THE SOLICITOUS SOLICITOR



Case Nine

26 June, 1890

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As we enter Holmes' apartment, we come upon a most silent and introspective gathering. Our attention is drawn towards Holmes who sits, legs out stretched, plucking random notes from the strings of his violin. It appears that for the Master Sleuth the instrument produces not sound but sight. As he plays a discordant melody, some vision seems to be forming behind those gray and brooding eyes. Dr. Watson, who sits on the seat of a large chair, fills his pipe while engaging in a most minute inspection of the rug. Inspector Lestrade, who stands near the mantel flipping the pages of his notebook, desperately tries to read between the lines of his own handwriting. It takes a moment but our presence is finally noticed.

"Ah, your prompt attention to my note is gratifying. Inspector Lestrade has a rather intriguing problem for you. Inspector, would you be so kind?"

"At approximately 10 o'clock this morning," begins Lestrade, "I received a communication from the offices of Sloane, Swathmore and Cartwright. No doubt you are aware that they are one of the must prestigious legal firms in all of London. Trust funds under their care amount to many millions and they advise the world's largest companies in their contract negotiations.

"The communication from Constable Lane read, 'Junior partner drops dead. Doctor at scene suspects poison. Come at once.'

"I arrived in the lobby of the Sloane building and took one of the two lifts to the fourth floor. Out of the lift, I turned right and proceeded down a short corridor entering a large circular room. In the centre were three desks, obviously the executive staff's work space. Five office doors ringed the room. Constable Lane beckoned me towards one of them.

"There I found the body of Melvin Tuttle, two and one-half years with the firm and the newly promoted junior partner. Dr. Jerrold Mason, who has offices in the building, was also present. He informed me an examination of the body indicated heart failure but that considering the youth of the man - Tuttle was 28 - and, his obvious good health, he suspected poison."

"Of course, heart failure is not unheard of in one so young," interrupts Watson. "The appearance of health is not always the fact of it."

"An excellent observation, my dear Watson," says Holmes, "but no doubt Sir Jasper will be able to tell us more after a thorough examination."

"Quite so, quite so," says Lestrade. "But my instincts tell me that the man was poisoned. In fact, I will stake my reputation on it."

"And a sterling reputation it is," says Holmes. "Pray continue, Inspector."

"Acting on Dr. Mason's suspicions, and my own," he proceeds, "I sent the cup of tea and biscuit found on Tuttle's desk to Professor Murray for analysis, as well as a bag of toffee found in the top drawer. Oh, and Tuttle's tobacco pouch and pipe." With this last, Lestrade looks to Holmes for approval and Holmes, somewhat amused, gives it to him with a nod.

"While Constable Lane collected the contents of Tuttle's desk to be taken to the Yard for inventory and study, I took the vacant office next to Tuttle's to conduct my investigation.

"According to the lift operator, Emmett Price, Tuttle worked late last night and arrived early, shortly before 8:00 a.m. Some important contracts had to be gotten out and it was Tuttle's responsibility.

"At 9:00 a.m., Mrs. Margaret Porter and Miss Alice Spring arrived in the lobby almost simultaneously. Mrs. Porter, the senior member of the executive staff, has been with the firm some 22 years. Miss Spring, an attractive brunette, is the executive secretary and has been with the firm for five years. Price noted that she seemed `distracted.' The third member of the staff, Miss Brenda Walker, the staff typist, also worked late last evening and was not expected before afternoon.

"Of the three senior partners, Sir Sidney Sloane, the founder of the firm, never arrives before noon; Mr. Henry Swathmore, head of the Trust Division, worked late with Tuttle last night and had an appointment at Bell's Baths at 9:00 a.m.; and Mr. Whitney Cartwright, head of the Contracts Division, took an unscheduled leave of absence of undetermined duration, yesterday.

"According to Mrs. Porter, Mr. Tuttle's door was open when she and Miss Spring arrived. When he saw them, he rose, waved his pipe in greeting and closed the door. While Mrs. Porter made the rounds of the three senior partners' offices collecting memos and such, Miss Spring was back at hers, weeping. Mrs. Porter attempted to find out the trouble but Miss Spring rebuffed her. By Mrs. Porter's estimate, fifteen minutes passed during which she sorted correspondence, Miss Spring typed at her desk and Mr. Tuttle worked behind the closed door of his office.

"Mrs. Porter then went about preparing morning tea. When it was ready, she took a cup and a fresh biscuit, purchased at Lydell's Bakery, 345 Macklin-street, to Tuttle. He accepted them and handed her eleven letters to be posted immediately, stating that he was very glad that the contracts were finally finished. Mrs. Porter saw that Tuttle appeared tired, even a little unsteady - his hand shook as he tried to relight his pipe - but noticed nothing of a more serious nature.

"She then left the office, closing the door behind her, and walked directly to the lift. When Price arrived she gave him the letters with instructions to pass them on to a messenger for immediate posting. She had just arrived back at her desk when she heard a crash from Tuttle's office. After an exchange of glances with Miss Spring, who had been at her desk during all the foregoing, they both went to investigate.

"They found Tuttle lying on the floor apparently lifeless. Miss Spring rushed to the body crying out, 'Oh, Melvin!' Mrs. Porter was able to take her out of the office and settle her down somewhat before she summoned Dr. Mason via Price. And there you have it."

"I suppose you thoroughly, what's the expression, `grilled' the two ladies?" asks Watson. "Poison is, after all, a woman's weapon."

"Each was questioned separately and their stories, in the main, coincided," replies Lestrade.

"In the main?" asks Watson intensely.

"No two witnesses to a single event will give the same testimony in every detail," says Holmes. "To do so would indeed be suspicious, as Inspector Lestrade knows quite well."

"Yes... yes of course," agrees Lestrade, cautiously.

"You mentioned a vacant office, Inspector?" asks Holmes.

"Yes, until last week it was occupied by Harold Diggs. It seems that three months ago both Diggs and Tuttle were promoted from the floor below. Diggs, 11 years with the firm, resigned upon the announcement of Tuttle's junior partnership. As I understand it, he had quite a row with Sir Sidney Tuesday last."

"Ah, a jealous colleague!" says Watson, "certainly a motive for murder."

"Mr. Holmes," says Lestrade, completely ignoring Watson's remark, "I admit to being quite baffled. The Commissioner has already notified my office that he expects a prompt solution to this crime."

Holmes nods gravely and says, "Of course, Inspector. A prompt solution to any case is always desirable. You shall certainly have our help in this matter."

AREA SE

15 SE

The desk clerk at the Knight's Arms Hotel smiles a leering smile when we ask him about Melvin Tuttle. However, it takes a bob or two before he becomes talkative.

"Yes, he kept a room here. Gave it up two, three weeks ago. He was certainly one for the ladies, that's for sure. All pretty ones too."

AREA SW

2 SW

"Of course, I can talk about the social doings of Messrs. Sloane, Swathmore and Cartwright, but who would want to listen? They are a dull crowd all around."

Langdale Pike takes a delicate sip of his sherry, leans back and sighs.

"Well, if you insist. Sir Sidney is invited to and attends all the best social functions. I use the term 'best' in its proper sense, although some would claim it is used with irony. Henry Swathmore, a very attractive and much sought after bachelor – I might also add the word 'confirmed' – attends only those galas which are obligatory to the prestige of the firm. Whitney Cartwright is the forgotten man. He habitually sends his wife, a very charming woman, in his stead. She is usually accompanied by one of the lesser members of the firm."

"Do you know a Mr. Tuttle in that connection?"

"Oh, yes. You see, Mrs. Cartwright's partners, young men all, were rotated quite frequently. In fact, I cannot recall one who ever appeared with her twice in a row. That is, until Mr. Tuttle took over the escort duty. Oh, they were very proper, to be sure, but people did begin to talk. In whispers, of course."

"Were Mrs. Cartwright and Tuttle having an affair?"

"Alas, I can only speculate. If they did, they broke it off some three months ago. Since that time, Mrs. C. has gone back to the quiet rotation of office personnel. Actually, Tuttle always struck me as a bit of a social climber, which gives their liaison even more sinister connotations."

3 SW

By somewhat overstating the case, namely, that we are part of an official Scotland Yard investigation, we are able to wheedle our way past the doorman of the Criterion Club. Wiggins repeats the exaggeration to the club manager, Mr. Neville Gibson, and it seems to thaw his rather frosty exterior.

