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Sunday Magazine

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THREE GARRIDEBS

By Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

way was to ad-
the agony columns
have done that. Mr.
No replies."
r me! Well, it is
ly a most curious lit-
blem. I may take a
at it in my telegra-
way, it is curious
u should have come
opeka. I used to
a correspondent—he
now—old Dr. Lysan-
arr, who was Mayor
ly."

old Dr. Starr!
e visitor. "His name
honored. Well, Mr.
s, I suppose all we
is to report to you
t you know how we
ss. I reckon you will
within a day or two."
t this assurance our
can bowed and de-

now had lit his pipe
e sat for some time
e curious smile upon
ce.
Well?" I asked at last.
m wondering, Watson
wondering!"
what?"

His face turned upon
us with a glare of in-
flamed rage, which grad-
ually softened into a
stammered grin.

It was twilight of a lovely spring evening,
and even Little Ryder street, 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

Holmes took his pipe from his lips.
"I was wondering, Watson, what on earth
could be the object of this man in telling
us such a signature of lies. I nearly asked
him so—for there are times when a brutal
frontal attack is the best policy—but I
judged it better to let him think he had
fooled us. Here is a man with an English
coat froayed at the elbow and trousers
barged at the knee with a year's wear, and
yet by this document and by his own ac-
count he is a provincial American lately
landed in London. There have been no ad-
vertisements in the agony columns. 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
cock 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 Lon-
don. What is his game, then, and what
motive lies behind this preposterous search
for Garridebs? I believe its worth our at-
tention; for, granting that the man is a rascal,
he is certainly a complex and in-
sistent one. We must now find out if our
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 synopsized 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 eve-
ning? I suppose your camera-obscura 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 understand from
your note that you don't go out often.
Well, we shall be round about 6.
You need not mention it to the American
lawyer. . . . Very good. Good-by!"

It was twilight of a lovely spring evening,
and even Little Ryder street, 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 client
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."

The house had a common stair, and there
were a number of names painted in the
hall, some indicating offices and some pri-
vate 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 say-
ing that the woman in charge left at 4
o'clock. Mr. Nathan Garrideb proved to be
a very tall, loose-jointed, round-backed per-
son, 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 goatee beard combined
with his stooping attitude to give him an
expression of peering curiosity. The gen-
eral effect, however, was amiable, though
eccentric.

The room was as curious as its occu-
pant. It looked like a small museum. It
was both broad and deep with cupboards
and cabinets all round, crowded with spec-
imens, geological and anatomical. Cases of
butterflies and moths flanked each side
of the entrance. A large table in the center
was littered with all sorts of debris, while
the tall brass tube of a powerful micro-
scope 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," "Hohleberg,"
"Cro-Magnon" printed beneath them. It
was clear that he was a student of many
subjects. As he stood in front of us now,
he held a piece of chamois leather in his
right hand with which he was polishing a
coin.

"Syracusan—of the best period," he ex-

plained, holding it up. "They degenerated
greatly toward the end. At their best I
hold them supreme, though some prefer the
Alexandrian school. You will find a chair
here, Mr. Holmes. Pray allow me to clear
these bones. And you, sir—ah, yes, Dr.
Watson—if you would have the goodness to
put the Japanese vase to one side. You see
round me my little interests in life. My
doctor lectures me about never going out,
but why should I go out when I have so
much to hold me here? I can assure you
that the adequate cataloguing of one of
those cabinets would take me three good
months."

Holmes looked round him with curiosity.
"But do you tell me that you never go
out?" he said.

"Now and again I drive down to Sothe-
by's or Christie's. Otherwise I very seldom
leave my room. I am not too strong and
my researches are very absorbing. But you
can imagine, Mr. Holmes, what a terrific
shock—pleasant but terrific—it was for me
when I heard of this unparalleled good for-
tune. It only needs one more Garrideb to
complete the matter, and surely we can find
one. I had a brother, but he is dead, and
female relatives are disqualified. But there
must surely be others in the world. I
heard that you handled strange cases, and
that was why I sent to you. Of course
this American gentleman is quite right, and
I should have taken his advice first, but I
acted for the best."

"I think you acted very wisely indeed,"
said Holmes. "But are you really anxious
to acquire an estate in America?"

"Certainly not, sir. Nothing would in-
duce 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 un-
able 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. I will be the Hans
Sloman of my age."

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

"I merely called to make your acquaint-
ance, 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 ex-
istence."

"That is so. He called on me last Tues-
day."

"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 reflec-
tion on his honor. But he was quite cheer-
ful 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 ap-
pointment?"
"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 these
rooms?"
"Nearly five years."

Holmes's cross-examination was inter-
rupted by an imperative knocking at the
door. No sooner had our client unlatched
it than the American lawyer burst excited-
ly into the room.

"Here you are!" he cried, waving a
paper over his head. "I thought I would be
in time to get you. Mr. Nathan Garrideb,
my congratulations! You are a rich man,
sir. Our business is happily finished and
all is well. As to you, Mr. Holmes, we ear-

only say we are sorry if we have given
you any useless trouble."

He handed over the paper to our client,
who stood staring at a marked advertise-
ment. Holmes and I leaned forward and
read it over his shoulder. This is how it
ran:

HOWARD GARRIDEB
Constructor of Agricultural
Machinery

Bladders, reapers, steam and hand plows,
drills, harrows, farmers' carts, buck-
boards, and all other appliances.
Estimates for Artesian Wells.

APPLY GROSSENER BUILDINGS,
ASTON.

"Glorious!" gasped our host. "That makes
our third man."

"I had opened up inquiries in Birming-
ham," said the American, "and my agent
there has sent me this advertisement from
a local paper. We must hustle and put the
thing through. I have written to this man
and told him that you will see him in his
office tomorrow afternoon at 4 o'clock."

"You want me to see him?"
"What do you say, Mr. Holmes? Don't
you think it would be wise? Here am I,
a wandering American, with a wonderful
tale. Why should he believe what I tell
him? But you are a Britisher with solid
references, and he is bound to take notice
of what you say. I would go with you if
you wished, but I have a very busy day to-
morrow, and I could always follow you if
you are in any trouble."

"Well, I have not made such a journey
for years."

"It is nothing, Mr. Garrideb. I have
figured out your trains. You leave at 12
and should be there before 2. Then you
can be back the same night. All you have
to do is to see this man, explain the matter,
and get affidavits of his existence. By the
Lord!" he added hotly, "considering I've
come all the way from the center of
America, it is surely little enough if you
go a hundred miles in order to put this mat-
ter through."

"Quite so," said Holmes. "I think what
this gentleman says is very true."

Mr. Nathan Garrideb shrugged his shoul-
ders with a disconsolate air.

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

"Then that he 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-by, 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 ex-
planation. 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
afternoon. If you would say a word to
Mrs. Saunders, it would be quite in order.
By the way, who is your house agent?"

Our client was amazed at the sudden
question.

"Holloway & Steele, in the Edgware
Road. But why?"

"I am a bit of an archaeologist myself
when it comes to houses," said Holmes,
laughing. "I was wondering if this was
Queen Anne or Georgian."

"Georgian, beyond doubt."

"Really, I should have thought a little
earlier. However, it is easily ascertained.
Well, good-by, Mr. Garrideb, and may you
have every success in your Birmingham
journey."

The house agent's was close by, but we
found that it was closed for the day, so we

