in chronological order. The other is the "evolutionary" series, wherein the repeated characters age and show signs of character development or deterioration. Perry Mason, on TV, is a template character; Holmes and Watson are evolutionary characters. The Sherlock Holmes stories

as a unit have a biographical element, which gives the series depth and perspective. One important aspect of the evolutionary series is that even a lesser story in the series will maintain interest for its depiction of the characters, while a weak unit in a template series (and no series of tales can be of uniform excellence) is a dead loss.

The twelve cases which make up *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* take place between the years 1883 and 1890, according to the chronology of the tales worked out by W. S. Baring-Gould, who places the first meeting of Holmes and Watson in 1881. (Several lovers of the tales have made chronologies, and there are disagreements on dates; Baring-Gould's is a most persuasive one, and is the best known; you will find it in his book, *Sherlock Holmes of Baker Street*.) We are plunged into international intrigue, of a romantic sort, in *A Scandal in Bohemia*; encounter the motive for a bizarre hoax in *The Red-Headed League*; uncover a shameful deceit in *A Case of Identity*; meet murder in *The Boscombe Valley Mystery*; struggle with a sinister secret society in *The Five Orange Pips*, and are confronted with an uncanny disappearance in *The Man with the Twisted Lip*. No less baffling and enchanting are the mysteries and human problems revealed in the other six tales: *The Adventures of The Blue Carbuncle*, *The Speckled Band*, *The Engineer's Thumb*, *The Noble Bachelor*, *The Beryl Coronet*, and *The Copper Beeches*.

The young person who first met Sherlock Holmes at the time *The Adventures* were first published was reading stories of his own times. Today, even *His Last Bow* is a period piece, except for the elderly. It makes no difference; young and old will be caught up in this re-creation of Victorian England, where the breathless pursuit of a criminal was carried on at a canter in a hansom cab, and a master detective solved his cases with fascinating deductions rather than with a hail of bullets—though physical action is not slighted. But whether this is a first encounter or another rereading, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* is a treasure which defies age.

To the end of his life, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle sought to write fiction, plays, essays, tracts, and historical studies which, he thought, would eclipse Sherlock Holmes in literary value and endurance. His success was, at the best, marginal; he is known for other works than the tales of Holmes and Watson to persons with specialized interests. Lovers of science fiction know him for his character, Professor Challenger, who appears in *The Lost World* and a few short stories, and for *The Maracot Deep*, a tale of sunken Atlantis. Adherents of weird fiction know him for various short stories, independent of any of his well-known characters, such as *The Ring of Thoth*. Those fascinated by historical romances find *Micah Clarke*, etc., readable; historians may look into his writings on the Boer War and his propaganda

work for the Allies during the Great War, while Spiritualists value *The Land of Mist* and the two-volume *History of Spiritualism*. But when he died in 1930, the man the whole world mourned was the Arthur Conan Doyle who gave us Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson.

—ROBERT A. W. LOUNDES

A SCANDAL IN BOHEMIA

To Sherlock Holmes she is always *the woman*. I have seldom heard him mention her under any other name. In his eyes she eclipses and predominates the whole of her sex. It was not that he felt any emotion akin to love for Irene Adler. All emotions, and that one particularly, were abhorrent to his cold, precise but admirably balanced mind. He was, I take it, the most perfect reasoning and observing machine that the world has seen, but as a lover he would have placed himself in a false position. He never spoke of the softer passions, save with a gibe and a sneer. They were admirable things for the observer—excellent for drawing the veil from men's motives and actions. But for the trained reasoner to admit such intrusions into his own delicate and finely adjusted temperament was to introduce a distracting factor which might throw a doubt upon all his mental results. Grit in a sensitive instrument, or a crack in one of his own high-power lenses, would not be more disturbing than a strong emotion in a nature such as his. And yet there was but one woman to him, and that woman was the late Irene Adler, of dubious and questionable memory.