"Mr. Cartwright has indeed been with us since yesterday," says Mr. Gibson. He bends his 6-foot-5 frame over conspiratorially. "He has remained in his room the entire time. Meals have been sent up sporadically and decanters of scotch whiskey have been sent up quite regularly."

We impress upon Mr. Gibson the necessity of talking to Mr. Cartwright and he directs us to his room.

Our knock on the door is answered after a few moments by a very dishevelled man in his late fifties. Small and portly, his silver-grey hair is uncombed and his eyes are quite bloodshot.

"Mr. Cartwright, we have come to ask you some questions concerning the murder of Melvin Tuttle."

He looks at us for a moment, blinking, then gestures for us to enter. As we walk past him, he grabs Wiggins' arm to stop him. His eyes are wide with disbelief as the fog momentarily lifts.

"Whhaat did you say?! The murder of Melvin Tuttle?"

When we nod in the affirmative, he stumbles away to sink in a chair, grasping for it like a man drowning for a piece of floating debris.

"Would you tell us why you left the office so suddenly yesterday?"

"Personal," he mumbles. "I received a note... very distressing."

He waves toward the dresser. On it are an almost empty decanter of whiskey, a revolver and a note. He makes no objection when Wiggins picks up the typed note and reads:

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Everything she needs has Mrs. C.
Furs & jewels & even M.T.
While the husband works
The wife will play
& Thus runs the world away
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Without our prompting, Mr. Cartwright begins to speak. "I was completely blind to it, of course... But the note brought it all into focus. All the hints and half-hints that I saw but did not recognize became clear and real... I was so wrapped up in my work... I went home to speak to my wife but she was out. The longer I waited the less courage I had to face her. I was angry and

sad and guilty all at once. I took the gun out of my study desk and somehow ended up here... Couldn't use it though ... Does my wife know of Tuttle's death?"

"Yes."

"She must be very alone now."

"She told us to tell you that she loves you and that she will make it up to you."

"Perhaps," says Cartwright, rising, "we can make it up to each other."

5 SW

The only book we can find that even mentions chinaberry is Compendium of My Favourite Poisons, by H.R. Murray and, of course, it contains no information that he has not already given to us personally.

8 SW

The doorman at the Diogenes Club tells us that Mycroft Holmes left with his brother quite some time ago and did sot say when he would return. "They seemed to be in a hurry."

13 SW

Constable Lane is a polite young man who has already laid out the contents of Tuttle's desk in anticipation of our arrival.

There is a sheaf of papers in a folder which, after a cursory inspection, appears to contain information on textile contracts. It consists of correspondence between various companies and the legal firm, as well as voluminous notes on the more arcane passages of contract

There is a key stamped with the name 'Bell's Baths' – evidently a locker key.

There are six tickets to a performance at the Drury Lane Theatre, dated April 9. Two of the tickets are torn, the other four intact.

There are two almost identical lockets. One, inscribed 'To A.S. with love - M.T.,' is of inferior quality. The other, inscribed 'To V.M. with love - M.T.,' is solid gold rather than plated and has a sprinkling of diamond chips in the shape of a heart. Constable Lane informs us that the second locket was still gift-wrapped when it was removed from Tuttle's desk. A sticker on the bottom of its box says, 'J.W. Benson, Ltd.'

There are two trust files, one for the British Museum and the other for a Richard Mainhart. Each lists properties, stocks, bonds, &c. owned by the client, as well as a running record of all sales and acquisitions. As we move them aside, a slip of paper falls out. On it is written a series of numbers, '42, 87, 112' and the words, 'Chancery-lane - 2nd Floor - Disraeli O'Brian.' Upon closer examination of the files, we discover that the numbers represent the lot numbers of various properties owned at one time or another by both clients.

Finally, there is a bill for a room at the Knight's Arras Hotel, 15 Hampton-street. From the size of it, it appears to be a monthly rate.

22 SW

We descend the increasingly familiar musty staircase and enter the Professor's laboratory. "We've come about the items left off by Scotland Yard for analysis. Tobacco, pipe, toffee, tea, biscuit."

"Tea and biscuit? I was hoping for something more substantial, fish and chips at the least! Well, in any case, put it over there."

It takes a moment of further explanation before the Professor grasps that we are not here to deliver his dinner.

"Oh, Inspector Lestrade! Why didn't you say so? I have the report right here, Woggins. Come in, come in."

The Professor leads the way to an alcove which serves as his office and begins sifting through stacks of papers, charts, graphs, notes, all jumbled together on a huge roll-top desk. What appears to us as chaos is to the Professor a precise filing system for in a matter of seconds he draws forth the desired document.

He hands it to us with a self-satisfied smile. Unfortunately, it is unintelligible to us – just a series of chemical formulae and percentages, for example, "Toffee - C12 H22 Oil - 93%."

"Professor, could you translate this into layman's terms? Did you find poison in any of these samples?"

Somewhat irritated, Dr. Murray snatches back the report. Like most experts, it would seem he becomes exasperated with those who find his speciality incomprehensible and are thus improperly appreciative.

"The toffee and the tobacco are exactly what they purport themselves to be, toffee and tobacco. Now the tea does contain the barest trace of poison, .004 grams to be exact, but more significantly a very high concentration was found on the lip of the cup. Also, this same lethal rime was detected along the bite taken out of the biscuit and on the pipe stem. The biscuit itself was not contaminated."

"What is the poison, Professor?"

Without replying, he reaches above the desk and pulls a tome down from the shelf. It turns out to be his own work, Compendium of My Favourite Poisons, London, 1848. He flips through the pages, then

hands it to us.

It says: "Chinaberry (melia azedarach) is a tree of warm temperate regions producing panicles of fragrant purple flowers followed by pale yellow berry-like drupes about half an inch across; the fleshy pulp of the fruit contains a paralysing nerve poison. When distilled into its crystalline pure state and ingested, only .05 grams is enough to prove fatal to the most hearty of men. Heart action stops immediately and permanently. No known antidote exists. The presence of the poison can be detected by its faint smell reminiscent of lilac."

"Professor, where would one obtain this poison?"

"Well, I should think one of the only ways to obtain 'chinaberry' would be to strike up a friendship with a South Sea Aborigine."

"It is not then readily available in London?"

"No."

"Thank you, Professor, for your time."

"Four-forty-three," he says, consulting his pocket watch. "Ah...yes, thank you," and we make our exit.

24 SW

Banks Featherstone, a gentleman of some girth, sits back in a chair and answers us in a bored tone of voice.

"Swathmore handles all my property transactions. He lays papers in front of me and I sign them."

25 SW

At 25 Chichester-street, Charles Goode comes to the door at his butler's request.

"Melvin Tuttle?" asks Goode. "Never heard the name. Are you sure you have the correct address?"

"Is there a person living here by the name of Ginny?"

"There is no one here by that name. You definitely do have the wrong address."

The door is shut and we are about to leave in defeat when a young woman leans out of the first floor window and calls for our attention. Wiggins detaches himself from the group and, sweeping off his derby hat, approaches her. The interview is short. She retreats back inside and Wiggins rejoins us.

"That was Emily Goode, the daughter of the house. She wouldn't tell me the circumstances but it seems that this address was but a way-station for the letters from Tuttle to Emily's dear friend, Virginia Monroe."

43 SW

We arrive at the Monroe Mansion and are told by the butler that Miss Virginia Monroe is indisposed and cannot see anyone. When we explain that we are on a murder investigation and that we have reason to believe that Miss Monroe may have some valuable information, the butler asks us to wait. It is only a moment or two before John Monroe appears at the door.

He is a tall, thin man in his late forties, immensely dignified in form and manner. He invites us in immediately, more from a desire to get us off his doorstep and out of sight of prying neighbours than from any real concession to hospitality.

"What's this about a murder? And how can my daughter possibly be involved?" he asks in an imperious tone.

We barely begin to explain before he interrupts. "Tuttle! That popinjay! I knew he would come to no good. He met my daughter quite by accident some months ago and had the effrontery to introduce himself! He further had the unmitigated gall to come to me and ask for my daughter's hand in marriage. I threw the blighter out and there's an end to it. My daughter has had no contact with him since, I can assure you!"

"That's not true, Father."

Miss Virginia Monroe stands at the top of the stairs. Her long blonde hair is dishevelled and her eyes show the evidence of prolonged weeping. She is doubtless aware of Tuttle's death, and that knowledge enables her to confess to her father.

