

SHERLOCK HOLMES

the

folk
tale

mysteries

VOLUME
TWO

GAYLE LANGE PUHL



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SHERLOCK HOLMES
AND THE
FOLK TALE MYSTERIES
VOLUME 2

THE DYREBURY DANGER
AND OTHER STORIES

GAYLE LANGE PUHL

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FOR
ANDREW,
AINEA,
ANICIA,
AND
BRENNEN

THE CASE OF THE DYREBURY DANGER

The cases Mr. Sherlock Holmes accepted throughout his long career as a consulting detective came to his attention in various ways. Sometimes the authorities, like Scotland Yard officials or his brother Mycroft, who was once described to me as being "*the British Government*", sent for him to request his services. Public servants, not excluding Cabinet Ministers or Members of Parliament, have graced our simple rooms urging Holmes to help them out of their difficulties, either public or private. Humbler clients have written or arrived to our sitting room at 221B Baker Street in person to request his aid. Occasionally he found something to pique his interest in the paragraphs of the numerous daily newspapers he read, many of them from outside London.

The case I remember as one of our most unusual adventures came to us in a new fashion, shortly after Holmes had finally decided to have a telephone installed.

In my surgery a few streets away I had grown used to the benefits of having a telephone and had urged my friend for months to get one for his exclusive use. Typically he had taken some time to investigate the pros and cons of such a move. I think he thought that such an invention situated in his own rooms might disturb the mental processes he had hoped to such fine points while sunk in deep deliberation of clues and observations gathered during his intricate cases. An insistent ringing might also draw him from his chemical experiments at a critical moment.

Finally modernity won out and Sherlock Holmes soon found that the instrument greatly simplified his work. Now experts could be consulted and lines of information opened immediately to him, instead of his enduring the frustrating time spent waiting for answers to the many wires and notes he was accustomed to send

out daily in the course of his profession. Mrs. Hudson was saved the trotting up and down the seventeen steps of our staircase to deliver questions and information that arrived via her instrument installed in the lower hall. Holmes himself no longer needed to bestir himself to walk down the stairs to talk into the receiver several times a day. After a week I could see that he revelled in the ease of sitting in his armchair and reaching out a hand to pluck the gadget from a nearby table in order to place his calls.

He also took advantage of the simple act of taking the receiver off the hook to silent the telephone when he engaged in such important work he felt it must not be disturbed by any outside concerns.

This had been a half-day for me at the surgery and I returned to Baker Street at lunch time. I found my friend sprawled in on the sofa, a newspaper spread across his chest, wearing his dressing gown.

He lifted languid eyes to me and acknowledged my presence with a wave of his hand. For a moment I wondered, but a quick glance at his eyes reassured me that the pledge made to me long before still held. Sherlock Holmes was merely resting.

“You solved that case that worried you last night,” I remarked.

“You progress, Watson. Yes, I called up the Yard this morning and gave them the last bit of information needed to put Lady Spratt away for the murder of her husband. They thought it was a simple case of voluntary starvation, but the marks on the pantry door told the true tale. But I didn’t expect to see you here in the middle of the day.”

“I had a half-day today and thought you might like to go out for some lunch.”

“I am feeling a little peaked. The last meal I remember was dinner at that vile little café by the docks two days ago.”

“Yes, and you haven’t had a bite since. Come, get dressed and we’ll try that new restaurant you mentioned on Gloucester Street. You said their chef is remarkable.”

“Watson, you scintillate today!” He jumped up off the sofa and went to his bedroom. A few moments later he emerged, the dressing gown gone. In its stead he wore a smart City suit. He was knotting the tie around his collar when the telephone rang.

“Oh, bother the thing and just when I’m hungry! Hello? Hello? Yes, this is Mr. Sherlock Holmes. Who’s this? Lord Owen Sessamy of Dyrebury? What, in Yorkshire? Ah. You want to come here and consult me on a case? What kind of case? Oh, you would rather not say over the ‘phone. Very well. Are you in London? I am just going out but you may meet me at the “Gai Souterrain” in Gloucester Street in twenty minutes. You know the place? Excellent. Goodbye.

“Well, this should be a most fruitful lunch, Watson. A meal to sustain the outer man and a murder to occupy the inner man.”

“How do you know it is a case of murder?”

“When a busy and important man like Lord Sessamy, who owns several thousand acres of land in the West Riding of Yorkshire peopled with tenant farmers and who controls two coal mines and a limestone quarry currently producing building materials for the Sheffield Cathedral repairs project travels all the way to London to consult with me, you may feel assured that is not because of some trifling robbery or trespass on his estate better handled by the local constabulary. No, it is something grave. That is clearly stated by his reluctance to even mention it over an open telephone line. Ah, Watson, that’s a lot of information for you to digest on an empty stomach. The place is close so I think we shall walk. I think for once we both can say that we approach this meal with hearty appetites.”

