

The Adventure of the

NOTE: This is the third of a series of stories, never before published in a newspaper, in which "Good old Watson" tells some of the most thrilling adventures of Sherlock Holmes.—(Editor.)

IT MAY have been a comedy or it may have been a tragedy. It cost one man his reason, it cost me a bloodletting, and it cost yet another man the penalties of the law. Yet there was certainly an element of comedy. Well, you shall judge for yourselves.

I remember the date very well, for it was in the same month that Holmes refused a knighthood for services which may perhaps some day be described. I only refer to the matter in passing, for in my position of partner and confidant I am obliged to be particularly careful to avoid any indiscretion. I repeat, however, that this enables me to fix the date, which was the latter end of June, 1902, shortly after the conclusion of the South African War. Holmes had spent several days in bed, as was his habit from time to time, but he emerged that morning with a long foolscap document in his hand and a twinkle of amusement in his austere gray eyes.

"There is a chance for you to make some money, Watson," said he. "Have you ever heard the name of Garrideb?"

I admitted that I had not.

"Well, if you can lay your hand upon a Garrideb, there's money in it."

"Why?"

"Ah, that's a long story—rather a whimsical one too. I don't think in all our explorations of human complexities we have ever come upon anything more singular. The fellow will be here presently for cross-examination, so I won't open the matter up till he comes. But meanwhile that's the name we want."

The telephone directory lay on the table beside me, and I turned over the pages in a rather hopeless quest. But to my amazement there was this strange name in its due place. I gave a cry of triumph.

"Here you are, Holmes! Here it is!"

Holmes took the book from my hand. "Garrideb, N.," he read. "138 Little Ryder street, W. Sorry to disappoint you, Watson, but this is the man himself. That is the address upon his letter. We want another to match him."

Mrs. Hudson had come in with a card on a tray. I took it up and glanced at it.

"Why, here it is!" I cried in amazement.

"This is a different initial. John Garrideb, Counselor at Law, Moorville, Kansas, U.S.A."

Holmes smiled as he looked at the card. "I'm afraid you must make yet another effort, Watson," said he. "This gentleman is also in the plot already, though I certainly did not expect to see him this morning. However, he is in a position to tell us a good deal which I want to know."

A moment later he was in the room. Mr. John Garrideb, counselor at law, was a short, powerful man with the round, fresh, chestnut-brown face characteristic of so many American men of affairs. The general effect was chubby and rather childlike, so that one received the impression of quite 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.

"Mr. Holmes?" he asked, glancing from one to the other. "Ah, yes. Your pictures 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 forced a laugh. "I've read of your tricks, Mr. Holmes, but I never thought I would be the subject of them. Where did 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. But business brought me over here some time ago, and so, as you say, my outfit is nearly all London. How-

ever, 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 directions of mine sometimes prove in the end to have some bearing on the matter. But why did Mr. Nathan Garrideb not come with you?"

"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 it 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 zeal upon his part to gain your end—an end which is, 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 puts it different," said he.

"When I went to see him this morning and he told me he had sent to a detective I just asked for your address and came right away. I don't want police business 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 are 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 had, I never heard of it. But he took a kind of pride in the queerness of his name. That was what brought us together. It was in the law at Topeka, and one day I had a visit from the old man and he was tickled to death to meet another man with his own name. It was his pet and he was dead set to find out if there were any more Garridebs in the world. 'Find me another!' said he. I told him I was a busy man and could not spend my life hiking round the world in search of Garridebs. 'None the less,' said he, 'that is just what you will do if things pan out as I planned them.' I thought he was joking, but there was a powerful lot of meaning in the words, as I was soon to discover.

"For he died within a year of saying them and he left a will behind him. It was the queerest will that has ever been filed in the State of Kansas. His property was divided into three parts, and I was to have one on condition that I found two Garridebs who would share the remainder. It's \$5,000,000 for each if it is a cent, but we can't lay a finger on it until we all three stand in a row.

"It was so big a chance that I just let my legal practice slide and I set forth looking for Garridebs. There is not one in the United States. I went through it, sir, with a fine-tooth comb, and never a Garrideb could I catch. Then I tried the old country. Sure enough, there was the name in the London telephone directory. I went after him two days ago and explained the whole matter to him. But he is a lone man like myself, with some women relations but no men. It says three adult men in the will. So, you see, we still have a vacancy, and if you can help to fill it we will be very ready to pay your charges."

"Well, Watson," said Holmes with a smile, "I said it was rather whimsical, did I not? I should have thought, sir, that your



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obvious way was to use in the agency of the papers."

"I have done it, Holmes. No reply."

"Dear me! We certainly must do the problem. I'm slanting at it in my way. It is that you should have from Topeka. I have a correspondent in dead now—old der Starr, who was in 1890."

"Good old Dr. said our visitor."

"I'm honored, Holmes. I suppose can do is to help and let you know progress. I peek hear within a day. With this assist American bowed ported."

Holmes had it and he sat for with a curious smile on his face.

"Well?" I asked. "I am wondering just wondering 'At what?'"