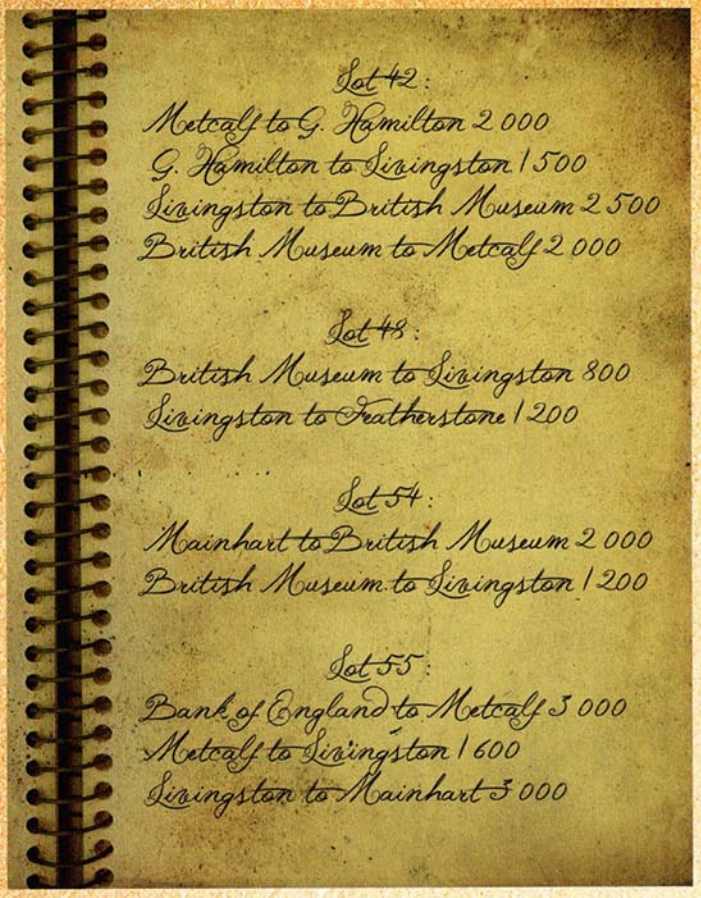
"Mel and I met almost every Sunday in St. James Park and corresponded frequently. As soon as he could attain the position you required, we would have married. He was made a junior partner only last week."

Her lower lip begins to tremble but she is able to master her grief. Advancing towards us, she holds out a small black notebook.

"I think that this might be important to you," she says, handing it to us.

While we glance at it, Miss Monroe and her father converse in whispered tones. Whatever Mr. Monroe's feelings towards Tuttle, his sympathy for his daughter is profound. His only thought is to comfort her.

The notebook contains a detailed list of property transactions. A sample page reads:



We mumble an apology for our intrusion and leave quietly.

44 SW

"Mr. Swathmore takes care of all my business transactions. I pay Sloane, Swathmore and Cartwright a large fee to worry about it all for me."

"Thank you, Mr. Metcalf."

50 SW

Cedrick Livingston dismisses his butler with a curt nod and waves for us to take a seat. He locks his steel-grey eyes on us and, in a tone that is more a command than a request, asks our business.

"Are you acquainted with Mr. Melvin Tuttle?"

"Tuttle? No. Oh, wait a moment. Isn't he Swathmore's associate? Yes, I believe I did meet him once."

"Are you a friend of Mr. Swathmore's?"

"Hardly. I've done a bit of business with Sloane, Swathmore and Cartwright and Swathmore represented the firm. Our entire association consists of several formal meetings and two or three business lunches."

53 SW

We are greeted at the door of Mr. Heathcliff's pillared town house by the butler. Looking at us from under drooping eyelids and down a long nose, he enquires as to our business. It seems that our reply is barely adequate, for it is only with a great deal of reluctance that we are shown into the foyer.

"I will tell Mr. Heathcliff of your arrival. If you would care to wait in the library." At the foot of the marble staircase, he turns back to us and says, ominously, "Please do not touch anything."

Properly chastened, we enter the library. It is a vast room, lined with books from the floor to its 12-foot ceiling. In the centre is a long mahogany table, polished to a mirror-like sheen. The room is, as it is intended to be, most impressive, made all the more so by the fact that not a single spine of any volume has ever been 'cracked'.

"Yes, what can I do for you?"

We turn to see a smallish man in his mid-fifties. His head is a touch too small for his body and his hands and feet are quite tiny. He presents a rather odd picture, all in all.

"Mr. Heathcliff, could you give us some information on the contracts being prepared for you and your associates by the firm of Sloan, Swathmore and Cartwright?"

Turning on the butler, Mr. Heathcliff explodes, "What's going on here! Those contracts were to be kept highly confidential and now it seems that everyone and his brother knows about them!" He tosses his dainty hands up in exasperation and turns back to us. "Oh well ...I suppose there is no harm at this stage.

"As I told the other fellow, some eight months ago Sir Sidney Sloane undertook the very delicate negotiations for a merger between several English and German textile companies. Once all the principals had made known their wants and needs and a common ground was agreed upon, Mr. Whitney Cartwright drew up the contracts to effect the merger. In anticipation of your questions; yes, a considerable sum of money was involved; no, the firm never directly handled any part of the money, excepting of course their fee, which was considerable enough, let me tell you; and finally, I dealt exclusively with Mr. Cartwright throughout the contract stage and, while I was surprised to hear of Mr. Swathmore's involvement, it has had no material effect on the final form of the contracts. I do wish you fellows could get together; I'm sure a lot of time could have been saved!"

"This 'other fellow,' sir? Who was he?"

"Ah... Maitland, what was his name?"

"A Mr. Shylock Holmes, I believe, sir," replies the butler. "Sher-lock!" we correct. "Mr. Sherlock Holmes, the consulting detective."

"Whoever," says Heathcliff. "Tall man, funny coat. He seemed more interested in the envelope than the

contract. Sniffed it, seemed satisfied with its odour and asked to keep it. Most peculiar. Now if that's all, Maitland will show you to the door." Mr. Heathcliff turns on his heel and exits the library.

On our way out we are tempted to overturn a vase or some such, just to confirm Maitland's worst thoughts. However, we restrain ourselves.

"Do come again," says Maitland, with all the sincerity of Henry 8 speaking the marriage vows.

56 SW

In his mid-sixties, Sir Sidney Sloane appears to be every inch the successful and wealthy man he is. Dressed in an exquisitely tailored broadcloth suit, he exudes an elegance and charm that is impressive in the extreme. Coupled with an almost fatherly warmth, it is easy to see why he, personally, is so trusted as a solicitor and why his firm has so outdistanced many other firms of longer pedigree. As we are shown into his study, Sir Sidney rises from behind a massive mahogany desk and offers us a seat.

"Come in, come in. It is terrible, simply terrible. Such a fine young man. Only tell me how I can be of help to you. I am completely at your disposal."

"Thank you, Sir Sidney. Could you tell us a bit about Mr. Tuttle's promotions? First, his elevation to the executive level. And then his rise to a junior partnership."

"I am afraid I can shed little light on that subject and after promising to offer you my assistance."

He tugs on his huge mutton-chop sideburns.

"You see, some three years ago, I relinquished day-to-day operation of the firm to Swathmore and Cartwright. In anticipation of my retirement, I decided to enjoy the fruits of my long labours. Since that time my sole function with the firm has been one of 'Ambassador of Good Will,' you might say. I entertain our more important clients. I am afraid that I have become a bit of a social gadfly in my old age."

"Then you did not know Tuttle very well? Or his qualifications?"

"No, I knew Tuttle only slightly. Found him pleasant and well-mannered. As to his qualifications, I took Swathmore's and Cartwright's word for that. I trust their judgement implicitly."

"Would you tell us about your interview with Mr. Diggs on the day of his resignation?"

"Certainly. Essentially, Diggs felt that he had given long and worthy service to the firm and Tuttle's promotion represented a great insult to him. I was very high on Diggs and knew his work to be of high calibre. But as I explained, it was Swathmore's and Cartwright's decision."

"Did Diggs threaten you or Mr. Tuttle in any way?"

"Oh, no, no, no. Diggs was quite angry and voiced his arguments quite loudly, to be sure, but he was not abusive in any way."

"Can you tell us a little bit about the contracts that Mr. Tuttle was working on?"

"Well, eight or so months ago, I was contacted by August Heathcliff, a prominent textile manufacturer. He asked me to personally conduct negotiations for an international merger. His own, four other English companies and five German companies were involved. After the preliminary work had been accomplished, I turned things over to Mr. Cartwright, who is a recognized expert in contract law. Tuttle assisted him."