Yet I had one more question. “How do you know so much about Lord Sessamy, Holmes?”

“You have forgotten my subscription to the *Leeds Mercury*, Watson, not to mention those commendable publications the *Doncaster Voice* and the *Sheffield Star*. As a consulting detective it behoves me to keep up with the doings of my old London “friends” when they decide to rusticate in the country. A change of air and scenery may motivate a man to try new variations on certain old

tricks and I like to keep up with the latest modes of crime wherever they appear. There has been much in the newspapers lately about Lord Sessamy's involvement in the Cathedral rebuilding, and there was a short paragraph earlier this week about the accidental death of his castle librarian."

The "Gai Souterrain" was set beneath pavement level under another eating establishment and entered by a set of well-trod stone stairs. The space within was lit with flickering gaslights along the drab walls, although it was the middle of the day. A French maître d', solemn in white tie and tails, ushered us to a table and slapped down the hand-written menus on the white tablecloth before us. He motioned for another waiter to attend to our wants and returned to his station by the front entrance.

There were no windows. Despite the flaring flambeaux the restaurant was only half-lit. There were a dozen tables, each with its candle, and the subterranean motif was carried out with a flagstone floor and fitted stone walls. Overhead the ceiling seemed to hang heavily, as if it hadn't decided if it would remain there, or crash down on our heads. The place was filled and the clientele murmured quietly to each other as a trio played softly in a corner.

We had barely picked up our menus when Owen Sessamy, Baron of Dyrebury, was shown to our table. He was a man with broad shoulders and a trim waist, just over medium height. He was about thirty years of age with fair hair smoothed back over a high brow. His dark eyes looked from one to the other of us as he took his seat. His nose was aristocratic, his mouth thin-lipped but backed by a good set of white teeth, and the cleft in his chin gave him a somewhat rakish appearance. He was clad in a dark suit of tweed and wore a striped school tie. His hands gripped the menu with strong fingers and he moved with the masculine grace of a lion. I noticed several women at other tables watching him as he joined us.

We ordered lunch. As the waiter left Sherlock Holmes shook out his serviette and invited Lord Sessamy to explain his problem.

“I am the twenty-first Baron of Dyrebury and my home is Cliffdale Castle in the Yorkshire Dales. We have lived there since Edward III set up the office to fight for and defend the northern Border. My widowed mother and my two younger sisters live there with me. The nearby village of Dyrebury hosts a holy spring, dedicated to St. Galena. There was in olden times a steady stream of pilgrims travelling north to visit it and bathe in its waters, for it was as renowned as a healing spring and many miracles were wrought there. Indeed, there is a little cave hard by the water that is filled with the small stones tradition calls for the pilgrims to leave at the site. The spring still draws visitors to this day.”

“Are there many caves in the Yorkshire Dales?” I asked, as Holmes sat fidgeting with a fork.

“Yes, a great many. The base is limestone, you see, with other mineral veins shooting through at intervals. On the estate I have a large quarry for the stone, and also a couple of smaller coal mines. The tenant farmers do well with sheep and hay and some grain, but mostly sheep, because the land is cut up into many little valleys set among the rolling hills and other higher elevations. There are many streams that drain away into the Ouse and the Humber. I may be biased, but I think there can be no prettier sight than the Dales in early morning, when the rising sun picks out the huddled flocks safe within the long, dry stone walls set up by sturdy peasants centuries ago.”

“You are a poet, sir,” I said.

“There is a literary strain that runs through the family, Dr. Watson, and it plays a part in this problem.”

At this moment the waiter appeared with our first course and we took a few minutes to appreciate the chef’s efforts.

“Please state the nature of your problem, Lord Sessamy. Leave nothing out. Even the most insignificant detail may prove important to the case.” said Holmes. Lord Sessamy continued as the waiter served us throughout the meal.

