

The Counterfeiting Deacon

A Holmes and Watson Story

After I part with Sherlock Holmes at Harwich on our return from Amsterdam and the wrap-up of the Night Watchman case, I see very little of him for the next eighteen months.

In this period, my fame or infame, as the Chronicler of a series of successful and interesting Sherlock Holmes cases grows, Strand magazine publishes the ones that I can write up without stepping on sensitive toes, my medical practice also grows, as does our social commitments. Our natural bent is to attend symphony concerts in the main, but the invitations from literary London are too agreeable to pass up. Thus we rub shoulders with the rich and famous and as my heiress wife Eliza, sometimes quips, the rugged and beggared of contemporary literary society, in the world magnet of Victorian London.

One invitation I find hard to decline is to the opening shoot at Lord Erskine's country place, 'Henscombe Park', in the Surrey Hills. This is quite a big shoot to which we take our wives. My Eliza is no sycophant, but her earlier life experience as a house agent in Truro, has taught her to hold her own in any society. While she doesn't go out of her way to pick a fight in the snotty or toffee-nosed women circles we are now perforce pressured to mix with, she is more than capable to put down any of the women who try it on with her.

This event proves both enjoyable and interesting. It's a big shoot and as my claim to fame is more illusory than real, I get placed well down the shooting line with a pleasant young man loading for me. He is very shooting savvy and this is quite a help to me on the customs and more, of country house shooting parties. I impress him just a bit in that my shotgun, which came to me as a present on one of Holmes' cases, is a marvellous, but well-used Holland & Holland 12 gauge. Thus I'm not standing in the line holding a brand new gun; the hallmark of the *nouve riche*. The conditions are a bit tricky as a strong wind is blowing and the birds are coming over high. My loader's comments such as, 'lead him a bit more' or 'in some situations shoot right at the bird, Sir', are extremely helpful and I like to think the number of birds that I down, reflect credit on him as a loader.

After our first break to allow us to have a pull on our flasks and a cigar, I am somewhat surprised to see Secret Service man, the Honourable Harry Jenkins, come walking along the line. He reaches over to my loader for the second Holland and Holland matched gun.

"I'll load for the Doctor for a while. It's private business," he says. "Just step back well out of earshot."

"I'm sorry," I say to the snubbed loader, "but I'm sure it's important. Just do as he says." And the man does. Jenkins, however, knows what he's about and his sharp instructions see me drop the next seven birds in a row. I'm giving the gun dogs plenty to do. At the next break, Jenkins says,

"Sir David Malachai wants to have a word with you and Sherlock jointly. We have another counterfeiter on the loose."

One of the reasons Sherlock has been able to retire with his artist partner, Amelie, and to waste his talents keeping bees on the Sussex Downs, is the huge amount of money that the Bank of England paid him for locating nearly one and a half million pounds skimmed from the Bank by a former employee. I've written up

the details of this fascinating and somewhat dangerous investigation under the title of 'The Watchers', but Sherlock, at this point in time, is not agreeable to it being published; 'down the track a bit, my dear Watson,' he says, 'but definitely not yet.' I look back on this case kindly as the wrap-up of it took us both to Rome. The final pieces of the jigsaw were in fact put in place in a stroll around and an inspection of the famous Pantheon in that city. Pleasant memories indeed, but Jenkins pulls me back into the present.

"What about setting it up?" he says. "Anytime in the next three weeks. Wire me at the Bank when you set a date."

We train to Brighton for our meet-up and a driver and a smart buggy and pair take us out to the Holmes' demesne.

"This is a bit of a hoot, John," Eliza says as we bowl along in marvellous bright sunshine. "We haven't seen Sherlock and Amelie for yonks. Speaking personally, I think we have both missed them."

"So long as they are happy," I reply. "It's rather amazing that my restless old friend, Sherlock Holmes, has settled into marital (but not married) bliss."

Eliza laughs. "It just proves that there's someone for everyone," she says.

The driver drops us off at Holmes' cottage.

Sir David Malachai, Jewish, Head of the Bank of England is along with the omni-present the Honourable Harry Jenkins. We find them sitting in steamer chairs on the best bit of lawn I have ever seen in England; land of lawns. Malachai's wife, Bettina, is full-figured; perhaps opulent describes her better, in sharp contrast with the lean Anglo-Saxon looks of Amelie and Eliza. It's an unusual meeting and I am pleased that both Eliza and Amelie gather Lady Malachai under their wing and soon have her on a cottage garden tour. Malachai, I can see is also happy with this and over a cup of tea explains what he wants.