"Could you tell us about Mr. Cartwright's sudden departure?"

"Not that much, I'm afraid. I received a note late yesterday afternoon which simply stated that Whitney requested a leave of absence for personal reasons. I was aware that the contracts were due to leave by the morning post and I called Tuttle in to confirm that that was the case. He told me that there were some minor changes to be made but that Mr. Cartwright had outlined their content. He said that if Miss Walker could stay with him to complete some typing, the deadline would be met. Swathmore appeared shortly after and volunteered to work late with Tuttle. Everything seemed to be in hand."

"Thank you, Sir Sidney."

87 SW

The clerk at Keene & Ashwell says he's never even heard of chinaberry.



AREA NW

8 NW

Mrs. Porter is a tall, imposing woman in her mid-fifties; her silver hair neatly tied in a bun; her dress severe and unfashionable; her manner and posture somewhat stiff. Our first impression is one of sternness, unmixed with anything of a more gentle nature.

After enquiring as to our business, she nods curtly and ushers us into her small apartment, where after a few moments of conversation, we discover that our impression of her is completely in error. She is, in fact, quite friendly, warm even, and quite willing to talk about the subject she knows best in the world – the inner workings of Swathmore and Cartwright.

"You see, my husband passed away fifteen years ago and so the firm has become my life.... Frank was a dear man, a bit of a dreamer. He made children's toys."

She gestures toward a large breakfront which dominates one wall of the apartment. In it are housed samples of her husband's craft.

"He never made much money and so it was always necessary for me to bring in an extra income. I was Sir Sidney Sloane's secretary at Brace and Kenton and when he decided to set up for himself, he asked me along. That was twenty-two years ago."

She glances over toward the breakfront with a wistful smile on her lips, no doubt remembering some private and special moment.

"But you have no desire to hear me prattle on about myself. You have come here for quite a different purpose."

"Mrs. Porter," we ask, "what sort of man was Melvin Tuttle?"

"Well, I am sure that everyone would say that he was immensely charming. Perfect manners, a careful and stylish dresser. He was very eager to please, although not in an unmanly way. My young charges, Miss Walker and Miss Spring, were quite taken with him – as were many of our clients, especially those of the fairer sex."

"You sound as if you did not share the accepted view."

"Well, I must admit a certain reticence of enthusiasm for Mr. Tuttle. He struck me as, well, calculating. Behind the well-mannered, smiling facade one could feel a certain coldness. You see, he always said and did exactly the right thing. A bit too perfect, I always felt."

So saying, she casts another quick look at the breakfront, then turns back to us.

"But perhaps," she continues, in a lighter vein, "I am just being an old woman offended by the fact that Mr. Tuttle never used that exquisite charm on me."

"Will you describe the circumstances under which Mr. Tuttle was raised to the executive level?"

"Three months ago, Sir Sidney called me into his office and simply told me of the change. He asked me to work closely with both Mr. Diggs and Mr. Tuttle, 'to help make their transition to new responsibility a smooth one,' was the way he put it."

"What exactly was this new responsibility?"

"Well, the firm had long needed some of its junior members to make decisions on specific trusts or contracts without the need of referring them to the senior partners. Mr. Diggs and Mr. Tuttle were brought up to the executive floor to symbolize this new power."

"Do you know how the choice of these two men, out of twenty-three candidates, was arrived at?"

"No, I am afraid not, although both Mr. Swathmore and Mr. Cartwright would jointly have made the decision. You see, Sir Sidney is very close to retirement. The day-to-day running of the firm has long since devolved upon the other two senior partners."

"Were you surprised at the choices?"

"In Mr. Diggs' case, not at all. He was a bright, considerate man and an excellent solicitor. He had been with the firm eleven years and had consistently produced outstanding work. Mr. Tuttle's work, on the other hand, I thought unexceptional. I will say, however, that he was an industrious and thorough worker. Nevertheless, I was surprised at his promotion."

"In view of your assessment of the two men, how can you explain Mr. Tuttle's additional promotion to junior partner?"

"I cannot."

"How did Diggs and Tuttle get along?"

"Their relationship was quite strained to be sure. While he never said anything, I am certain that Mr. Diggs felt Mr. Tuttle's initial appointment should have gone to someone else with more experience and better qualifications. Then there was the added pressure put on him by Mr. Swathmore. All at once he began to find fault with Mr. Diggs' work, even to the point of berating him in front of the staff while holding up Mr. Tuttle as a model to be followed. And then there was Miss Spring. I don't want to appear a gossip, but Mr. Diggs did nothing to conceal his feelings for her, feelings, I might add, which Miss Spring did not seem to reciprocate. Rightly or wrongly, I could not say, but Mr. Diggs saw Mr. Tuttle as the obstacle between himself and Miss Spring's affections. However, there

was never any overt trouble between them."

"Did Diggs have any parting words with Tuttle on the day of his resignation?"

"No, Mr. Diggs' parting words were all with Sir Sidney. In fact, Mr. Tuttle and Mr. Swathmore had already left to lunch at Romano's."

"Did you overhear any of Diggs' interview with Sir Sidney?"

"No, it took place entirely in Sir Sidney's office and, although it was certainly loud, no distinguishable words could be heard."

"Mrs. Porter, there are a few things we need to clarify about the morning of Mr. Tuttle's death. There would be no way for anyone to enter Mr. Tuttle's office without your seeing them, is that correct?"

"Quite correct. None of the offices have adjoining doors and so anyone wishing to see Mr. Tuttle would have had to pass through the centre work area."

"There were eleven contracts to be posted, correct?"

"Ten contracts, actually, addresses typed on company envelopes. Five were sent to textile firms in Germany. Four were sent to textile firms in Manchester. The last was addressed to August Heathcliff in London. The eleventh letter was personal, hand addressed, from Mr. Tuttle to Mrs. Cartwright."

"Mrs. Cartwright?"

"Yes. I suppose it had to do with some social function or other. You see, Mr. Cartwright is absolutely dedicated to the firm. He also fairly dotes on his wife. These two 'passions,' as he describes them, sometime conflict in that he often has important work to complete just when Opera Season opens or a dress ball is scheduled. In order not to disappoint his wife, he will request one of the junior clerks to escort her. Mr. Tuttle escorted her to many such functions and I assume the letter had something to do with one."

"In view of Mr. Cartwright's attitude towards the firm, isn't his sudden leave of absence rather strange, especially at a time when these important contracts were in the works?"

"I am afraid I have no light to shed on that. Only to agree that it is most unlike Mr. Cartwright."

"Thank you, Mrs. Porter."

"You're most welcome."

17 NW

"Yes, Mr. Tuttle was a very good customer," says the clerk at J.W. Benson, Ltd. with an unsuppressed smirk. "He bought several gold-plated lockets, the inscribed initial varied, of course. He was in only last week to pick up another one, only it was solid gold, not plated, with inlaid diamond chips. I believe I detected a change in attitude with this purchase. He seemed, how should I say, more serious."

18 NW

Sam Parsons gives us a wink. "Got something for you today." He takes out and sets on the counter a small copy of a Roman treasury house. Wiggins looks it over carefully, and then says to us, "Moriarty must be up to something that has nothing to do with our case."

30 NW

Miss Brenda Walker, a small, plain woman in her late twenties, with dull brown hair and large eyeglasses, is a bundle of energy. From the speed with which she moves about her flat, one can readily infer that her speed at the typewriter must be prodigious indeed. Accompanying this flurry of activity – plumping pillows, re-setting furniture, clearing away knitting – is a steady stream of patter consisting of sympathetic remarks concerning Mr. Tuttle, questions about the progress of our investigation and speculations as to the identity of the culprit, during which we find it difficult to get a word in edgewise.

Then, as abruptly as this veritable pyrotechnic display of sight and sound had begun, it ceases. Miss Walker comes to rest on a small settee, her eyes wide open in expectation, her attention to us complete. It leaves us at as much of a loss as her former frenetic activity.

"Ah... yes... Miss Walker... ah... would you.... You worked late with Mr. Tuttle and Mr. Swathmore last evening, is that correct?"

"Certainly. Well, the firm was drawing up some important contracts, very confidential. Of course, I never read what I type, at least I don't remember it, I just type. Mr. Swathmore asked me to stay late last evening as Mr. Tuttle - perhaps I should say poor Mr. Tuttle now - had some last minute revisions and the contracts had to be sent out in the morning - 'posthaste' I believe the expression is. Well, Mr. Swathmore is a very imposing individual – I must admit to being slightly afraid of him at times – so when Mr. Swathmore makes a request it is really a command in disguise – a very thin disguise to be sure–"

"Miss Walker!"