I had seen little of Holmes lately. My marriage had drifted us away from each other. My own complete happiness, and the home-centred interests which rise up around the man who first finds himself master of his own establishment, were sufficient to absorb all my attention, while Holmes, who loathed every form of society with his whole Bohemian soul, remained in our lodgings in Baker Street, buried among his old books, and alternating from week to week between cocaine and ambition, the drowsiness of the drug, and the fierce energy of his own keen nature. He was still, as ever, deeply attracted by the study of crime, and occupied his immense faculties and extraordinary powers of observation in following out those clues, and clearing up those mysteries which had been abandoned as hopeless by the official police. From time to time I heard some vague account of his doings: of his summons to Odessa in the case of the Trepoff murder, of his clearing up of the singular tragedy of the Atkinson brothers at Trincomalee, and finally of the mission which he had accomplished so delicately and successfully for the reigning family of Holland. Beyond these signs of his activity, however, which I merely shared with all the readers of the daily press, I knew little of my former friend and companion.

One night—it was on the twentieth of March, 1888—I was returning from a journey to a patient (for I had now returned to civil practice), when my way led me through Baker Street. As I passed the well-remembered door, which must always be associated in my mind with my wooing, and with the dark incidents of the *Study in Scarlet*, I was seized with a keen desire to see Holmes again, and to know how he was employing his extraordinary powers. His rooms were brilliantly lit, and, even as I looked up, I saw his tall, spare figure pass twice in a dark silhouette against the blind. He was pacing the room swiftly, eagerly, with his head sunk upon his chest and his hands clasped behind him. To me, who knew his every mood and habit, his attitude and manner told their own story. He was at work again. He had risen out of his drug-created dreams and was hot upon the scent of some new problem. I rang the bell and was shown up to the chamber which had formerly been in part my own.

His manner was not effusive. It seldom was; but he was glad, I think, to see me. With hardly a word spoken, but with a kindly eye, he waved me to an armchair, threw across his case of cigars, and indicated a spirit case and a gasogene in the corner. Then he stood before the fire and looked me over in his singular introspective fashion.

“Wedlock suits you,” he remarked. “I think, Watson, that you have put on seven and a half pounds since I saw you.”

“Seven!” I answered.

“Indeed, I should have thought a little more. Just a trifle more, I fancy, Watson. And in practice again, I observe. You did not tell me that you intended to go into harness.”

“Then, how do you know?”

“I see it, I deduce it. How do I know that you have been getting yourself very wet lately, and that you have a most clumsy and careless servant girl?”

“My dear Holmes,” said I, “this is too much. You would certainly have been burned, had you lived a few centuries ago. It is true that I had a country walk on Thursday and came home in a dreadful mess, but as I have changed my clothes I can’t imagine how you deduce it. As to Mary Jane, she is incorrigible, and my wife has given her notice; but there, again, I fail to see how you work it out.”

He chuckled to himself and rubbed his long, nervous hands together.

“It is simplicity itself,” said he; “my eyes tell me that on the inside of your left shoe, just where the firelight strikes it, the leather is scored by six almost parallel cuts. Obviously they have been caused by someone who has very carelessly scraped round the edges of the sole in order to remove crusted mud from it. Hence, you see, my double deduction that you had been out in vile weather, and that you had a particularly malignant boot-slitting specimen of the London slavey. As to your practice, if a gentleman walks into my rooms smelling of iodoform, with a

black mark of nitrate of silver upon his right forefinger, and a bulge on the right side of his top hat to show where he has secreted his stethoscope, I must be dull, indeed, if I do not pronounce him to be an active member of the medical profession."

I could not help laughing at the ease with which he explained his process of deduction "When I hear you give your reasons," I remarked, "the thing always appears to me to be so ridiculously simple that I could easily do it myself, though at each successive instance of your reasoning I am baffled until you explain your process. And yet I believe that my eyes are as good as yours"

"Quite so," he answered, lighting a cigarette, and throwing himself down into an armchair "You see, but you do not observe. The distinction is clear For example, you have frequently seen the steps which lead up from the hall to this room."

"Frequently"

"How often?"

"Well, some hundreds of times."

"Then how many are there?"

"How many? I don't know."