“Yes, Mr. Holmes. I fear it is a long tale, but I will try to condense it down to the major points. It naturally resolves itself into three

parts. The first part starts back in the days of King James II, when the government was corrupt and crime was rife. For a period of nearly two years a band of highwaymen roamed the Yorkshire Dales. There were rumours that over time there were as many as forty men on horseback involved. They covered a large area in their depredations, but their robberies and assaults centred mainly on the pious travellers that came to Dyrebury to take the healing waters, so they were referred to as the Dyrebury Danger. Reports said that their leader, called the Captain, a dashing figure swathed in a blood-red cloak and wearing a wide-brimmed hat festooned with sweeping feathers, rode a great black stallion. He seemed invincible. Officers of the King's Law, along with many local men, organized mounted parties and patrols that ranged over the Dales in attempts to capture or kill him. Occasionally they would find members of his band and summary justice would be done, but the Captain would always escape. It was said that local people helped to conceal him, for he was a romantic figure and even admired by some. Some helped him hoping to discover where he had hidden his cache of ill-gotten gains, a treasure of gold, silver and precious gems taken from the wealthy victims. Men wanted to learn his secrets and as for women...well, he was reputed to have long light hair, a handsome face, dark eyes that could mesmerize a girl at a glance, and a way with a woman unequalled in the district.

"It was his penchant for the ladies that finally did him in. Officials discovered that the Captain regularly visited an innkeeper's daughter, named Bess Boniface, in her room at her father's pub, the "Lamb and Lion". They threw a guard around the building and waited for him to appear. Many a cold and weary night they watched and waited until they wondered if their information was true.

"He must have been watching them, for the first cloudy, moonless night after they had called off the surveillance he was sighted in the courtyard, embracing the girl before he mounted his steed. A cry went up and in a moment six men were running for their mounts. He laughed at them before spurring his black horse down the road

that led into the countryside. As they scrambled to follow him, one constable, too fat to join in the hasty pursuit, grabbed Bess and forced open her clenched hand. He found four sovereigns and a gold ring that fitted the description of one stolen from a lady waylaid on the road to Dyrebury only three days before. She was dragged to a storeroom and locked inside, while more help was summoned from the town.

“Meanwhile the ruffian led his pursuers a merry chase. Sparks flashed from his horse’s steel shoes as he thundered down the frozen highway. He galloped the animal at such a pace that the plumed hat flew from his head. . The Captain used all his tricks; suddenly turning off onto soft ground to disguise the sounds of his horse’s footfalls, standing hidden by shadows as the posse blundered past, and finally, when it seemed he was to be surrounded at last, dashing over a bridge and galloping into a thick wood. It appeared that he had made his escape, but a couple of the officials drew pistols and fired just before the thick trees hid the fugitive. They both swore they hit him.

“The men were not far from Cliffdale Castle, my family’s seat, and decided to ride there in order to inform the Baron that the Dyrebury Danger was abroad on his estate. As they clattered up the hill to the front entrance of the Castle, they were astonished to find a fine black horse standing, floundered, by the icy steps. At its feet lay the huddled body of a man, tangled in a blood-red cloak, and bleeding to death from two pistol shots. The Baron was called out and he was horrified to find, when the body was turned over and a horn lantern held up, his youngest son, Jarvis Sessamy, breathing his last under the cold, starless sky.

“The evidence was clear. Jarvis Sessamy, third son of Lord Clarence Sessamy, had led the Dyrebury Danger. He was by all accounts a reckless lad, who was destined for the military. But he resented all authority and resisted his father’s half-hearted attempts to get him to enlist, for he was his mother’s favourite. She was French and very passionate, by all accounts, and her husband could deny her nothing. She died soon after Jarvis. Bess Boniface

pleaded her belly before the Justice of the Peace and was allowed to remain locked in her bedroom at the "Lamb and Lion" until she was delivered of the child. The baby, a girl, was born five months later, but Bess died in childbirth and the infant was handed over to the innkeeper's wife to raise.

"The rest of the gang were either captured or driven from the district, but all suspects questioned claimed that their shares were divided up and given to them immediately. Only Jarvis Sessamy knew the location of the cave that held his lion's share of the treasure they had stolen. Many men went out, armed with shovels and picks, to search the caves and caverns of the Yorkshire Dales in a vain attempt to discover the treasure of the Dyrebury Danger. Not a trace of it was ever found."

The waiter came and cleared away the last course. Brandy was poured and Owen Sessamy and I accepted cigars. Sherlock Holmes, his thin fingers now steeped before him, waited for the Baron to continue.

"The second part of the story occurred about fifty years later. The scandal had receded into legend. Dunley Sessamy, the Baron's oldest son, had inherited the title and estate decades before. His surviving brother, Creighton, had gone into the clergy and raised a family on the estate, having been given the living of the Dyrebury parish as a young man by their father.

"Creighton had a granddaughter, fancifully named Berengaria, whom the family called Berry. By all accounts she was a bright girl, only sixteen, but a bit bookish. She had heard the story of the Dyrebury Danger and took it upon herself to research the tale with the intention of writing it all down as an adventure to read to the younger children in the family as a night-time story.

