

# **The Moonstone**

(Volume V)

by Wilkie Collins

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## CHAPTER X

How the interval of suspense to which I was now condemned might have affected other men in my position, I cannot pretend to say. The influence of the two hours' probation upon my temperament was simply this. I felt physically incapable of remaining still in any one place, and morally incapable of speaking to any one human being, until I had first heard all that Ezra Jennings had to say to me.

In this frame of mind, I not only abandoned my contemplated visit to Mrs. Ablewhite I even shrank from encountering Gabbriel Betteredge himself.

Returning to Frizinghall, I left a note for Betteredge, telling him that I had been unexpectedly called away for a few hours, but that he might certainly expect me to return towards three o'clock in the afternoon. I requested him, in the interval, to order his dinner at the usual hour, and to amuse himself as he pleased. He had, as I well knew, hosts

of friends in Frizinghall; and he would be at no loss how to fill up his time until I returned to the hotel.

This done, I made the best of my way out of the town again, and roamed the lonely moorland country which surrounds Frizinghall, until my watch told me that it was time, at last, to return to Mr. Candy's house.

I found Ezra Jennings ready and waiting for me.

He was sitting alone in a bare little room, which communicated by a glazed door with a surgery. Hideous coloured diagrams of the ravages of hideous diseases decorated the barren buffcoloured walls. A bookcase filled with dingy medical works, and ornamented at the top with a skull, in place of the customary bust; a large deal table copiously splashed with ink; wooden chairs of the sort that are seen in kitchens and cottages; a threadbare drugget in the middle of the floor; a sink of water, with a basin and waste pipe roughly let into the wall, horribly suggestive of its connection with surgical operations comprised the entire furniture of the room. The bees were humming among a

few flowers placed in pots outside the window; the birds were singing in the garden, and the faint intermittent jingle of a tuneless piano in some neighbouring house forced itself now and again on the ear. In any other place, these everyday sounds might have spoken pleasantly of the everyday world outside. Here, they came in as intruders on a silence which nothing but human suffering had the privilege to disturb. I looked at the mahogany instrument case, and at the huge roll of lint, occupying places of their own on the bookshelves, and shuddered inwardly as I thought of the sounds, familiar and appropriate to the everyday use of Ezra Jennings' room.

‘I make no apology, Mr. Blake, for the place in which I am receiving you,’ he said. ‘It is the only room in the house, at this hour of the day, in which we can feel quite sure of being left undisturbed. Here are my papers ready for you; and here are two books to which we may have occasion to refer, before we have done. Bring your chair to the table, and we shall be able to consult them together.’

I drew up to the table; and Ezra Jennings handed me his manuscript notes. They consisted of two large folio leaves of paper. One leaf contained writing which only covered the surface at intervals. The other presented writing, in red and black ink, which completely filled the page from top to bottom. In the irritated state of my curiosity, at that moment, I laid aside the second sheet of paper in despair.

‘Have some mercy on me!’ I said. ‘Tell me what I am to expect, before I attempt to read this.’

‘Willingly, Mr. Blake! Do you mind my asking you one or two more questions?’

‘Ask me anything you like!’

He looked at me with the sad smile on his lips, and the kindly interest in his soft brown eyes.

‘You have already told me,’ he said, ‘that you have never to your knowledge tasted opium in your life.’

‘To my knowledge,’ I repeated.

‘You will understand directly why I speak with that reservation. Let us go on. You are not aware of ever having

taken opium. At this time, last year, you were suffering from nervous irritation, and you slept wretchedly at night. On the night of the birthday, however, there was an exception to the rule you slept soundly. Am I right, so far?

‘Quite right!’

‘Can you assign any cause for the nervous suffering, and your want of sleep?’

‘I can assign no cause. Old Betteredge made a guess at the cause, I remember. But that is hardly worth mentioning.’

‘Pardon me. Anything is worth mentioning in such a case as this. Betteredge attributed your sleeplessness to something. To what?’

‘To my leaving off smoking.’

‘Had you been an habitual smoker?’

‘Yes.’

‘Did you leave off the habit suddenly?’

‘Yes.’