It is a great mistake to pose such a broad question to her. If the interview is to continue at anything less than a mad gallop, it is evident that we must frame specific questions and hope against hope that she will confine her answers to a few well-chosen words.

"Miss Walker, you were there alone with Mr. Swathmore and Mr. Tuttle?"

"Yes. Imagine me alone with two gorgeous men. Of course, Mr. Swathmore is quite a bit older and a bit intimidating, but he is a very attractive man and a bachelor, and Mr. Tuttle, one cannot say enough about Mr. Tuttle's charms... Tut, tut, poor Mr. Tuttle–"

"Miss Walker, no one else was in the office aside from the three of you? No one else entered while you were there?"

"No. No one. Now nothing happened between us, I assure you. We worked is all. You mustn't think–"

"No, no, of course not. Do you know what time it was when you left?"

"It was exactly 11:15. As Mr. 'Tuttle handed me up into a cab, Mr. Swathmore commented on the time and made a joke about my being home before midnight so as not to turn into a pumpkin or something. I suppose when one considers it, Mr. Swathmore is very, well, dashing. He is–"

"The three of you left together, then?"

"Yes..."

"Ah... yes... yes. About the contracts. When, were they being sent?"

"I really don't know, I'm afraid."

"Oh, that's right, you did mention that you don't retain what you type."

"That is curious, isn't it? But in this case I didn't type the envelopes. Mr. Swathmore got them from his office and gave them directly to Mr. Tuttle. I believe they were going to various foreign textile firms, although just where I could not say. There was a great deal of secrecy about them, but within the office it is difficult to keep anything too secret. It's amazing–"

"Contracts were in Mr. Cartwright's sphere, were they not? Why was Mr. Swathmore, the head of the trust division, involved?"

"Well, Mr. Cartwright left the office very suddenly yesterday morning and the contracts had to be gotten right out and I suppose Mr. Swathmore just took it upon himself to see that they were completed."

"Do you know anything about Mr. Cartwright's sudden leave of absence?"

"No, not really. I had just been in his office with the morning mail and he looked fine. Then he came out all pale and sick-looking and left. You know a persons health is so important –"

"And that was the last you saw of Mr. Cartwright?"

"Yes. A messenger arrived later in the afternoon with a note saying that Mr. Cartwright would be taking a leave of absence at which time Mr. Swathmore volunteered to assist Mr. Tuttle with the contracts and asked me to stay and do some last minute typing."

"Thank you, Miss Walker, you've been most helpful."

"You're welcome. Silly me! All this time I've forgotten to offer you some refreshment. I could brew up some tea and I've a fresh-baked pie. I'm really a good cook, even if I do say so myself. My mother always said–"

"No, no. That's very kind of you. Thank you again, Miss Walker. Goodbye."

32 NW

At the door to the Cartwright home the maid informs us that Mr. Cartwright is not at home. Our request to see Mrs. Cartwright instead is met with some resistance and it is only after our business is explained and that explanation carried inside that we are admitted.

Mrs. Fay Cartwright is waiting for us in the sitting room. With a few soft-spoken words she dismisses the maid, who hovers over her protectively, and offers us a seat. In her late forties, she is an attractive woman once possessed of great beauty now waning. She appears very pale, the more so due to the contrast of her very dark hair and eyes.

"Can you tell us anything about Mr. Cartwright's whereabouts?"

"No, I sent our butler James to enquire at the Criterion Club, but I was hoping you could tell me something. He came home early yesterday and left this."

She hands us a note which reads:

I received a note at the office. I know everything!
I did not know I could have been so blind.
If you love him, I will not stand in your way.
Whitney

In answer to our questioning look, she explains.

"My husband must have found out about Mr. Tuttle and me. The irony of it is that Mr. Tuttle broke off the affair several months ago."

She is silent a moment, then goes on to tell us the whole story.

"Whitney is quite dedicated to the firm, so much so that he is often unable to attend various social functions. So as not to disappoint me, Whitney will have one of the junior clerks escort me while he attends to the firm's business. Melvin, Mr. Tuttle, received that assignment for the first time last June. He was very different from the others. They looked upon it as a duty, but Mr. Tuttle seemed to genuinely enjoy my company. He made

me feel young and beautiful and desirable. Finally, he declared his love for me. Then, two and a half months ago Melvin seemed to change. When I questioned him he admitted that he was in love with another woman. He wanted to break off with me. I had not seen or talked to him since that time. Three days ago I sent him a message that I wanted to see him. His reply, which I've only just read, was quite firm. He said that it was out of the question."

"Do you know anything about the note that your husband alluded to?"

"No, I can't imagine who knew about the affair or why they would wait until after it was over to expose it... If you find my husband, please tell him that I love him and that I will make it up to him."

"Thank you, Mrs. Cartwright. Sorry to have troubled you."

As we leave we notice the sign on Ambrecht & Co., Chemists next door which reads "Closed for vacation."

39 NW

Henry Swathmore is a tall, thin man whose manner, cool and distant, is both irritating and intimidating.

"Can you give us an explanation of Mr. Tuttle's rapid rise in the firm?"

"It is quite simple really. He was qualified to do the job. A bright lad, we shall all miss him."

"May we take it that you sponsored Mr. Tuttle?"

"In point of fact, Mr. Cartwright sponsored Tuttle, if 'sponsored' is the right word."

"You said that he was qualified to do the job. What exactly was the job, at least as far as the first promotion to the executive level?"

"To take some of the burdens off of the senior partners by dealing with the lesser matters that normally came to our attention."

"Why was Mr. Tuttle given a junior partnership and Mr. Diggs not?"

"Diggs proved unsatisfactory, I'm afraid. He was supposed to solve little problems not create more. Tuttle, on the other hand, showed initiative, spirit and a good sense of judgement. Mr. Cartwright was very high on him and I agreed and went along."

"You worked late with Mr. Tuttle on the evening before his death, is that correct?"

"Yes. Sir Sidney asked me to lend a hand when Mr. Cartwright quite inexplicably left the office. There were some very important contracts to be finished and mailed by the next post."

"We thought that they were Mr. Tuttle's responsibility."

"Yes, but under the supervision of Mr. Cartwright. Sir Sidney evidently felt the contracts were too important to be solely Tuttle's responsibility."

"Do you have any idea of why Mr. Cartwright quit his post at such a crucial juncture?"

"I have no idea."

"You worked with Mr. Tuttle and Miss Walker that evening. Did anyone join you, did anything strange happen?"

"No, we worked until 11 or so; Tuttle and I put Miss Walker in a cab; he took the next cab to his home and I took a third one to mine."

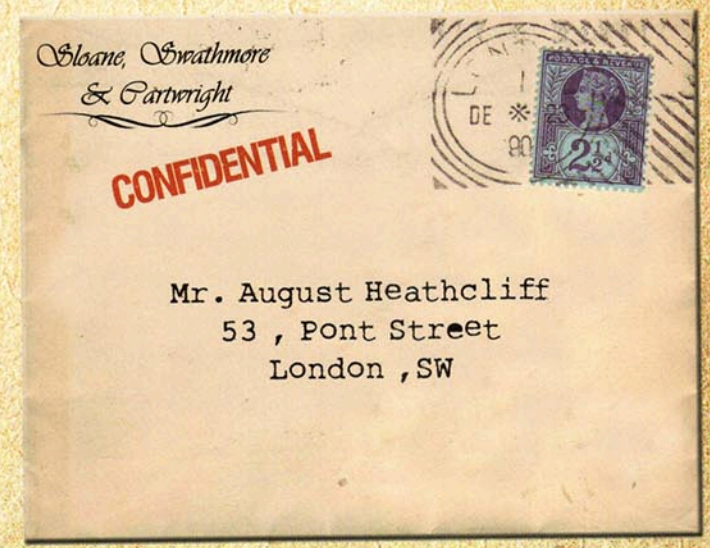
"Thank you, Mr. Swathmore."

42 NW

We arrive at 221 B Baker Street and find that Holmes is out. Watson is there and he explains that Holmes left not ten minutes before.

"He came in fairly bubbling with excitement, humming no less. When I asked him about it, he pulled an envelope from his pocket and said, 'spring is in the air.' Then he went over to his laboratory table and conducted a few tests. I think the envelope is still there."

We walk over to the table and, indeed, the envelope is on the table.