It seems that there is another batch of forged English five pound notes in circulation. It's not on a significant scale; however Malachai is worried that it may be the tip of the iceberg. He produces some examples and for the life of me, I can't pick them from the real thing.

"Where are you finding them?" Holmes asks.

"London only," Jenkins says. "They are coming into 25 banks in the metropolis." He produces a map with the banks circled. "This particular bank gets much of what we have found," he says. "We have sourced a deal of it to a Jewish money-changer account. Here is his name and address. We can, of course, come down heavy on him, but the view of the Bank," – he looks at Malachai who nods – "is that a discreet approach is best. Thus we have come to you."

Holmes chuckles. "I've been just a bit bored of late," he says. "I expect we can look into this matter a bit. You seem to have done a deal of the needed spadework. How are you situated, Watson?" he asks. "Time to give the hounds another run do you think?"

"As always, Holmes," I say, "I'm at your disposal." The business done, we have a pleasant cold lunch on the lawn and make our separate ways back to London.

Chapter Two

Thus, about 10 days later, we met up with a big upstanding uniformed Peeler and descend on the identified moneyman. He looks askance at us when we enter his shop. Holmes introduces us and says,

“We are here to interview you on a money matter. This is not necessarily Police business, but we have brought along First Class Constable Wilkensen just to demonstrate that we can easily make it so if you won’t co-operate with us. The choice is very much yours.”

“I’ve nothing to hide,” the Jewish chap says, “ask away.”

“Fine,” says Holmes. “I think we can let you go about your usual duties Constable. You have played your part here and I will commend you to higher authority in due course.” The copper touches his helmet and leaves.

We get down to cases with the money-changer and produce the dodgy fivers. He inspects them with a magnifying glass. “They look kosher to me,” he says. “In fact if they are not, it would take a specialist to prove it.”

“You can take my word for it,” Holmes says. “Now if you are indeed an unsuspecting victim of this, let’s run through things to get to the bottom of this matter.”

“I change money for anyone,” the man says. “I take a percentage as is normal. The only out of sync aspect of these notes, all of which I add a tiny identity mark to when I change them, is that they are all changed for people that you would never imagine have a full blown five pound note in their pocket. The sort of people I’m talking about would, in the normal course of business if used to buy something, arouse suspicion and enquiry from the shopkeeper selling the goods. This is the common thread that runs through this scam, if it is a scam.”

We spend three hours with the man and determine that the note-changing is always on a Monday. The money-changer has no pattern of change required. This chap’s premises are very central to a lot of mainstream London with all its nooks and crannies.

Holmes says, “We will have to grab one of the customers you describe to find the source of the fivers.” The man gives us a steely look.

“Business is business, Mr Holmes,” he says, “and I change a lot of these fivers. People pass other money-changers to come to me. I must be regarded as a reliable money man. I don’t think you can get my business a bad name; not at all, at all. Perhaps I need a lawyer friend to take part in future discussions.”

“Your point is fair,” Holmes says. “Here is something we could try that would stifle your quite reasonable objection.”

Thus we park Pew, the blind beggar, in the vicinity of the money-changer’s shop. Pew is a class act. He probably has 20/20 vision, but with his dark glasses, white stick and Boer War uniform coat and medals, is a sort of clean-cut beggar. He works in tandem with a very tough tough-one, Lenny. Lenny is quick, smart and belligerent when needed and keeps the low-lives away from Pew.

Holmes comes up to stay at my house off the Bayswater Road for the initial investigation. We hansom cab down to the near vicinity of the money-changer. His shop is in the shadow of one of Wren’s 112 London Churches; this being St Norbert’s. It’s a sort of Victorian upmarket or less downmarket section of London. We join Harry Jenkins for breakfast in a nearby tavern. Holmes has made arrangements with the money-changers to identify those changing notes by surreptitious signals of an ordinary nature. He also has Eric, our telegram boy; much at our old rooms delivering these in our Baker Street days. Eric, in turn, has mustered up seven street Arabs (the Baker Street irregulars, as we once used to call them). Eric has fed them well from a nearby food barrow vendor and they are ready to run. He has them tucked away on a building site nearby. Eric touches base with Sherlock.