"No one saw any harm in that. In truth the people in the area had come to consider Jarvis as a bit of a rogue to be proud of. He had never seriously injured anyone and the local population held him to be a sort of Robin Hood, although there was not much evidence that he distributed more than a few coins among the poor. In any case, much time had passed and memories had softened. Berry

interviewed the oldest remaining residents; of which there were only a few. She visited the various places the Captain and the Danger had been known to be seen, the better to describe them. The only people that would not talk to her about the incident were the Bonifaces of the "Lamb and Lion". Yes, the same family still owned and ran the public house. Bess's daughter had lived and it was her family who refused to talk to Berry. The child was a sensible girl and did not press the issue.

"Berengaria carefully wrote out a manuscript of over fifty pages. As a Christmas surprise she presented the entire thing to her grandfather. He was so impressed with the manuscript that he caused it to be set into typeface and had one copy printed. The copy and the original script were bound between covers, making two books in all. The typeset copy was given to the current Baron for the Castle's library, and the handwritten manuscript was retained by the old vicar, with instructions that Berengaria should inherit it upon his death.

"Unfortunately, young Berry didn't live to see her twentieth birthday, and when the household was broken up after the old man died, his handwritten copy of the story was lost. There did remain the copy in the Castle's library and as the years and decades went by it became a favourite of the younger members of the family. As a child I thrilled to the account of my wicked Uncle Jarvis of ancient memory when my nanny consented to read the tale to my sisters and me in the nursery when we had, in her opinion, been especially well-behaved that day.

"Now we come the third and most recent part of the story. My father was no bibliophile, but he did care about the things left in his care from earlier generations of Sessamys. About twenty years ago he decided that the Cliffdale Castle library needed a complete overhaul. The collection was vast and far-ranging, having been added to by generations of the family. Many old volumes were falling victim to neglect and even crumbling away as they sat on the shelves. A complete inventory hadn't been done in decades and in short, the job was well overdue.

“He hired a man, Garrett Aydin, a scholar of some repute, who specialized in Highland myths. He had travelled around for years as a tutor to this family and that. He was nearly forty and grateful for the offer of such steady and interesting work. He proved to be a fine librarian, and the good fellow devoted himself to the Herculean task.

“I knew Mr. Aydin well. He had rooms in the Castle, never married, and spent his working hours organizing the innumerable volumes in the large library. It is a tall, broad room, with a balcony circling the main floor half-way up, lined with books. Below the balcony multiple shelves girdled the wide space with a moveable ladder reaching up from the parquet floor. It holds tens of thousands of volumes. Many an hour I spent as a youth at the huge main table, the light from the stained glass windows that bore our family coats of arms falling on a book or atlas whose contents took me far away from Yorkshire to exotic lands where monkeys chattered from palm trees or pirates glared at their helpless victims as with naked blades clenched between their teeth they climbed the sides of treasure ships bound for Spain from the gold mines of South America.

“Mr. Aydin was a fixture of the Castle, a kind, knowledgeable man who not only cared for and preserved the books under his charge, but read them as well. I was educated by tutors, but whenever I had a question they could not answer, Mr. Aydin helped me find the solution. He grew grey in the service of the Sessamys, Mr. Holmes, and he did not deserve the fate that befell him.

“One early morning, a week ago, one of the housemaids found Mr. Aydin lying on the floor of the library at the foot of the ladder. He had been dead several hours. The back of his head was crushed by the edge of a display case behind him that held a collection of ancient knives and daggers. A few books and papers were scattered around his body. The consensus was that he had fallen from the ladder with his arms full of materials. He was unable to save himself, hit his head on the case and died. No one had seen him since dinner the evening before and the library had not been used

by the family that night. The police closed the case, the inquest declared it to be "death by misadventure" and poor Mr. Aydin was buried yesterday in the Dyrebury churchyard near the Sessamys he had served so faithfully."

"But you have doubts about Mr. Aydin's death," said Sherlock Holmes shrewdly.

"Yes, I have," replied Lord Sessamy. "The man was devoted to his job, but I, who knew him from when I was a child, never knew him to start work before breakfast. He had a regular schedule to which he adhered. He was a man of method, as behoves a good librarian, and had worked out a routine from which he seldom digressed.

"Garrett Aydin rose each morning at seven, had breakfast at eight and was at his desk before nine. He worked until one, had lunch and then took a walk down to the village or over the fields of the estate. He returned after an hour, resumed his duties and worked until five-thirty. He usually ate dinner with the family. Sometimes of an evening he would play chess, fill in at whist or bridge as needed or discourse on current affairs when asked. During holidays he was always included in the festivities. During Christmas we quite depended on him to get up little pantomimes and plays for the amusement of our guests."