"Then he left without another word," continues Watson. "Holmes is capable of the most erratic behaviour, I'm afraid."

72 NW

John Taylor, to all appearances, must be the oldest chemist in the world. Sitting motionless at his dining table, he seems at least 100 years old. Mercifully, his mental faculties are still intact. "Sorry lads, but I haven't had an active practice in 35 years. I never get around

to telling them to change the listing in the directory. I hope you find what you are looking for elsewhere."

AREA WC

5 WC

After a thorough search, we find the cabbies that took away Brenda Walker and Melvin Tuttle from the Sloane Building the night before the murder. Miss Walker's cabbie says he took her directly to her home at 30 Brook-street.

Tuttle's cabbie says chat he also took Mr. Tuttle directly home. We are unable to find the cabbie that carried away Mr. Swathmore – or at least any cabbie that will admit to doing so.

7 WC

Tuttle's landlady kindly lets us into his flat which we find in a shambles. It is evident that not a nook or cranny had been left untouched by the intruders. As we pick among the rubble, we find several things of interest.

First, there is Tuttle's bank book from the Bank of England. The last three months showed a marked increase in deposits. Next there is an earring – inexpensive costume jewelry such as one might purchase in any department store. Finally there are two letters.

One has no return address and is dated 23 June. It reads:

Darling,

I cannot accept that it is over.
Please, please come to see me.
I love you beyond all caring!

Fay

The other is actually one of a series of letters with the same return address: "V.M. 25 Chichester-street, SW." We find twenty-four such letters dating as far back as December 17, 1889. The one we choose at random is dated March 10, 1890 and reads, in part:

Your high spirits on Sunday gave me great hope. I believe in you and know that you will one day overcome Father's objections. But know that if it takes longer than you would wish, I will wait. I will wait forever if need be!

Ginny

8 WC

During the short trip from the front door to the back of the house, we learn more than we need to know about Bertha Puddle's personal life. Weighing in at something close to 15 stone, Diggs' landlady flounces and bounces, flashes a teasing smile and bats her eyelashes, all in a coquettish display that borders on the grotesque. It seems that she has lately buried her fourth husband and is, "unused to the absence of intimate male companionship," in her words. She quotes her age at 25, a considerable understatement, and proudly displays her perfect white teeth by way of proof. Fortunately, we are saved from viewing other parts of her anatomy by our arrival at a small flower garden at the back of the house.

Harold Diggs, who is puttering about, visibly cringes when Mrs. Puddle calls his name. No doubt he fears that he is targeted as husband number five. It is not until Mrs. Puddle is well away that the colour returns to his cheeks.

Diggs is a tall man in his mid-thirties. Decked out in the apparel of an amateur horticulturist, he still retains a serious look about him, a look that most would find comforting, even prerequisite, in a solicitor. We quickly explain our business and ask about his relationship with Tuttle.

"We got on well enough, I suppose. I will admit, I did not like the man and I thought that others were more qualified for his position, but I bore him no malice."

"You resigned because of his promotion to junior partner, is that correct?"

"Yes, I felt that it was the final insult to me. I had been with the firm for eleven years, Tuttle but two. My work, I say quite immodestly, was superior. When he was promoted and I was not, I felt my prospects with the firm were limited. So I resigned."

"Your dislike was based solely on professional rivalry then?"

"No, it was much more personal. I hold Miss Spring in high regard. I tried to warn her against in-

volvement with the man – he was a cad – but to no avail. I was sorry to see her taken in by his glibness."

Mrs. Puddle reappears at the back door with a delivery man in tow. Curiously, he looks as uncomfortable as all men are who come under her sway. As quickly as he can, he deposits his load and flees. We can't help but notice that the delivery comes from Grayson's Nursery, and that the two bags of weed killer are clearly marked with a skull and crossbones.

We finish our interview but are reluctant to run the gauntlet back through the house. Sensing our predicament, Diggs informs us that there is an exit into the alley behind.

14 WC

At the Office of Records we speak with Disraeli O'Brian about Tuttle.

"Oh, yes. For a stretch of months he came in almost every day on what I took to be his lunch hour. Haven't seen him in two months, though."

"Can you tell us what records he sought?"

"He concerned himself with property transaction files, which consist of the names of owners of a given property lot and the dates when that lot were transferred to another owner. They also listed sale prices."

"Did he ever mention why the interest?"

"He never said and I never asked."

17 WC

There is no record of a will for Melvin Tuttle at Somerset House.

19 WC

The head waiter at Romano's tells us that during the last two months Mr. Swathmore and Mr. Tuttle dined together quite frequently.

29 WC

Although built by Sir Sidney some ten years ago as a monument to his firm's reputation, the Sloane Building houses more than just the offices of Sloane, Swathmore & Cartwright. The ground floor is occupied by several commercial shops that include a shoe repair shop and a glass-eye maker. The second floor is occupied by various professional people, including Brickbat and Buttress, Architects, and Dr. Jerrold Mason, the physician called to the scene. Only the third and domed fourth floor, sitting atop the building like the final tier of a wedding cake, are occupied by the firm.

In the lobby we question Emmett Price, the operator of the executive lift. He is a young, well-favoured lad, neatly decked out in a blue, quasi-military uniform. Although the executive offices are closed, Price is on duty to shuttle up and down the several officers of the law who are roaming about die place. It seems that the police are still investigating "the scene of the crime." Price restates the time of arrivals that morning as given to us by Inspector Lestrade.

"Did you speak to Mr. Tuttle at ail?"

"Just to say 'hello,' which ain't anymore than usual. He was in good spirits, whistling, he was."

"Mrs. Porter and Miss Spring arrived about an hour later, shortly before nine?"

"That's right. Mrs. Porter was the first. She gave me a fresh biscuit like she always does and said good morning. Miss Spring arrived just as I was about to shut the door. She seemed, I don't know, nervous or something. Didn't say a word. She's quite a looker, ain't she?"

"Were you on duty last night?"

"Course. I stay until everybody's gone, no matter how late. I'm the only way up or down, you see."

"Do you recall when everyone left fast night?"

"Times, you mean? Sure. Mr. Cartwright left, oh, a little before noon. Usually he's the one who keeps me late. One for working late, he is. Anyway, yesterday he seemed awful upset. Now he's the one to pass the time of day with me. Asks about me Mum or me girl friend or whatnot. Didn't say a word, that's how I known he was upset. Ah, Sir Sidney left at four, his usual time. Miss Spring and Mrs. Porter left just after five. It was then that Mrs. Porter told me that Mr. Swathmore, Miss Walker and Mr. Tuttle were working late."

"At what time did they leave?"

"It was exactly 11:15. Got to mark down me time, you know."

"Did they leave together or separately?"

"Well, they all come down together but they left in separate cabs. Miss Walker's hansom went down Piccadilly, Mr. Tuttle's went north up Little St. Andrew's and Mr. Swathmore's went west out Castle and turned South on Endell."

At our request, Price takes us to the fourth floor where we find Constables Barnwell and Throgmorton, out of uniform and playing gin rummy. They are momentarily embarrassed by our entrance and sheepishly ask us not to report their conduct to Lestrade. By way of explanation they assure us that everything that was needed to be done had been done, that is, the entire

premises had been searched and nothing suspicious had been found. We promise that Lestrade will hear nothing from us and ask if we can tour the premises. They give us the complete freedom of the floor and access to Tuttle's office. We find nothing of interest either.

31 WC

The Manager of the Drury Lane Theatre, Mr. Phineas Fast, is a man of great charm. A former actor who gave up performing to go into the business end, he still retains a sonorous voice and expansive manner.

"Ah yes, I remember the night of April 9th quite well. It was the closing night of Mr. Henrik Ibsen's new play A Doll's House. In many ways it was a sad night. One hates to see the curtain rung down on such a startling new talent as Mr. Ibsen. And Mrs. Achurch's performance in the lead role was, as usual, brilliant. But we had extended the run for a year and we did have previous commitments to other productions. Hopefully, Mr. Ibsen will allow us to house his next work. In any case, we were sold out that night and unfortunately tickets had been double printed and sold for Box #1. I was called on to resolve an essentially irresolvable situation. It seemed that a young man, such as you described – I don't recall if he gave his name as Tuttle or if he gave some other name – had purchased all six seats in the box, although he and his companion were occupying only two. Shortly before curtain time another party appeared with, regrettably, six properly printed tickets for the night for that box. I'm afraid no inducement would convince the young man to give up the four empty seats and allow two more to be squeezed in. He simply would not hear of it. Much against fire regulations, I was forced to seat the party of six in the orchestra aisle. Of course, I refunded their admission price. No one was happy with the arrangement. The young man was incensed at being disturbed and the other party was just as put out, a free performance of a work destined to become a classic notwithstanding."