“All set, Eric?” he asks.

"Surely, Sir," comes the reply.

"Well," Sherlock says, "when Pew tips you the wink, cast your hounds and get on the scent. I'm hoping by days end we will have identified the dwelling place of at least five of the people we are interested in."

But the nearby hardware merchant puts an early spike in our well organised wheel. He takes umbrage at Pew setting up begging near his shop.

"Off with you!" he says to Pew. "We move on pests like you around here."

"I've served my Queen and Country," Pew starts to say.

"And so have I," the hardware man says, "and I'm not begging on the streets."

Lenny quickly intervenes. He's a bit frightening to look at, but can talk very persuasively if he wants to. "Back off!" he says. "I'm the minder. Just get inside your shop and stay there. This is deeper than you think and we don't want undue attention called to us."

"Or what?" the hardware man says.

"Or I'll break your arm."

"And who will help you?"

Lenny puts on his menacing look. "Believe me Mr Hardware man," he says, "I need no help, but you will."

This of course is starting to attract attention and Jenkins, peering through the small paned window of the tavern says, "I'd best put this to rest." And briskly crosses the street to the hardware shop. He flashes his Warrant Card from the Treasury and taking the man by the forearm, walks him back into the shop.

"Well done," says Holmes when Harry returns. "What did you say to him?"

Jenkins says, "I told him to keep schtum and cause no further attention to be drawn or I would take him into Bow Street for two days questioning."

"And what did he say?" Holmes asks.

"Ah....can you do that? And I said, 'try me'."

With the operation under way we return to my house as I'm due for surgery there. We meet up with Eric at the Book and Candle Tavern at days end.

"We followed five," Eric says. "We know now where that five live. They are all poor, but perhaps honest or as honest as poor men can hope to be."

He hands over the list of addresses. After Eric goes, Lenny and Pew come in. Holmes stands them a pint or three and briefs them for the next step. This, to my surprise, is a watching brief for next Sunday afternoon. After they go, I look interrogatively at Holmes.

"Elementary, my dear Watson," he says. "They are in early on Mondays to change the fivers. Thus we can deduce they get them over the weekend, almost certainly on Sundays."

The watching brief involves Pew and Lenny and also the street Arabs. A week later, we have found out that the only visitor common to the five, whose houses we have staked out on Sunday afternoons, is a clergyman. We have a good look at him the next Sunday and find, to our surprise, that he travels by hansom coach and that he has visited 15 clergymen at various Wren parishes. He doesn't stay long; he can't, he has too many parish houses to visit. We follow him home to the Close of Southwark Cathedral.

Our mark is not a big man, but neither is he small; he's well-built and very alert. We know this by the subterfuges we had to take to keep him in sight, but unaware of what we were doing. Light and not searching enquiry reveals he is the Honourable Lloyd Blessington; which perhaps is not a bad name for a cleric.

Holmes says, "We have dug deeply here and there on this matter and if we have raised any suspicions, its best we let them settle. Let's regroup in six weeks' time to get back on the job."

And we do that. Holmes again comes to stay.

Chapter Three

"We have some evening visitors coming," he says. "We will need your lounge room to talk to them in."

Over three hours that night and the next, the seven come in and leave at different times. They are the oddest bunch, but quite respectable looking. Holmes tells them all separately – 'I want this man followed' – and gives them an outstanding accurate drawing of the mark. These, of course, all done by Amelie; who is ahead of her time in doing what many years later becomes known as Identity Kit pictures. He gives them all a good idea of what he wants. He wants to trace the very Reverend Lloyd Blessington's movements, both clerical and private. He tells them all,

"This is, I think, an intelligent man and your job is for each one of you to trace his movements, just on one day of the week for that day of the week. It's a seven week programme, in which, I hope that he will not pick up on the follower. You are all clever people and you must be very circumspect in tracking him."

Holmes second guesses the followers programme and revises the days following into half days after the watcher on week three thinks Blessington may – he stresses may – have rumbled him. "He doubled back on me," the man says, "but it may also be that he had forgotten something."