"Quite so! You have not observed And yet you have seen. That is just my point Now, I know that there are seventeen steps, because I have both seen and observed By the way, since you are interested in these little problems, and since you are good enough to chronicle one or two of my trifling experiences, you may be interested in this" He threw over a sheet of thick, pink-tinted notepaper which had been lying open upon the table. "It came by the last post," said he "Read it aloud"

The note was undated, and without either signature or address

"There will call upon you to-night, at a quarter to eight o'clock [it said], a gentleman who desires to consult you upon a matter of the very deepest moment Your recent services to one of the royal houses of Europe have shown that you are one who may safely be trusted with matters which are of an importance which can hardly be exaggerated This account of you we have from all quarters received Be in your chamber then at that hour, and do not take it amiss if your visitor wear a mask.

"This is indeed a mystery," I remarked "What do you imagine that it means?"

"I have no data yet It is a capital mistake to theorize before one has data. Insensibly one begins to twist facts to suit theories, instead of theories to suit facts But the note itself. What do you deduce from it?"

I carefully examined the writing, and the paper upon which it was written

"The man who wrote it was presumably well to do," I remarked, endeavouring to imitate my companion's processes.

"Such paper could not be bought under half a crown a packet. It is peculiarly strong and stiff."

"Peculiar—that is the very word," said Holmes. "It is not an English paper at all. Hold it up to the light."

I did so, and saw a large "E" with a small "g," a "P," and a large "G" with a small "t" woven in the texture of the paper.

"What do you make of that?" asked Holmes.

"The name of the maker, no doubt; or his monogram, rather."

"Not at all. The 'G' with a small 't' stands for 'Gesellschaft,' which is the German for 'Company.' It is a customary contraction like our 'Co.' 'P,' of course, stands for 'Papier.' Now for the 'Eg.' Let us glance at our Continental Gazetteer." He took down a heavy brown volume from his shelves. "Eglow, Eglonitz—here we are, Egria. It is in a German-speaking country—in Bohemia, not far from Carlsbad. 'Remarkable as being the scene of the death of Wallenstein, and for its numerous glass-factories and paper-mills.' Ha, ha, my boy, what do you make of that?" His eyes sparkled, and he sent up a great blue triumphant cloud from his cigarette.

"The paper was made in Bohemia," I said.

"Precisely. And the man who wrote the note is a German. Do you note the peculiar construction of the sentence—'This account of you we have from all quarters received.' A Frenchman or Russian could not have written that. It is the German who is so uncourteous to his verbs. It only remains, therefore, to discover what is wanted by this German who writes upon Bohemian paper and prefers wearing a mask to showing his face. And here he comes, if I am not mistaken, to resolve all our doubts."

As he spoke there was the sharp sound of horses' hoofs and grating wheels against the curb, followed by a sharp pull at the bell. Holmes whistled.

"A pair, by the sound," said he. "Yes," he continued, glancing out of the window. "A nice little brougham and a pair of beauties. A hundred and fifty guineas apiece. There's money in this case, Watson, if there is nothing else."

"I think that I had better go, Holmes."

"Not a bit, Doctor. Stay where you are. I am lost without my Boswell. And this promises to be interesting. It would be a pity to miss it."

"But your client——"

"Never mind him. I may want your help, and so may he. Here he comes. Sit down in that armchair, Doctor, and give us your best attention."

A slow and heavy step, which had been heard upon the stairs and in the passage, paused immediately outside the door. Then there was a loud and authoritative tap.

"Come in!" said Holmes.

A man entered who could hardly have been less than six feet six inches in height, with the chest and limbs of a Hercules. His dress was rich with a richness which would, in England, be

looked upon as akin to bad taste. Heavy bands of astrakhan were slashed across the sleeves and fronts of his double-breasted coat, while the deep blue cloak which was thrown over his shoulders was lined with flame-coloured silk and secured at the neck with a brooch which consisted of a single flaming beryl. Boots which extended halfway up his calves, and which were trimmed at the tops with rich brown fur, completed the impression of barbaric opulence which was suggested by his whole appearance. He carried a broad-brimmed hat in his hand, while he wore across the upper part of his face, extending down past the cheekbones, a black vizard mask, which he had apparently adjusted that very moment, for his hand was still raised to it as he entered. From the lower part of the face he appeared to be a man of strong character, with a thick, hanging lip, and a long, straight chin suggestive of resolution pushed to the length of obstinacy.