"What about his family?" asked Holmes.

"His parents had died before he came to Cliffdale Castle. He had a sister and a younger brother in Chester. He used to go visit them once a year. His sister was a governess and caught typhoid from one of her charges ten years ago. She died. His brother immigrated to Australia after that. Mr. Aydin then started taking walking tours through Scotland during his vacations."

"Is there another reason you think his death was suspicious?"

"I went into the library after his body was removed and the police were finished with the room. I picked up the books and papers from the floor. To my surprise the papers were just blank note sheets from the desk. The books were all from one lower shelf. There was no need to carry them up the ladder. And strangely,

when everything was tidied up, the only thing found missing from the library was the old copy of Berengaria's story."

"Does the library contain many valuable books?"

"Yes, indeed. There are volumes dating back to medieval times, first editions of many famous authors and even an illustrated Bible from an ancient Irish monastery. Berry's book was old and rare, but would hold little interest to anyone outside the family."

Around us the lunch crowd had thinned. A waiter hovered in the background. It was time to leave. Sherlock Holmes allowed Lord Sessamy to pay the check and then led us up to the street level above.

"What is to happen to Mr. Aydin's things?" he asked.

"His personal items are to be packed up and sent to his brother in Australia. I wanted to wait until after I consulted you to have his things disturbed. I wish you to come up to Cliffdale Castle and look into this for me. The Dowager Baroness has gone to visit family in Wales and my sisters are currently abroad. There is plenty of room, I assure you, for both you and Dr. Watson."

"Very good. Watson, do you fancy a little trip to the Yorkshire Dales? Can you leave your practice for a few days?"

"I will make arrangements with Jackson this afternoon."

"Excellent. Lord Sessamy, look for us tomorrow. What is the nearest station?"

"Cragville, about ten miles from Dyrebury. I will send a carriage to meet you. I am leaving from King's Cross this afternoon."

Holmes and I parted on the pavement before "Gai Souterrain". I returned to the surgery where I made arrangements to have my patients covered by another doctor while I was out of town.

The trip from King's Cross to Cragville the next morning was uneventful. I found Holmes on the platform holding the tickets. We secured a compartment and I tossed in my valise. Sherlock Holmes asked me if I had packed my revolver, which I had, then handed in his own bag and swung aboard just as the train began to move. We passed the time reading the papers Holmes brought along and when they were exhausted we talked about the history

of the Border region. Holmes discoursed learnedly about Hadrian's Wall and the soldiers who manned the fortifications for centuries until the Roman Empire withdrew from Britain in 410 A.D.

A dog-cart was waiting for us at Cragville and we spun through the soft fall air faintly warmed by sunshine flooding down over rolling hills that led towards Dyrebury. The low mountains that the road wound through were graced by fall-tinged trees, shrubs and dry stone walls enclosing faded fields. Our cart wheels rolled through drifts of fallen leaves. From our seat in the cart we could see some of the limestone caves Lord Sessamy had mentioned, dark holes dotting worn hillsides. Lyell, the driver, a horsy old man who handled the reins with a knowing hand, told us that the route we were taking was the very road which bore the traffic of pilgrims to St. Galena's holy spring back in the days of the Dyrebury Danger.

"Aye, the tales my old granddad used to tell me about the stories his old granddad told him of the rich people who used to come to drink the water and wash their limbs in the pool of St. Galena. From all over the kingdom and even over the sea! Fine ladies and splendid gentlemen, all wearing silk and velvet, travelling with their servants in carriages fit for the King himself. But the rich people, for all their money, suffered just as much as the poor pilgrims that walked beside them, all hoping for a cure from St. Galena. Oh, some people went away cured and left a little stone in the cave next to the holy spring in gratitude. But many were never helped and went back to their homes as sick as when they arrived. There was many a pilgrim who started too late and never reached the spring at all, dying on the way. Look, there is an old monument over there to some ailing traveller who died just a few miles short of his hope of relief from his terrible problem."

He pointed with his whip to a pitiful mound of rocks surrounded by weeds at the side of the roadway. We stopped the cart and walked over to the shrine. It had obviously been there for a very long time and the years and the weather had partially obliterated an inscription on the uppermost stone. I used my pocketknife to scrape away the moss and lichen so that the words could be read.

To the best of my ability I made out the words. “Michel Rattaile, born like his brothers blind. He prayed for a cure, but he was taken before he could wash in the waters. God willing that the miracle be manifested to his brothers Jacques and Leon. In the year of our Lord 1533.”