We are of course, perfectly aware of the gruelling Sunday afternoon schedule, but we find out about other fixed commitments. He visits his parents near Wimbledon weekly; he spends one afternoon a week in the private Library at St Pauls Cathedral; and somewhat to our amusement, we find he trains up to the Counties to ride out with the famous Quorn Hunt on Wednesdays. Not a hireling either, he has a big black hunter stabled in Livery near the Quorn. Many of the Clergy have private means of course, but this chap's parents are not rich, nor has he a rich wife or any wife for that matter.

Holmes suggests that I tap my father-in-law, the very Reverend John Curnow, also known as, since his brother's demise in the early part of the Boer War, Lord Roscommon. He has been Vicar at Truro Cathedral now since 1890.

"You should be able to dig up some detail on Blessington," Homes suggests. "The devil with this enquiry or any enquiry touching on the Church of England," he continues, "is that the Clergy, irrespective of their standing in the hierarchy of the established church, have been university educated and are not fools. Any enquiry touching on a clergyman can quickly touch a nerve and cause repercussions. Anyway, see what you can find out."

John Curnow is a smart, lazy man. He could and should be a Bishop at least, but he has never, through his family, been short of the readies and has led an undemanding life as one of Truro Cathedral's vicars. "My ambition, John," he has told me in past days, "is to live and die a vicar of Truro Cathedral."

"You have no idea," he now says, "of the bitchy nature of the Clergy. I've no leaning into joining the competition to get on. I've arrived where I want to be and here I will stay. I'm rich enough from my inheritance to not have social climbing, upwardly mobile clerics shafting me as I go. Umm, now.....he continues, picking up his reference book on the clergy. "Here we are.....Lloyd Athelstane Blessington,

age 37, unmarried, Deacon of the section of the church that takes in dear old London. He has an MA with Honours from Oxford. He went through his church studies easily and nowadays, he looks after the staffing of most Church of England London churches, which basically are the wonderful 112 churches attributed to Sir Christopher Wren. That's the official bit. In confidence, I can tell you he is an unobtrusive, but very, very smart member of the Church." He continues, "He has this theory that for those clergy who do not come from or marry money, the stark reality of the penurious nature of their calling gets to them. They take on the problems of their parishioners and that, coupled with living like church mice on small stipends, ends in many of them taking to drink or at least using alcohol as a crutch. They lose their punch and once on the turps, don't bother much with the quality of their Sunday teaching. What Blessington does, is to apply his huge talents to writing very good sermons, mostly in the footsteps of St Paul and to a degree, St Timothy and he has a job printer run these off and runs them around to the ones he thinks are failing or falling down on the job. He also has an indigent clergyman fund to dole out a bit of extra money to them. His friends in the hunting world, rich landed gentry, contribute to this, I hear, in a not ungenerous way. Thus, he sees they have an intelligent and pertinent sermon to give of a Sunday, a little extra food on the table and the means to buy more booze. Seems to work," the Vicar says. "He's a Christian man."

I relay all this to Sherlock. "It's plain enough," he says, "and indeed commendable, but it's also plain enough he is mixing and matching what he is doling out with dud fivers. Where the devil does he get them from?"

Holmes centres a bit on the weekly visit by the Clergyman to the private library tucked away in St Paul's.

"He's there every Thursday, 1pm to 3pm," Holmes says, "Perhaps, my dear Watson, you could develop a latent interest in Theology and access the library to study this and that?"

And I do. Access through my vicar father-in-law is easily arranged through the man who guards access, the very Reverend Frobisher Wells MA Hons.

"What area are you studying in, Dr Watson?" he asks. "St Paul's and St Timothy's preachings are my immediate area of interest," I say.

He fills me in on where to find the motherlode of books and over three Thursdays, I keep my head and eyes down and read and take notes. Curiosity eventually overtakes the Rev Blessington and after three Thursdays, he remarks off the cuff to me, "You are a scholar, Sir."

"Not at all," I say, "but I had a near death experience in Afghanistan and like any thinking man; I have given a deal of thought to the afterlife, if there is one. And I seem to find that St Paul has as good a viewpoint on that as any other writer of antiquity."

Blessington laughs. "Well, it's certainly our Christian belief that there is an afterlife, but that belief has, to some extent, emanated from belief based on belief and much of that, influenced by the writings of the past. You are looking deeply into that of St Paul. He wasn't really a scholar of the established teachings of the time. He came to reflect the uncomplicated goodness of Christ, which brought him head on to the Judaism of the temple. He was a brilliant speaker of a considered kin and was forced into writing his epistles, as he had far too many churches to appear at personally. It is a case of the written word transcending that of the spoken word. He wrote in Greek, the common understandable language of the time and his epistles stoutly defend his teachings."