"Do you recall anything about the young man's companion?"

"Yes, of course. Before an actor can perform life with any skill, he must observe it. Although I no longer tread the boards, I retain the habits of my early training. The young man's companion was a very attractive woman in her late forties. Dark hair and eyes. Stylishly dressed and aglitter with jewelry – very expensive jewelry. She seemed embarrassed by the intrusion. Also, from looks passed back and forth from the young man to her, I detected a bit of tension between them, altogether independent of the situation."

"Thank you, Mr. Fast, for your time and your remarkable memory."

34 WC

From the size of the proprietor of Lydell's Bakery, we judge that he is very fond of his pastry products.

"Of course, I know Mrs. Porter. She comes into the shop every morning on her way to pick up fresh biscuits. Has been for over fifteen years."

38 WC

At the British Museum we are directed to the office of Michael Kempfield, financial administrator.

"Mr. Kempfield, we meet again."

"Hello, Mr. Wiggins. I must tell you again that the friends and family of Oswald Mason are very appreciative of all your help in the murder investigation. What brings you here today?"

"Another murder, I'm afraid. Melvin Tuttle of the firm of Sloane, Swathmore and Cartwright. We understand that they handle much of the Museum's property holdings. What can you tell us?"

"Henry Swathmore has complete charge of the Museum's Investment Trust. It is a relief to me not to be burdened with the details of the trust's management. That fund has grown under Mr. Swathmore's stewardship and I have complete confidence in him."

"Thank you."

"Good luck."

39 WC

The bookkeeper at the Pharmaceutical Society is willing to cooperate with us. We ask him if he knows where and if it would be possible to obtain chinaberry or extract of chinaberry.

"Chinaberry? Well, let me see...." He flips through a huge musty ledger. "Chinaberry ... oh, it is extremely rare. Practically unavailable outside its native habitat. We here at the society had brought some over more than forty years ago for study purposes, but it was disposed of shortly thereafter. We have no records of any chinaberry being brought into England since that time. If you know anyone who has got some, they must have brought it into the country illicitly."

66 WC

The clerk at Squire & Sons is bewildered when we ask him if they sell chinaberry. "We don't sell anything, sir. We merely do analyses for people, professors and the like. We're more of a consulting firm."

AREA EC

6 EC

"Mr. Swathmore takes care of everything for me," says George Hamilton. "I'm afraid I have no business sense at all."

11 EC

We enter Bell's Baths and are approached by a seedy looking elder, broom in hand, whose generously tattooed forearms tell a tale of life on the salt sea. Shipwrecked now, he seems to us out of place in the opulent surroundings of this leisure-class haunt. But since no one else seems to question his presence and his directions to the manager's office prove accurate, we do not dwell on it overmuch.

Our knock on the manager's door is answered by a booming, "Come in." Once inside we find Mr. Filbert Raike, a giant of a man both in height and breadth. He is dressed in a broad-striped suit which, given his tremendous bulk, borders on the ridiculous. A diamond stickpin, of considerable size and doubtful value, gleams from the folds of his black cravat. His hair is slicked down with enough of a sweet-smelling pomade to cause tearing at close range. In all respects of sound, sight and smell, Mr. Raike is a formidable personage indeed.

With the aid of what must be very powerful legs, he rises from behind his desk to greet us. At first his manner is extremely affable. No doubt he initially thinks of us as prospective customers and so exudes an appropriate oily charm. But once we make known our business, his manner abruptly changes. He plops down into his chair and eyes us with a mixture of caution and malevolence.

"Mr. Henry Swathmore is a member of the club, is he not?

I believe he was here this morning. Did he meet anyone?"

"I do not pry into my customers' private affairs. Whether he met anyone or not, I would not know."

"Was Mr. Melvin Tuttle a member?"

"Ah... yes. Until last week. He resigned."

"Did he give any reason for his resignation?"

"Not that I recall."

"Did Mr. Swathmore bring Mr. Tuttle into the club?" "No. I mean, I have no idea. I'm afraid I have no more time for your questions. I'm a very busy man. Good day." As we are about to leave, the old salt first encountered approaches us again.

"Now if ya's come to ol' Jack Jensen in the first place, it'd saved ya the royal runaround," he whispers, stabbing his thumb to emphasize his point. We understand and pass him a few coins.

"Thankee. This'll go down well tonight at the Bar of Gold. Now, down to cases. Mr. Swathmore met Mr. Livingston this morning."

"Mr. Livingston, the builder?"

"That's 'im. 'E owns the place. Used to be first mate aboard the Glenda, sailin' the China trade. Back in '58, the Cap'n met with an unfortunate accident, or so it was said. Mr. Livingston brought the Glenda through. The owners was so pleased they up an' gives 'im the Cap'n's share an' a fat bonus to boot. That's when he quits the sailor's life and set up for 'isself ashore. We was shipmates on that voyage. So was Mr. Raike, 'course 'e was a might less plump in them days. Anyway, this morning Mr. Raike cleaned out Mr. Tuttle's locker and brought the stuff to his office. Mr. Swathmore and Mr. Livingston were there waiting for a look-see."

"So Mr. Swathmore and Mr. Livingston are fast friends?"

"Been thick as thieves for a long time. Mr. Tuttle joined in, oh, three, four months back."

"What were they looking for in the locker?"

"Don't know. Didn't find it though. Swathmore was in a dither, let me tell ya'!"

We thank him for his help and he jingles the coins as if to say, "You're welcome."

38 EC

At Bart's we find Sir Jasper Meeks in his office huddled over a mass of papers.

"Sorry to intrude, Sir Jasper –"

"No, no, come in," he says with genuine relief. "Can't say if the pen is mightier than the sword but it most definitely is mightier than the scalpel. What can I do for you?"

"Can you tell us about the autopsy performed on Melvin Tuttle?"

"Ah, let's see," he says, rubbing his forehead as if turning the pages of a report. "Died of heart and respiratory failure. No disease present. An examination of the contents of his stomach indicate that he had not eaten since the previous evening. I tested for several common poisons, but I could find no foreign substances. Of course, you must realize that many poisons are virtually undetectable unless you know what you are looking for. Anything else?"

"No, that's all we wanted to know. Thank you."

"Don't run off. Have some tea, chat awhile. Did you by chance catch the cricket finals in the Gold Cup this year?"

46 EC

Miss Alice Spring has evidently done a great deal of weeping, as her red eyes and puffy face testify. Notwithstanding, she is still a very attractive lady. Seated in her small but comfortable flat, she composes herself to answer our questions.

"This morning? I arrived at the building a little before 9 o'clock, I suppose. I'm not sure of the exact time. Mrs. Porter and I rode the lift to the fourth floor together. Mr. Tuttle–"

She threatens to dissolve in a flood of tears but a few quick dabs with a soggy handkerchief save the situation.

"Mr. Tuttle," she begins again, bravely, "was in his office. While Mrs. Porter went around to the executive offices, I went in to see Melvin, Mr. Tuttle."

"Your relationship with Mr. Tuttle was more than professional?"

"We... had been seeing each other for some seven or eight months, yes. But Mr. Tuttle ended it last week."

"Then your business with him that morning was not personal?"

"No. I mean, yes it was. He had given me a gift, a parting gift if you will, and I had decided to return it."

"When he ended your relationship, it must have been quite a shock to you."

"I was deeply hurt. But on reflection, Melvin had never made any promises. We had never talked of... a more permanent situation."

"Did he give you a reason for ending it?"

"He said that he had met another woman, that he was serious about her and didn't think it fair to me to carry on."

"After you saw him that morning, you came back to your desk and remained there?"

"Yes, right up until –"

On the edge throughout, she plunges into the abyss. We do what we can to comfort her but, finding the task impossible, we apologize for our intrusion and leave.

50 EC

We enquire at Grayson's Nursery about the poison content of a specific weed killer.

"Oh, it contains trace elements of strychnine."

"Could one extract the strychnine from it?"

"Possibly. But it would take a very great deal of the powder to yield even a little strychnine."

51 EC

Richard Mainhart is nearsighted and more than slightly hard of hearing, and our interview with him is a series of stops, starts and backtracks. From it we do glean that Sloane, Swathmore and Cartwright have handled his business affairs for some time. They have a completely free hand.

