

rather childlike, so that one could not have the impression of a young man with a broad set smile upon his face. His eyes, however, were arresting. Seldom in any human head have I seen a pair which bespoke a more intense inward life, so bright were they, so alert, so responsive to every change of thought. His accent was American, but was not accompanied by any eccentricity of speech.

A Good Deal to Discuss

"Mr. Holmes?" he asked, glancing from one to the other. "Ah, yes. Your picture are not unlike you, sir, if I may say so. I believe you have had a letter from my namesake, Mr. Nathan Garrideb, have you not?"

"Pray, sit down," said Sherlock Holmes. "We shall, I fancy, have a good deal to discuss." He took up his sheets of foolscap. "You are, of course, the Mr. John Garrideb mentioned in this document. But surely you have been in England some time?"

"Why do you say that, Mr. Holmes?" I seemed to read sudden suspicion in those expressive eyes.

"Your whole outfit is English," Mr. Garrideb bowed a laugh. "I've read of your tricks, Mr. Holmes, but I never thought I would be the subject of them. Where do you read that?"

"The shoulder cut of your coat, the toes of your boots—could anyone doubt it?"

"Well, well, I had no idea I was so obvious a Britisher. My business brought me over here some time ago, and so, as you see, my outfit is nearly all London. However, I guess your time is of value and we did not meet to talk about the cut of my socks. What about getting down to that paper you hold in your hand?"

Holmes had in some way ruffled our visitor, whose chubby face had assumed a far less amiable expression.

"Patience, patience, Mr. Garrideb," said my friend in a soothing voice. "Dr. Watson would tell you that these little digressions of mine sometimes prove in the end to have some bearing on the matter. But was Mr. Nathan Garrideb not your namesake?"

"Why did he ever drag you into it at all?" asked our visitor, with a sudden outbreak of anger. "What in thunder had you to do with it? Here was a bit of professional business between two gentlemen, and one of them must needs call in a detective. I saw him this morning and he told me this fool trick he had played me, and that's why I am here. But I feel bad about it all the same."

"There was no reflection upon you, Mr. Garrideb. It was simply read upon his part to gain your end—an end which, I understand, equally vital for both of you. He knew that I had means of getting information, and therefore it was very natural that he should apply to me."

Our visitor's angry face gradually cleared.

"Well, that is good," said he. "When I met a man like this morning and he told me he had seen a detective I just asked for your address and came right away. I don't want police butting into a private matter. But if you are content just to help us find the man, there can be no harm in that."

"Well, that is just how it stands," said Holmes. "And now, sir, since you say here we had best have a clear account from your own lips. My friend here knows nothing of the details."

Mr. Garrideb surveyed me with not too friendly a gaze.

"Need he know?" he asked.

"We usually work together."

"Well, there's no reason it should be kept a secret. I'll give you the facts as short as I can make them. If you came from Kansas, I would not need to explain to you who Alexander Hamilton Garrideb was. He made his money in real estate, and afterwards in the wheat pit at Chicago, but he spent it in buying up as much land as would make one of your counties, lying along the Arkansas river, west of Fort Dodge. It's grazing land and lumber land and arable land and mineralized land, and just every sort of land that brings dollars to the man that owns it.

"He had no kith nor kin—or if he

document and by his own account he is a provincial American lately landed in London. There have been no advertisements. You know that I miss nothing there. They are my favorite covert for putting up a bird, and I would never have overlooked such a pheasant as that.

"I never knew a Dr. Lysander Starr of Topeka. Touch him where you would he was false. I think the fellow is really an American, but he has worn his accent smooth with years of London. What is his game, then, and what motive lies behind this preposterous search for Garridebs. I believe it's worth our attention for, granting that the man is a rascal, he is certainly a complex and ingenious one. We must now find out if our other correspondent is a fraud also. Will you be kind enough to ring him up, Watson?"

I did so and heard a thin, quavering voice at the other end of the line.

"Yes, yes, I am Mr. Nathan Garrideb. Is Mr. Holmes there? I should very much like to have a word with Mr. Holmes."

My friend took the instrument and I heard the usual syncopated dialogue.

"Yes, he has been here. I understand that you don't know him—How long? Only two days!—Yes, yes, of course, it is a most captivating prospect. Will you be at home this evening? I suppose your namesake will not be there—Very good, we shall come then, for I would rather have a chat without him—Dr. Watson will come with me—I understood from your note that you did not go out often—Well, we shall be round about six. You need not mention it to the American lawyer—Very good. Good-bye."

It was twilight of a lovely spring evening, and even Little Ryder st., one of the smaller offshoots from the Edgware road, within a stone-throw of old Tyburn Tree of evil memory, looked golden and wonderful in the slanting rays of the setting sun. The particular house to which we were directed was a large, old-fashioned, early Georgian edifice with a flat brick face broken only by two deep bay windows on the ground floor. It was on this ground floor that our clients lived, and indeed the low windows proved to be the front of the huge room in which he spent his waking hours. Holmes pointed as we passed to the small brass plate which bore the curious name.

"Has been up some years, Watson," he remarked, indicating its discolored surface. "It's his real name, anyhow, and that is something to note."

