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othes 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 eff 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 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 with a black mark of nitrate of silver upon his right forefinger.
                                 maker, no doubt; or his monogram, rather." "Not at all. The 'G' with the small 't' stands for 'Pesellschaft,' 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 too
                      "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. "I think that I had better go, Holmes whistled." "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 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 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 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 you are. I am lost without my Boswell. And this promises where you are. I am lost without my Boswell. And the beautiful him. I may want you are. I am lost without my Boswell. And the beautiful him is taken in the lost with a pit him is taken by the lost of the lost of the lost of the beautiful him. I may want you are. I am lost the beautiful him is taken by the lost of the lost of the beautiful him is taken by the lost of the lost
                                cloak which was thrown over his shoulders was lined with flame-coloured silk and secured at the neck with a brooch which extended halfway up his calves, and which were trimmed at the tops with rich brown fur, completed the
                     air. "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 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 ce by which I have just called myself is not exactly my own." "I was aware of it," said Holmes dryly. "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 E
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        ad. Half a guinea if you do it in twenty minutes!' "Awa y they went, and I was just wondering whether I
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      d into it. I only caught a glimpse of her at the mome nt, but she was a lovely woman, with a face that a
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        eign if you reach it in twenty minutes.' "This was quite t oo good to lose, Watson. I was just balancin
   hether I should run for it, or whether I should perch behind her landau when a
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           cab came through the street. The driver loo ked twic e at such a shabby fare, but I jumped in before
   could object. 'The Church of St. Monica,' said I, 'and half a sovereign if you
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              reach it in twenty minutes.' It was twenty -five min utes to twelve, and of course it was cle
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 here was not a soul there save the two who m I had followed and a surpliced clergyman, who se
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    in front of the altar. I lounged u p the sid e aisle like any other idler who has dropped into a churton came running as hard as he could towards me. "Thank God," he cried. 'You'll do. Come!
Come!' '''What then?' I asked. '''Come, man, come, only three minutes, or it won't be legal
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         "I was half-dragged up to the altar, and before I knew where I was I found myself mumbling
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        e side and the lady on the other, while the clergyman beamed on me in front. It was the most
 preposterous position in which I ever found myself in my life, and it was the thought of it th
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       at started me laughing just now. It seems that there had been some informality about their lice
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                nd that my lucky appearance sa ved the b ridegroom from having to sally out into the streets in sea
 ise, that the clergyman absolutely refused to marry them without a witness of some sort, a
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         in in memory of the occasion." "Thi sis a ver y unexpected turn of affairs," said I; "and what then?" "
 Vell, I found my plans very seriously menaced. It looked as if the pair might take an i
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        mmediate departure, and so necessit ate very p rompt and energetic measures on my part. At the churc
h door, however, they separated, he driving back to the Temple, and she to her o
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        wn house. 'I shall drive out in the park   at fivé as u sual,' she said as she left him. I heard no more. They
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      ts." "Which are?" "Some cold beef and a glass of beer," he answered, ringing the bell. "I have been to e way, Doctor, I shall want your co-opera tion." "I sha II be delighted." "You don't mind breaking the la cause." "Oh, the cause is excellent!" "Then I am your man." "I was sure that I might rely on you." "Bu
drove away in different directions, and I went off to make my own arrangemen
o busy to think of food, and I am likely to be busier still this evening. By th
 v?" "Not in the least." "Nor running a chance of arrest?" "Not in a good
what is it you wish?" "When Mrs. Turner has brought in the tray I w
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    ill make it clear to you. Now," he said as he turne d hungri ly on the simple fare that our landlady had pr