We returned to the cart and continued on to Cliffdale Castle. After a couple of miles Holmes brought up the subject of Jarvis Sessamy.

“Oh, you’ve heard of the Captain! Yes, you can order a pint from any public house within thirty miles and hear legends of him and the Dyrebury Danger. Back in the early days of King James II the government was busy with its own affairs with little time to spend worrying about the people of the Dales. When the Captain and the Dyrebury Danger came galloping down over the hills and struck at the poor sick people travelling to St. Galena’s well there were naught to protect them but a few servants and the odd discharged soldier hoping to heal his own wounds in the water.

“Once, it’s said, a fat merchant hid his gold and jewels in a cavity under his carriage seat. But the Captain knew about it and had the man thrown out on his nose into the dust of the road. His carriage was chopped to pieces before his eyes. The Captain loaded up the booty and tossed the man a single silver penny before he left, saying ‘It’s obvious to me that you don’t need to eat dinner tonight. Here’s a penny to give to the honest labourer who clears this wreckage out of the road. He can buy a bird to roast on the remnants of your fine carriage. Now walk, you lazy glutton, and a better sacrifice you will never make to St. Galena in your life!’

“The merchant walked to Dyrebury but it is not known if he got his healing. What is sure is that he promised a reward of twenty pounds to the man who could bring him the Captain’s head. But when the time came the Baron refused to give it over and the twenty pounds were never paid.”

The old man was a fount of similar stories and Sherlock Holmes listened to them all as we trotted through the nondescript village of Dyrebury, a collection of local stone houses with slate roofs. At one

point the driver interrupted himself to point to a large building of the "coaching inn" type set back in a cobblestone courtyard. "That's the very place the Captain was last seen before he was killed." I looked up and admired the long galleries and the heavy roof. From an iron standard over the front door hung a swinging sign painted with a scene of a golden lion lying on green grass next to a white fluffy lamb. Then the dog-cart proceeded up the mountain to Cliffdale Castle.

It was an impressive old Norman pile of square towers and crenellated battlements. From the road below the leads of the inner fortification's roof rose above the curtain walls that surrounded the keep visible through the wide open portcullis of the main entry. It was not among the largest castles I had ever seen, but everything about it spoke of efficient design and solid construction. Only one corner tower showed signs of destruction from a long-ago war, with crumbling stones around a missing roof over smoke-blackened windows. Surrounded by the trees of burning colour that covered the prominence on which it stood, with the afternoon sun warming its ancient stones, the Castle gave the air of standing guard over the valleys and becks of the Yorkshire Dales like a stern but loving paterfamilias whom one could never question, for he would always know best.

The approach to the Castle ran in a serpentine manner up the bluff to reach the entrance. The carriage entered the Castle walls and stopped within the keep before a shallow set of wide stone steps that gave access to the great wooden doors of the main Hall. Two men, one a tall, fleshy man, the other our client, Owen Sessamy, twenty-first Baron of Dyrebury, stood on the steps. The Baron came forward with an extended hand.

"Welcome, gentlemen, welcome! This is Mr. Handy, my butler. Handy, please have Mr. Sherlock Holmes' and Dr. Watson's luggage taken to their rooms. I trust you gentlemen had a pleasant trip? Fall days can be tricky as regards the weather, but we seem to be in the middle of a fine stretch of sun. I can offer you tea or coffee or something a little stronger if you wish."

We stood in a marble-floored entry hall with a cheery blaze in the fireplace to the right and an intricately-carved walnut staircase reaching up on our left. Before us were another set of doors through which I glimpsed comfortable chairs and handsome paintings.

Sherlock Holmes brushed off any offers of refreshment or rest. "Please show me Mr. Aydin's quarters, Lord Sessamy," he said. "I think this case may be more complicated than I first thought and I wish to lose no time gathering information."

"Of, course, Mr. Holmes."

We climbed the stairs to the third story. On the way Lord Sessamy pointed out our assigned quarters. Garrett Aydin's suite was just above ours. The librarian had been given a small sitting room, lit by two windows, furnished with a couple of armchairs, a secretary with a straight chair, a bookcase filled to overflowing and a small couch. In the centre of the room was a round table. The floor was covered with a patterned rug. To the right of the fireplace was a door that led to his bedroom. It held a narrow bedstead with rumpled sheets, as if the owner had just risen from them, a chest of drawers, an armoire and two plain wooden chairs. A small square table stacked with reading material stood next to the bed next to a lamp. His shaving kit was laid out on the deep window sill.