"Mr. Swathmore himself usually delivers whatever papers I need to sign," he says to a bust of Julius Caesar, mistaking it for Wiggins.

52 EC

Porky Shinwell at the Raven & Rat has very little to offer us in the way of information. He knows nothing about the principals in the case. By way of apology, he stands us a pint, or two, or three.



QUESTIONS

Part One

1. Who killed Melvin Tuttle?

2. How was he killed?

3. Why was he killed?

4. Who was the killer's accomplice?

5. To whom was Tuttle secretly engaged?

Part Two

1. Why did Cartwright leave the office suddenly?

2. Why did Miss Spring see Tuttle on the morning of his murder?

3. What is Diggs' hobby?

SOLUTION

We are gathered once again at 221B Baker Street to listen to Holmes' explanation of the case. Standing by the mantel, he draws deeply on his pipe and begins.

"While Mr. Tuttle's untimely demise was indeed tragic, his rapid rise seemed to me far more significant. Two and one half years from junior clerk to junior partner in one of the very best legal firms in London? Most unusual to say the least. Such was my thinking after Lestrade's visit."

"What about the two women?" asks Watson. "Did you discount them as suspects from the beginning?"

"Well, Miss Spring was in love with Tuttle, or at least such an inference could be drawn from her reaction to Tuttle's death – her use of his first name, for example. While poison might be considered by some as a woman's weapon, it is hardly the weapon in a crime of passion. As for Mrs. Porter, let me just say that I found her story singularly unimaginative if it was to be considered anything but the truth.

"From Professor Murray I learned that poison was indeed involved, more to the point, a very rare poison. Also that none of the substances at hand actually contained it. Rather, Tuttle ingested it by some other means and transferred traces to the tea, pipe stem and biscuit. The discrepancy between the high concentration on the cup lip as opposed to the relatively low amount in the tea itself allowed for no other explanation.

"Pursuing the theory that Mr. Tuttle's swift advancement was instrumental in his murder, I needed more information on the circumstances of his promotion. Who better to supply that information that Mrs. Porter? From her, I learned three important things. First, Tuttle was no genius. Capable, hard-working, but hardly brilliant enough to explain his rapid rise. Second, a hint of a curious kind of nepotism. Tuttle's connection with Mrs. Cartwright presented an interesting scenario. At sometime in the past, Tuttle was asked to escort Mrs. Cartwright to some social function as Mr. Cartwright was busy with business matters. Where others might resent such after hours duty, Tuttle saw it as a golden opportunity. He was a charmer and he used that charm to the fullest. Perhaps the relationship ripened into an affair; the note in Tuttle's desk hints as much. Mrs. Cartwright then went to work on her husband. Over a period of time, her unstinting praise had its effect on Mr. Cartwright. He began to believe, without really realizing how or why, that Tuttle was an extraordinary fellow – brilliant in fact – and deserved to be promoted."

"You have just outlined a perfect scenario for murder," says Watson. "Husband finds out the truth, takes an unscheduled leave of absence, plans and executes a crime!"

"True, Watson," replies Holmes, "but there is an unanswered question provoked by the third bit of information. Both Mr. Cartwright and Mr. Swathmore were party to the decision to promote Tuttle. Remember now, Mr. Swathmore does not see Tuttle with Mrs. Cartwright's eyes. Why would he decide in Tuttle's favour? What did Tuttle have on him?

"In any case, while suspects abounded there was still no solution to the method of the crime. Perhaps Miss Brenda Walker, the staff typist, would be able to shed some light on that score. She, Swathmore and Tuttle worked late the previous evening. It took some doing, considering Miss Walker's volubility, but there I struck gold. The envelopes! And provided by Mr. Swathmore!

"Tuttle finished the contracts, sealed up the envelopes and was relaxing with his pipe just as Mrs. Porter brought him his tea. She noted the trembling in his hand as he was lighting his pipe – the first symptom of the poisonous assault on his nervous system. Due to the potency of the poison involved, Tuttle would have to have ingested it immediately before Mrs. Porter's entrance. Since all other substances proved negative, it had to have been the gum in the envelopes. The tea, although innocent itself, served to wash the poison down into Tuttle's stomach, thus accelerating the process.

"A brilliant plan, all things considered. The murder weapon, as it were, was mailed away to be consigned to the nearest waste basket, totally untraceable in a day or two. Unfortunately for Mr. Swathmore, one was posted locally. It was a simple matter to obtain Mr. Heathcliff's address from the Directory, obtain the envelope and test it for chinaberry in my own laboratory.

"In one fell swoop I had the murderer and the method but the motive remained a mystery. Some connection between Tuttle and Swathmore had to be discovered and so it was off to Scotland Yard to inspect the contents of Tuttle's desk. While there were a number of interesting items, the locker key from Bell's Baths seemed the most significant. You recall that Swathmore had an appointment at Bell's on the morning of the murder?

"After paying my 'fee' to ol' Jack, I learned that Swathmore was particularly interested in Tuttle's locker. He was looking for something. Also Mr. Cedrick Livingston entered the case, now a builder and land developer but formerly a seaman. He sailed in the Orient and probably in the South Seas. It took little imagination to see that Livingston was Swathmore's link to the rare poison used in the crime. And if Livingston was party to the murder, he must have been party to whatever it was that Tuttle had over Swathmore. What were they looking for in Tuttle's locker? Might a clue to be found at Tuttle's home?

"As I expected, Tuttle's flat had been thoroughly ransacked by the time I arrived. It was heartening to note, however, that not a corner of the place had been left unturned. It indicated that the intruders did not find what they were looking for. Had they, the debris would have ended at the point where they found it. The letters from 'V.M.' proved most significant. They tell an interesting story and explain Tuttle's voracious need to get ahead. 'V.M.', the initials on the more expensive of the two lockets, was the love of Tuttle's life, despite his other dalliances. Might not he entrust his valuable 'level of advancement' to her? The return address on the envelopes was suspect, however. If the father objected to their liaison, it was probable that it was the address of a trusted friend and not her own. However, a quick look at the Directory showed only one 'V.M.' listed, Virginia Monroe, 'Ginny' being a diminutive of Virginia.

"At the Monroe home the 'why' of the murder came to light. Mr. Swathmore was using his power of attorney over certain trust funds in his keeping to undersell land to Mr. Livingston which he in turn either kept for his own use or sold back to other trusts under Swathmore's care for a large profit. Tuttle evidently discovered the scheme, probably quite by accident, and after compiling a dossier from the office of records – the notation, 'Chancery Lane – 2nd floor – Disraeli O'Brian' on the slip of paper in the two trust files in his desk refers to the Office of Records – Tuttle confronted Swathmore. Tuttle was paid off in cash, as his bank account attests, and more importantly by being promoted. Perhaps Tuttle was dissatisfied with his share or perhaps the simple fault of his knowledge was too much for Swathmore and Livingston."

"And so ends the Case of the Solicitous Solicitor," says Watson.

HOLMES

Holmes has solved this case by following 8 leads: H.R. Murray (22 SW), Mrs Porter (8 NW), Brenda Walker (30 NW), August Heathcliff (53 SW), Scotland Yard (13 SW), Bell's Baths (11 EC), Melvin Tuttle (7 WC) and Virginia Monroe (43 SW)

His score is 100 points.

SCORE

Part One

1. Who killed Melvin Tuttle? Henry Swathmore (20 points).

2. How was he killed? Poison on the contract envelopes which Tuttle sealed (20 points).

3. Why was he killed? Tuttle was blackmailing Swathmore, who was misusing his power of attorney over certain trust funds in his care (20 points).

4. Who was the killer's accomplice? Cedrick Livingston - he supplied Swathmore with the poison (20 points).

5. To whom was Tuttle secretly engaged? Virginia Monroe (20 points).

Part Two

1. Why did Cartwright leave the office suddenly? He received a note (written by Swathmore) informing him that his wife and Tuttle were having an affair (10 points).

2. Why did Miss Spring see Tuttle on the morning of his murder? To return a locket that Tuttle had given her (10 points).

3. What is Diggs' hobby? Gardening (10 points).

To tally your score, add the points obtained by answering the questions, then count the number of leads you've followed (don't count the "free" leads indicated above). Then compare the number of leads you've followed to that of Holmes (8 leads in this case).

If you've followed more leads than Holmes, subtract 5 points from your score for each extra lead. If you've followed fewer leads than Holmes, add 5 to your score for each lead fewer. You'll thus get your final score.

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