nearly five now. In two hours we must be on the scene of action. Miss Irene, or Madame, rather, re
ovided, "I must discuss it while I eat, for I have not much time. It is
turns from her drive at seven. We must be at Briony Lodge to meet
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         'And what then?" "You must leave that to me. I h ave already arranged what is to occur. The
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        hat may. You understand?" "I am to be neut ral?" "To do nothing whatever. There will probab
 e is only one point on which I must insist. You must not interfere,
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           onveyed into the house. Four or five minu tes aft erwards the sitting-room window will open o watch me, for I will be visible to you." "Yes ... "And when I raise my hand--so--you will raise the cry of fire. You quite follo w me?" "Entirely." "It is nothing very formidable,"
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      You are t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     inary plumber's smoke-rocket, fi tted w ith a cap at either end to make it self-lighting
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       ill be taken up by quite a num ber of people. You may then walk to the end of the str
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               your cry of fire, it w
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        yself clear?" "I am to remain neutr al, to get near the window, to watch you, and at to wait you at the corner of the street." "Precisely." "Then you may entirely rely o
eet, and I will rejoin you in ten minutes. I hop
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                the cry of fire, and t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            pare for the new role I have to play." He disappeared into his bedroom and reful
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              Nonconformist clergym an. H is broad black hat, his baggy trousers, his white is sity were such as Mr. J ohn Hare alone could have equalled. It was not merely
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                past six when we left Bak er Street, and it still wanted ten minutes to the hour
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 g lighted as we paced up and down in front of Briony Lodge, waiting for the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    description, but the I o cality appeared to be less private than I expected. On
inder with his wheel, two guardsmen who were flirtin
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  g with a nurse-girl, and several well-dressed young m
emarked Holmes, as we paced to and fro in front of the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    odfrey Norton, as our client is to its coming to the eye
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      ess. Now the question is, Where are we to find
are that she would be as averse to its being seen by Mi
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             hat she carries it about with her. It is cabinet size. Too larg
s that the King is capable of having her waylaid and searc
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           hed. Two attempts of the sort have already been made. We m
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     it, then, that she does not carry it about with he
   ' "Where, then?" "Her banker or her lawyer. There is that d
n secreting. Why should she hand it over to anyone else? Sh
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                hat indirect or political influence might be brought
to bear upon a business man. Besides, remember that she had
e." "But it has twice been burgled." "Pshaw! They did not know
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 resolved to use it within a few days. It must be where she c
how to look." "But how will you look?" "I will not look." "V
e round the curve of the avenue. It was a smart little landau which r
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        of the loafing men at the corner dashed forward to ope
n the door in the hope of earning a copper, but was elbowed away by
 the two guardsmen, who took sides with one of the loungers, and by
  rotect the lady; but just as he reached her he gave a cry and dropped to the
nd the loungers in the other, while a number of better-dressed people, who h
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      her superb figure outlined against the lights of the hall, looking back into the street. "Is the poor gentleman much h houted another. "But he'll be gone before you can get him to hospital." "He's a brave fellow," said a woman. "They ng, and a rough one, too. Ah, he's breathing now." "He can't lie in the street. May we bring him in, marm?" "Surely. and solemnly he was borne into Briony Lodge and laid out in the principal room, while I still observed the proceed
 er, as I will still call her, had hurried up the steps; but she stood at the top with
urt?" she asked. "He is dead," cried several voices. "No, no, there's life in him!" s
would have had the lady's purse and watch if it hadn't been for him. They were a ga
Bring him into the sitting-room. There is a comfortable sofa. This way, please!'' Slowly
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        awn, so that I could see Holmes as he lay upon the couch. I do not know whether he was seized with compunction