Holmes began to examine the rooms. He began with the bedroom, methodically going through every drawer, all the bedclothes left disarranged on the man's bed, and every other item in the room. He picked up at the shaving articles and peered at them with his magnifying glass. He opened the armoire and felt and sniffed the clothing within. We stood back and watched silently.

Holmes finished with the bedroom and moved on to the sitting room. He gave it his full attention, going as far as to pick up every book on the shelves and flip through the pages of each one.

Nothing fell out. He ran his hand under the couch cushions and thumbed through the contents of the secretary. He opened a drawer and pulled out a stack of blank note paper. Then he stood up and turned to us and with a triumphant flourish held high a single sheet of white.

“You have found something!” I said.

“A clue! A palatable clue! Answer me this, my friends. When is a man’s stationary not stationary?”

Lord Sessamy and I looked blankly at each other.

“When it has been moved! Look at this. I found it tucked in the centre of the stack of blank sheets.”

Carefully he brought the notepaper to the round table. He smoothed it out on the table cloth and we bent over to see what he had found.

“Read it out loud, Watson,” Holmes said.

The handwriting was clear and round, as befitted a man who used words in his profession. “It is dated eight days ago. ‘Dear Douglas,’” I began.

The Baron broke in. “That’s his brother in Australia!”

I continued. “I was glad to hear of your good fortune. Amelia is a beautiful girl and why she would consent to marry such an old fool as you I will never understand. However I do send my warmest congratulations. I am glad to hear that your business is going well and you plan to open another store in a few months.

‘My work here at the Castle goes well. I have found something unusual. It may have to do with that old legend I told you about years ago. I need to check it out but if it is what I think it may be, I might have enough money to join you in Melbourne before the wedding and even invest in your enterprise. I look to have other news too. You know of whom I refer. Our relationship is coming to a head and if my discovery proves correct, I think the results may finally tip the scales and bring me the same sort of happiness you look forward to for yourself. I will write more tomorrow.’ That is all there is.” I laid the paper down.

“What could he have found that would bring him money? I don’t understand,” said the Baron.

“I have finished in here,” said Holmes as he folded the incomplete letter and put it in his notebook. “May I see the library next?”

“Of course,” replied Lord Sessamy.

The Cliffdale Castle library was as handsome and large as we had been told. I paused to admire the tall latticed windows sporting the coats of arms of branches of the Sessamy family going back centuries. They let the setting sunlight into the long chamber from the right side. The blaze in the fine marble fireplace opposite the windows did much to take the autumn chill off the room. Rows and rows of books lined the walls. Over our heads the balcony floor ran around three-quarters of the room supporting more shelves of books reaching up to the rococo ceiling painted with hunting scenes. Glass-topped display tables stood on Persian rugs that shared space with the long mahogany table in the center. An antique desk occupied a spot on the right. Cases with many wide shallow drawers, like those designed to hold collections of insects or mineral samples, stood in a row against the wall beyond the windows.

Sherlock Holmes quickly examined the contents of the display cases. He paid particular attention to one that held an assemblage of daggers and knives. I realized it must be the one Mr. Aydin had hit his head against when he fell. Holmes spent some time looking at the edge of the case that faced the shelves where the rolling ladder had stood with his lens. Finally he straightened up and cast a glance at the rest of the room.

“The question foremost in my mind, Watson,” he remarked absently, “is why did Mr. Aydin put the unfinished letter to his brother back in the middle of a stack of untouched notepaper? What are those cases used for, Lord Sessamy?” Holmes indicated the bank of drawers against the opposite wall.

“Collections, mostly, Mr. Holmes. My great-grandfather began them. He was fond of travelling and brought back many small souvenirs. Let me show you.” The Baron pulled open a wide, shallow drawer and displayed a tray neatly divided into many sections, each holding a tiny wooden carving of an animal. There were giraffes, lions, gazelles, apes and other fauna of the Dark Continent. Another drawer disclosed mounted beetles, each labelled in an old-fashioned hand. Drawer after drawer was opened, each containing

diminutive treasures like Egyptian scarabs, mineral samples from Asia, origami figures from Japan, and coins from all over the globe, each individual item in its own little compartment.

“I have added to the drawers’ contents with my own specimens. This one contains shells that I found on the beach when I was taken on vacation to Cornwall as a child. I was very proud when my father reserved a drawer for them. It was my first contribution to the family collection. I have filled several drawers since with such things as exotic birds’ eggs from America and fossils found on the estate.”

“And this set of drawers in the far corner? Do they have more baubles in them?” asked Sherlock Holmes.