"What of St Timothy?" I ask.

“Perhaps an intellectual lightweight,” Blessington replies, but also an intriguing character; much of whose fame stems from St Paul’s letter to him, in which he exhorts Timothy to ‘take not only water, but take some wine for your stomach and other ailments’. There are a number of London churches that preach well on St Paul,” he continues, “St Margaret’s in Whitechapel hosts as good a speaker as any. Do go for a listen if you want to perceive a different slant on your scholarship.”

I recant all this to Holmes. He laughs. “Hmm,” he says, “the Incumbent at St Margaret’s preaches, of course, Blessington’s Sunday in the steps of St Paul’s and St Timothy’s efforts.”

While I go to St Margaret’s and hear a very thought provoking sermon as outlined by Blessington, I can’t help thinking that our mark is making a major contribution to theology of a convincing nature each week by his efforts.

I go along to the private library at St Paul’s every week for a while, generally half an hour before Blessington. This particular Thursday, I’m doing a bit of reading on the Wesley brothers, founders of Methodism. He comes over to have a look at my line of enquiry.

“Remarkable chaps,” he says, “they were sort of evangelists at heart. You know John is commemorated in Westminster Abbey and Charles’s famous hymn, ‘Hark the Herald Angels Sing’, echoes around the world at Christmas tide. However, if you are looking at the build-up of belief that has got modern ecclesiastical thinking to where it is now, you can’t do better than backtrack to the times of the Roman Emperors and read the brief written by a leading Roman lawyer, Marcus Minicus, on the case for Christianity. It’s both direct and brilliant. Here,” he continues, walking over and taking down a book from a mid-level shelf, “do have a read of it.”

When I leave St Paul’s, I soon have a distinct impression that I’m being followed. Two men seem to be involved. One, a small, neatly dressed man and the other, further back, seems somewhat lame. He is wearing a tall hat and a green overcoat with an astrakhan collar. We have been doing a bit of following of our own, so I can’t cavil at someone turning the tables on us. I decide to pursue my usual path and not long after I arrive back at my home off the Bayswater Road, there is a knock on the door and the servant comes ushering in a man in a tall hat and green coat. I’m astounded; it’s Holmes of course.

“You have done good work today, my dear Watson,” he says. “I don’t know who your follower was, but I have someone good on his tail right now and tomorrow we should have our enquiries further advanced.”

Pulling off his bushy false beard and horn-rimmed glasses, Holmes says, “I’ve been out in the Shires having a pint or three with ‘Top Rail’, the journalist that records the comings and goings of the Quorn Hunt; quite an interesting fellow. Blessington is very well regarded with that moneyed mob. He’s not a god botherer; never talks religion. He rides his big black horse in the middle of the field when he could easily be in the first flight. He carries wire cutters instead of a hunting horn and he uses long webbing reins on his hunter, so that if a mishap occurs, he is able to quickly dismount, tie up his horse on a long rein and render help to the fallen. He’s invaluable to the Field Master, Lord Argyle and in fact is so well regarded, that Argyle foots the livery bills for Blessington’s horse. Top Rail tells me that Blessington will never conduct a wedding, but he does a lot of Hunt Club funerals; church fees go to his clergyman fund. He seems too good to be true.”

Chapter Four

The next evening when Holmes lobs along in time for dinner, he says, "Curiouser and curiouser, Watson. The little bloke tailing you was Archie Foreman. He's a Pinkerton man from St Louis over here on assignment."

"Well, Holmes," I say, "Pinkertons did sterling detective work for Abraham Lincoln in the late civil war there. They don't work for just anyone."

"Nor are they in this case," Holmes says. "They were briefed by none other than the Marquis of Inskilling, Ambassador from the Court of St James to Finland."

The penny drops – "Holmes," I cry, "the huge lot of fake notes inserted into the Boer War Military convoy came from Helsinki."

"Indeed," says Holmes, "pray tell me how the Doyen of the British Diplomatic service is allied to the person of the Deacon of London's parishes. Although there is a discernible connection, in that prior to the Marquis going to Finland, he hunted thrice a week with the Quorn in season."

"What do we do next?"