at that moment for the part he was playing, but I know that I never felt more heartily asham
dliness with which she waited upon the injured man. And yet it would be the blackest treacher
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       ed of myself in my life than when I saw the beautiful creature against whom I was conspiring, or the grace and kir
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         y to Holmes to draw back now from the part which he had intrusted to me. I hardened my heart, and took the smo
ke-rocket from under my ulster. After all, I thought, we are not injuring her. We are but preventing
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             ier from injuring another. Holmes had sat up upon the couch, and I saw him motion like a man who is in need o
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        and at the signal I tossed my rocket into the room with a cry of "Fire!" The word was no sooner out of my mouth in a general shriek of "Fire!" Thick clouds of smoke curled through the room and out at the open window. I caught
air. A maid rushed across and threw open the window. At the same instant I saw him raise his hand
a glimpse of rushing figures, and a moment later the voice of Holmes from within assuring them that it was
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         a false alarm. Slipping through the shouting crowd I made my way to the corner of the street, and in ten minutes w
as rejoiced to find my friend's arm in mine, and to get away from the scene of uproar. He walked swiftly and in s
oad. "You did it very nicely, Doctor," he remarked. "Nothing could have been better. It is all right." "You have the ph
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         ilence for some few minutes until we had turned down one of the quiet streets which lead towards the Edgeware I
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    otograph?" "I know where it is." "And how did you find out?" "She showed me, as I told you she would." "I am still that everyone in the street was an accomplice. They were all engaged for the evening." "I guessed as much." "Then o my face, and became a piteous spectacle. It is an old trick." "That also I could fathom." "Then they carried me in. S
in the dark." "I do not wish to make a mystery," said he, laughing. "The matter was perfectly simple. You, of course, saw
 when the row broke out, I had a little moist red paint in the palm of my hand. I rushed forward, fell down, clapped my hand
he was bound to have me in. What else could she do? And into her sitting-room, which was the very room which I suspected. It la
were compelled to open the window, and you had your chance." "How did that help you?" "It was all-important. When a woman thinks t
impulse, and I have more than once taken advantage of it. In the case of the Darlington substitution scandal it was of use to me, and also in th
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   y between that and her bedroom, and I was determined to see which. They laid me on a couch, I motioned for air, they
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             hat her house is on fire, her instinct is at once to rush to the thing which she values most. It is a perfectly overpowering Arnsworth Castle business. A married woman grabs at her baby; an unmarried one reaches for her jewel-box. Now it was
sclear to me that our ledy of to-day had nothing in the house more precious to her than what we are in quest of. She would rush to secure it. The alar my fire was admirably done. The smoke and shouling were enough to sh, the envise of steel. She would rush to see, and, making my excuses, escaped from the house. It estitated whether to attempt to secure the photograph is a roce, and, making my excuses, escaped from the house. It estitated whether to attempt to secure the photograph at once; but the coachman had come in, and as he was watching me narrow. It seemed safer to wait. A little over-in-pitated in the more place of the properties of the properti
 clear to me that our lady of to-day had nothing in the house more precious to her than what we are in quest of. She would rush to secure it. The alar
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      m of fire was admirably done. The smoke and shouting were enough to shake nerves of steel. She responded beautifully. The
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         n I cried out that it was a false alarm, she replaced it, glanced at the rocket, rushed from the room, and I have not seen her since. I ros
and to begin a narrative which promises to be one of the most singular which I have listened to for some time. You have heard me remark that the strangest and most unique things are very often connected not with the larger but with the smaller crimes, and occasionally, indeed, where there is room for do
ubt whether any positive crime has been committed. As far as I have heard it is impossible for me to say whether the present case is an instance of events is certainly among the most singular that I have ever listened to. Perhaps, Mr. Wilson, you would have the great kindness
to recommence your narrative. I ask you not merely because my friend Dr. Watson has not heard the opening part but also because the peculiar nature of the story makes me anxious to have every possible detail from your lips. As a rule, when I have heard some slight indication of the course of events, I a