“This last one contains only maps. My father and my grandfather were fond of maps and here you will find a diverse sampling of ones both modern and ancient. I must confess that these drawers were in a sorry mess before Mr. Aydin began work on them a year ago.” The Baron opened a drawer and pulled out a hand-drawn sailor’s chart of the coast of Norway. “This one dates from the early 1700s and was reputed to belong to the Greenwich Observatory at one time. There are hundreds of maps in these drawers. They cover all the oceans and the landmasses of the earth. My favourites when I was young were the old ones of unexplored territories with the legend “Here Be Dragons” marked in the blank spots.”

Mr. Handy appeared at the doorway. “Dinner is served, My Lord,” he intoned.

“Thank you, Handy. Since it will be only us, Mr. Holmes, I thought that we might not stand on ceremony tonight and forgo with dressing for dinner. I frequently eat informally when the women are absent. Each time I do I can see Handy’s orthodox soul shrink in horror. His greatest fear is that I shall one day turn eccentric and eat all my meals from a plant-stand in the conservatory while dressed in hunting pinks and bedroom slippers.”

After dinner Owen Sessamy offered to show us the rest of the Castle, but Holmes begged off and returned to the library. I look the Baron up on his offer, however, and we spent over two hours

traversing corridors and climbing stone steps to various vantage points of the Norman pile. While he showed me the Green Hall and the Onyx Suite Lord Sessamy told me tales of the Castle, including the story of the Grey Yeoman. It was the ghost of a loyal soldier whom after death haunted the ruined tower. He had died fighting during a battle with the Northerners five hundred years before. His body had been ravaged by the fire that had devastated the tower. His spectre now inhabited the ruins, forever on the lookout for the treacherous Northerners. Early repairs to the tower had to be called off when the workmen reported several sightings of the ghost and refused to continue the restoration.

The Grey Yeoman was reported to cause red lights to dance within and outside the tower on certain nights, as if the fire that destroyed the tower was still raging. There was a constant cold spot at the end of the Castle corridor that led to the Grey Yeoman's last post. Sometimes cries and screams were heard issuing from the tower. Sceptics said they were the calls of nesting birds but no signs of birds were ever found. The most notable manifestation of the Grey Yeoman occurred during Jarvis Sessamy's funeral, held at the castle's chapel. In the middle of a fire-and-brimstone sermon by the vicar concerning Jarvis' many sins, an earthquake shook the building. It was considered the work of the Grey Yeoman, displeased at the harsh words against a Sessamy in their own castle. I smiled at his words, but I saw by his eyes that the Baron was serious. Lord Sessamy admitted that all his life he had avoided the ruined tower of the Castle for fear of encountering the Grey Yeoman.

When we returned to the main floor, there was no sign of Holmes, although a light glimmered from under the library's door and I could hear the rustle of papers from within. I knew how he got when he was in the middle of a case and I decided it was best not to interrupt him. I explained some of his methods to Lord Sessamy and we finally retired to bed.

Sherlock Holmes was not present at breakfast the next day but Handy announced that he had requested we meet in the library

after we finished our meal. Lord Sessamy and I found Holmes seated at the vast table. Before him were three folded maps on the polished surface. It was obvious to me that he had neither eaten nor slept since we had parted the night before, but his attitude was bright and cheerful like it frequently was when he was following a promising clue.

“Good morning, gentlemen! I have spent a most interesting night in this fine old room, Lord Sessamy.”

“I am glad to hear it, Mr. Holmes,” said our host.

“Yes, and I found the most interesting things in that map case. Everything was meticulously labelled and filed away except for one paper. Look here.” Sherlock Holmes unfolded one of the maps and spread it before us. “Do you recognize this, my lord?”

“It’s a map of the Yorkshire Dales. Here is Cragville and Summitton and here is Dyrebury. That spot indicates Cliffdale Castle.”

“And what of this one?” Holmes opened another paper.

“That is an older map, with Dyrebury in the middle. The Castle is marked on the upper left. The style of cartography is from the eighteenth century, I’d say.”

“Finally, what do you know of this one?” Another map, more crudely drawn and on rougher paper, was flattened out on the table top.

Lord Sessamy slowly looked it over then turned to Holmes. “Bless my soul, sir. I don’t claim to know the details of every map in the collection, but I would swear I’ve never seen this one before. Where did you find it?”

“It was filed between two other maps in a bottom drawer. One was a street map of Chicago, Illinois, USA and the other was a detailed map of the Great Lakes area of the Middle Western States. These others I pulled out of their proper places.”

“But finding this old map where you say you found it doesn’t make any sense. Chicago is located on the shores of Lake Michigan, but that location hasn’t any connection with this old map. Mr. Aydin was so meticulous in his filing. He would never leave this