Holmes chuckles. "I've laid out a fair bit of dosh in following up this problem of Malachai's," he says. "I'll go around to the Bank of England tomorrow to recoup my expenses and we can then ponder the next step in this very convoluted matter."

Holmes's next step takes a deal of contemplation.

"I think, Watson," he says, "we need to get on our quarry's tail before we have a case of 'gone to earth'. I can perhaps become the earth stopper by calling on the Marquis."

Pinkertons arrange this for us, but with reservations. This chap is very heavy metal in the scheme of things. Pinkertons main man, Archie Floyd, says, "He will talk to you, but he wants us on the premises, but separate at the same time." The Marquis is at the House of Lords that evening, but nominates 9pm as an appointment time. We arrive along to his Eaton Square townhouse a bit before and are shown to chairs outside, it seems, the Marquis's study. A bit of a hubbub occurs in this cathedral quiet house; the Ambassador, it seems, has arrived home. He greets us pleasantly and ushers us into his study. It's a remarkably appointed room and sitting quietly by the fire – we didn't know he was there – is Lloyd Blessington; a glass of claret in his hand. The Marquis is quick to the point.

"I have to return to the House for the vote on the Baltic matter," he says, "but I think we have enough time to put your enquiries to rest."

But it seems that he is prepared to be accommodating. He rings for the butler, orders Port and cigars and we sit comfortably in this beautiful room. When he is ready, the Marquis says,

"It's regrettable this matter has come to light. It was running along smoothly thanks to the Reverend Lloyd and was doing no one harm and a lot of meaningful good to both the clergy and the poorest, but most decent of the poor in 25 London parishes. However, once Malachai enlisted your formidable resources, I've expected the matter to come out and I've given a deal of thought to our best course of action when this occurred. Honesty is always the best policy, but not of course, in politics. Thus we will tell you the tale and see what can be worked out. It all started with old Goldsmith at the Bank of England, surely not the sharpest of tools in the rack. Once the Bank found out the dodgy fivers in the Dutch Riots matter came from Finland, he put the boots into the Finnish Government to track the counterfeiter down. Failing that, he threatened to pull Finland's credit at the bank. The Finnish Government were so alarmed they jumped to obey and put their Secret Service onto the job. They have a smart Russian or two in their ranks and by finding out who made the

paper and leaning heavily on them, they found the note printer and his printing press. To cut a long story short, they knocked him on the head, bundled up all the left over money and the printing plates. They crated the whole lot up and at dead of night, dropped the crates in the area way of the Embassy. As Goldsmith dealt direct, it was a matter outside of both our Secret Service and the Diplomatic Service. In short, the powers that be, didn't want to know about it. The stuff sat untouched in our deepest basement for some years and finally, in the course of sending private money to the poor clergy fund, I hit on the idea of expanding the scheme and giving a good bundle of the dud notes to Blessington here for distribution where most needed. The supply of notes is finite at some stage, but my aim is to get them out by dribbling them to Reverend Lloyd with the view of getting rid of the lot by the end of my term there, in about three years. When it's all said and done," he continues, "it only amounts to about £2500 per week. It's probably the cheapest welfare running in the English speaking world and it's hurting no one and it's doing a helluva lot of good in the Byways of Greater London."

"And you propose to end it?" Holmes questions.

"No," says the Marquis, "not until the last note has gone out to do some good."

Holmes looks at me. "Well, Watson," he says, "Who are we to put a stop to something benefiting the greater good? Push on with your scheme, my Lord..... Come, Watson, we are done here."

"Don't rush off, Holmes," the Marquis says, "Have another cigar and some Port. I'd be fascinated to know the steps you took to unmask our little ploy.....and how you damp down Sir David Malachai at the Bank of England."

"It was just steady common sense investigating," Holmes says. "Malachai's concerns were that the dud notes turning up were the tip of the iceberg. That in itself is quite concerning to the Chairman of a Bank committed to preserving full trust in our English currency. Once I have assured him that the iceberg is well on its way to melting away, I'm sure he will agree to stand back off the matter. The cost to find all this out, despite my high fees, is but a drop in the bucket of the 'Old Lady of Threadneedle Street'."

We flag a hansom cab down and head home.

"You know," Holmes says, "this new-fangled invention of the horseless carriage may do away with Growlers in time. I had forgotten how much London streets reek of horse. I will, in fact, be glad to return to the twinklings and tappings of the Downs landscape."