m able to guide myself by the thousands of other similar cases which occur to my memory. In the present instance I am forced to admit that the facts are, to the best of my belief, unique." The portly client puffed out his chest with an appearance of some little pride and pulled a dirty and wrinkled newspape
from the inside pocket of his greatcoat. As he glanced down the advertisement column, with his head thrust forward and the paper flattened out upon his knee, I took a good look at the man and endeavoured, after the fashion of my companion, to read the indications which might be presented by his dress
or appearance. I did not gain very much, however, by my inspection. Our visitor bore every mark of being an average commonplace British tradesman, obese, pompous, and slow. He wore rather baggy grey shepherd's check trousers, a not over-clean black frock-coat, unbuttoned in the front, and a drab wa istcoat with a heavy brassy Albert chain, and a square pierced bit of metal dangling down as an ornament. A frayed top-hat and a faded brown overcoat with a wrinkled velvet collar lay upon a chair beside him. Altogether, look as I would, there was nothing remarkable about the man save his blazing red hea
d, and the expression of extreme chagrin and discontent upon his features. Sherlock Holmes' quick eye took in my occupation, and he shook his head with a smile as he noticed my questioning glances. "Beyond the obvious facts that he has at some time done manual labour, that he takes snuff, that he is a
Freemason, that he has been in China, and that he has done a considerable amount of writing lately, I can deduce nothing else." Mr. Jabez Wilson started up in his chair, with his forefinger upon the paper, but his eyes upon my companion. "How, in the name of good-fortune, did you know all that, Mr. Holm es?" he asked. "How did you know, for example, that I did manual labour. It's as true as gospel, for I began as a ship's carpenter." "Your hands, my dear sir. Your right hand is quite a size larger than your left. You have worked with it, and the muscles are more developed." "Well, the snuff, then, and the Free
masonry?" "I won't insult your intelligence by telling you how I read that, especially as, rather against the strict rules of your order, you use an arc-and-compass breastpin." "Ah, of course, I forgot that. But the writing?" "What else can be indicated by that right cuff so very shiny for five inches, and the left one with the smooth patch near the elbow where you rest it upon the desk?" "Well, but China?" "The fish that you have tattooed immediately above your right wrist could only have been done in China. I have made a small study of tattoo marks and have even contributed to the literature of the subject. That tr
ick of staining the fishes' scales of a delicate pink is guite peculiar to China. When, in addition, I see a Chinese coin hanging from your watch-chain, the matter becomes even more simple." Mr. Jabez Wilson laughed heavily. "Well, I never!" said he. "I thought at first that you had done something clever, but
see that there was nothing in it, after all." "I begin to think, Watson," said Holmes, "that I make a mistake in explaining. Omne ignotum pro magnifico,' you know, and my poor little reputation, such as it is, will suffer shipwreck if I am so candid. Can you not find the advertisement, Mr. Wilson?" "Yes, I have
got it now," he answered with his thick red finger planted halfway down the column. "Here it is. This is what began it all. You just read it for yourself, sir." I took the paper from him and read as follows: "TO THE RED-HEADED LEAGUE: On account of the bequest of the late Ezekian Hopkins, of Lebanon, Per
on Sylvania, U. S. A., there is now another vacancy open which entitles a member of the League to a salary of 4 pounds a week for purely nominal services. All red-headed men who are sound in body and mind and above the age of twenty-one years, are eligible. Apply in person on Monday, at eleven o'clock, on Duncan Ross, at the offices of the League, 7 Pope's Court, Fleet Street." "What on earth does this mean?" I ejaculated after I had twice read over the extraordinary announcement. Holmes chuckled and wriggled in his chair, as was his habit when in high spirits. "It is a little off the beaten track, isn't it?" sa
d he. "And now, Mr. Wilson, off you go at scratch and tell us all about yourself, your household, and the effect which this advertisement had upon your fortunes. You will first make a note, Doctor, of the paper and the date." "It is The Morning Chronicle of April 27, 1890. Just two months ago." "Very good. No
w, Mr. Wilson?" "Well, it is just as I have been telling you, Mr. Sherlock Holmes," said Jabez Wilson, mopping his forehead; "I have a small pawnbroker's business at Coburg Square, near the City. It's not a very large affair, and of late years it has not done more than just give me a living. I used to be able to keep two assistants, but now I only keep one; and I would have a job to pay him but that he is willing to come for half wages so as to learn the business." "What is the name of this obliging youth?" asked Sherlock Holmes. "His name is Vincent Spaulding, and he's not such a youth, either. It's hard to say his age. I should not wish a smarter assistant, Mr. Holmes; and I know very well that he could better himself and earn twice what I am able to give him. But, after all, if he is satisfied, why should I put ideas in his head?" "Why, indeed? You seem most fortunate in having an employé who comes under the full man
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