Holmes visits his client

The house had a common stair, and there were a number of names painted in the hall, some indicating offices and some private chambers. It was not a collection of residential flats, but rather the abode of Bohemian bachelors. Our client opened the door for us himself and apologized by saying that the woman in charge left at 4 o'clock. Mr. Nathan Garrideb proved to be a very tall, loose-jointed, round-backed person, gaunt and bald, some sixty-odd years of age. He had a cadaverous face, with the dull dead skin of a man to whom exercise was unknown. Large round spectacles and a small projecting goat's beard combined with his stooping attitude to give him an expression of peering curiosity. The general effect, however, was amiable, though eccentric.

The room was as curious as its occupant. It looked like a small museum. It was both broad and deep with cupboards and cabinets all round, crowded with specimens, geological and anatomical cases of butterflies and moths flanked each side of the entrance. A large table in the centre was littered with all sorts of debris, while the tall brass tube of a powerful microscope bristled up among them.

As I glanced round I was surprised at the universality of the man's interests. Here was a case of ancient coins. There was a cabinet of flint instruments. Behind his central table was a large cupboard of fossil bones. Above was a line of plaster skulls with such names as "Neanderthal," "Heidelberg," "Cro-Magnon" printed beneath them. It was clear that he was a student of many subjects. As he stood in front

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really anxious to acquire an estate in America?"

"Certainly not, sir. Nothing would induce me to leave my collection. But this gentleman has assured me that he will buy me out as soon as we have established our claim. Five million dollars was the sum named. There are a dozen specimens in the market at the present moment which fill gaps in my collection and which I am unable to purchase for want of a few hundred pounds. Just think what I could do with \$5,000,000! Why, I have the nucleus of a national collection!"

His eyes gleamed behind his great spectacles. It was very clear that no pains would be spared by Mr. Nathan Garrideb in finding a namesake.

The Last Garrideb Found

"I merely called to make your acquaintance, and there is no reason why I should interrupt your studies," said Holmes. "I prefer to establish personal touch with those with whom I do business. There are few questions I need ask, for I have your very clear narrative in my pocket and I filled up the blanks when this American gentleman called. I understand that up to this week you were unaware of his existence."

"That is so. He called on me last Tuesday."

"Did he tell you of our interview today?"

Yes, he came straight back to me. He had been very angry."

"Why should he be angry?"

"He seemed to think it was some reflection on his honor. But he was quite cheerful again when he returned."

"Did he suggest any course of action?"

"No, sir, he did not."

"Has he had, or asked for, any money from you?"

"No, sir, never!"

"You see no possible object he has in view?"

"None, except what he states."

"Did you tell him of our telephone appointments?"

"Yes, sir, I did."

Holmes was lost in thought. I could see that he was puzzled.

"Have you any articles of great value in your collection?"

"No, sir, I am not a rich man. It is a good collection, but not a very valuable one."

"You have no fear of burglars?"

"Not the least."

"How long have you been in those rooms?"

"Nearly five years."

Holmes' cross-examination was interrupted by an imperative knocking at the door. No sooner had our client unlatched it than the American lawyer burst excitedly into the room.

"Here you are!" he cried, waving a

"Quite so," said Holmes. "I think what this gentleman says is very true." Mr. Nathan Garrideb shrugged his shoulders with a disconsolate air.

"I shall go," said he.

"Well, if you insist, I shall go," said he. "It is certainly hard for me to refuse you anything, considering the glory of honor that you have brought into my life."

"Then it is agreed," said Holmes, "and no doubt you will let me have a report as soon as you can."

"I'll see to that," said the American. "Well," he added, looking at his watch, "I'll have to get on. I'll call tomorrow, Mr. Nathan, and see you off to Birmingham. Coming my way, Mr. Holmes? Well, then, good bye, and we may have good news for you tomorrow night."

I noticed that my friend's face cleared when the American left the room, and the look of thoughtful perplexity had vanished.

"I wish I could look over your collection, Mr. Garrideb," said he. "In my profession all sorts of odd knowledge comes useful, and this room of yours is a storehouse of it."

Our client shone with pleasure and his eyes gleamed from behind his big glasses.

"I had always heard, sir, that you were a very intelligent man," said he. "I could take you round now, if you have the time."

"Unfortunately, I have not. But these specimens are so well labeled and classified that they hardly need your personal explanation. If I should be able to look in tomorrow I presume that there would be no objection to my glancing over them."

"None at all. You are most welcome. The place will, of course, be shut up, but Mrs. Saunders is in the basement up to 4 o'clock and would let you in with her key."

"Well, I happen to be clear tomorrow. If you would say a word to Mrs. Saunders, it would be quite in order. By the way, who is your house agent?"

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"But what is his game?"

"Well, it begins to define itself. I have been to the house agents. Our client, as he told us, has been there five years. It was unlet for a year before then. The previous tenant was a man named Waldron. Waldron's appearance was well remembered at the office. He had suddenly vanished, and nothing more has been heard of him. He was a tall, bearded man with very dark features. Now, Preston, the man whom Killer Evans had shot, was, according to Scotland Yard, a tall, dark man with a beard. As a working hypothesis, I think we may take it that Preston, the American criminal, used to live in the very room which our innocent friend now devotes to his museum. So at last we get a link, you see?"

"And the next link?"

"Quite so," said Holmes. "I think what this gentleman says is very true." Mr. Nathan Garrideb shrugged his shoulders with a disconsolate air.

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