"You had my note?" he asked with a deep harsh voice and a strongly marked German accent. "I told you that I would call." He looked from one to the other of us, as if uncertain which to address.

"Pray take a seat," said Holmes. "This is my friend and colleague, Dr. Watson, who is occasionally good enough to help me in my cases. Whom have I the honour to address?"

"You may address me as the Count Von Kramm, a Bohemian nobleman. I understand that this gentleman, your friend, is a man of honour and discretion, whom I may trust with a matter of the most extreme importance. If not, I should much prefer to communicate with you alone."

I rose to go, but Holmes caught me by the wrist and pushed me back into my chair. "It is both, or none," said he. "You may say before this gentleman anything which you may say to me."

The Count shrugged his broad shoulders. "Then I must begin," said he, "by binding you both to absolute secrecy for two years; at the end of that time the matter will be of no importance. At present it is not too much to say that it is of such weight it may have an influence upon European history."

"I promise," said Holmes.

"And I."

"You will excuse this mask," continued our strange visitor. "The august person who employs me wishes his agent to be unknown to you, and I may confess at once that the title by which I have just called myself is not exactly my own."

"I was aware of it," said Holmes drily.

"The circumstances are of great delicacy, and every precaution has to be taken to quench what might grow to be an immense scandal and seriously compromise one of the reigning families of Europe. To speak plainly, the matter implicates the great House of Ormstein, hereditary kings of Bohemia."

"I was also aware of that," murmured Holmes, settling himself down in his armchair and closing his eyes.

Our visitor glanced with some apparent surprise at the languid, lounging figure of the man who had been no doubt depicted to him as the most incisive reasoner and most energetic agent in Europe. Holmes slowly reopened his eyes and looked impatiently at his gigantic client.

"If your Majesty would condescend to state your case," he remarked, "I should be better able to advise you."

The man sprang from his chair and paced up and down the room in uncontrollable agitation. Then, with a gesture of desperation, he tore the mask from his face and hurled it upon the ground. "You are right," he cried; "I am the King. Why should I attempt to conceal it?"

"Why, indeed?" murmured Holmes. "Your Majesty had not spoken before I was aware that I was addressing Wilhelm Gottsreich Sigismond von Ormstein, Grand Duke of Cassel-Felstein, and hereditary King of Bohemia."

"But you can understand," said our strange visitor, sitting down once more and passing his hand over his high white forehead, "you can understand that I am not accustomed to doing such business in my own person. Yet the matter was so delicate that I could not confide it to an agent without putting myself in his power. I have come incognito from Prague for the purpose of consulting you."

"Then, pray consult," said Holmes, shutting his eyes once more.

"The facts are briefly these: Some five years ago, during a lengthy visit to Warsaw, I made the acquaintance of the well-known adventuress, Irene Adler. The name is no doubt familiar to you."

"Kindly look her up in my index, Doctor," murmured Holmes without opening his eyes. For many years he had adopted a system of docketing all paragraphs concerning men and things, so that it was difficult to name a subject or a person on which he could not at once furnish information. In this case I found her biography sandwiched in between that of a Hebrew rabbi and that of a staff-commander who had written a monograph upon the deep-sea fishes.

"Let me see!" said Holmes. "Hum! Born in New Jersey in the year 1858. Contralto—hum! La Scala, hum! Prima donna Imperial Opera of Warsaw—yes! Retired from operatic stage—ha! Living in London—quite so! Your Majesty, as I understand, became entangled with this young person, wrote her some compromising letters, and is now desirous of getting those letters back."

"Precisely so. But how——"

"Was there a secret marriage?"

"None."

"No legal papers or certificates?"

"None."

"Then I fail to follow your Majesty. If this young person