‘Betteredge was perfectly right, Mr. Blake. When



smoking is a habit a man must have no common constitution who can leave it off suddenly without some temporary damage to his nervous system. Your sleepless nights are accounted for, to my mind. My next question refers to Mr. Candy. Do you remember having entered into anything like a dispute with him at the birthday dinner, or afterwards on the subject of his profession?'

The question instantly awakened one of my dormant remembrances in connection with the birthday festival. The foolish wrangle which took place, on that occasion, between Mr. Candy and myself, will be found described at much greater length than it deserves in the tenth chapter of Betteredge's Narrative. The details there presented of the dispute so little had I thought of it afterwards entirely failed to recur to my memory. All that I could now recall, and all that I could tell Ezra Jennings, was that I had attacked the art of medicine at the dinner table with sufficient rashness and sufficient pertinacity to put even Mr. Candy out of temper for the moment. I also remembered that Lady

Verinder had interfered to stop the dispute, and that the little doctor and I had 'made it up again,' as the children say, and had become as good friends as ever, before we shook hands that night.

'There is one thing more,' said Ezra Jennings, 'which it is very important I should know. Had you any reason for feeling any special anxiety about the Diamond, at this time last year?'

'I had the strongest reasons for feeling anxiety about the Diamond. I knew it to be the object of a conspiracy; and I was warned to take measures for Miss Verinder's protection, as the possessor of the stone.'

'Was the safety of the Diamond the subject of conversation between you and any other person immediately before you retired to rest on the birthday night?'

'It was the subject of a conversation between Lady Verinder and her daughter '

'Which took place in your hearing?'

‘Yes.’

Ezra Jennings took up his notes from the table, and placed them in my hands.

‘Mr. Blake,’ he said, ‘if you read those notes now, by the light which my questions and your answers have thrown on them, you will make two astounding discoveries concerning yourself. You will find: First, that you entered Miss Verinder's sitting room and took the Diamond, in a state of trance, produced by opium. Secondly, that the opium was given to you by Mr. Candy without your own knowledge as a practical refutation of the opinions which you had expressed to him at the birthday dinner.’

I sat with the papers in my hand completely stupefied.

‘Try and forgive poor Mr. Candy,’ said the assistant gently. ‘He has done dreadful mischief, I own; but he has done it innocently. If you will look at the notes, you will see that but for his illness he would have returned to Lady Verinder's the morning after the party, and would have acknowledged the trick that he had played you. Miss

Verinder would have heard of it, and Miss Verinder would have questioned him and the truth which has lain hidden for a year would have been discovered in a day.'

I began to regain my self possession. 'Mr. Candy is beyond the reach of my resentment,' I said angrily. 'But the trick that he played me is not the less an act of treachery, for all that. I may forgive, but I shall not forget it.'

'Every medical man commits that act of treachery, Mr. Blake, in the course of his practice. The ignorant distrust of opium (in England) is by no means confined to the lower and less cultivated classes. Every doctor in large practice finds himself, every now and then, obliged to deceive his patients, as Mr. Candy deceived you. I don't defend the folly of playing you a trick under the circumstances. I only plead with you for a more accurate and more merciful construction of motives.'

'How was it done?' I asked. 'Who gave me the laudanum without my knowing it myself?'

'I am not able to tell you. Nothing relating to that part

of the matter dropped from Mr. Candy's lips, all through his illness. Perhaps your own memory may point to the person to be suspected?'

'No.'

'It is useless, in that case, to pursue the inquiry. The laudanum was secretly given to you in some way. Let us leave it there, and go on to matters of more immediate importance. Read my notes, if you can. Familiarize your mind with what has happened in the past. I have something very bold and very startling to propose to you, which relates to the future.'

Those last words roused me.

I looked at the papers, in the order in which Ezra Jennings had placed them in my hands. The paper which contained the smaller quantity of writing was the uppermost of the two. On this, the disconnected words, and fragments of sentences, which had dropped from Mr. Candy in his delirium, appeared as follows:

'... Mr. Franklin Blake... and agreeable... down a peg...

medicine... confesses... sleep at night... tell him... out of order... medicine... he tells me... and groping in the dark mean one and the same thing... all the company at the dinner table... I say... groping after sleep... nothing but medicine... he says... leading the blind... know what it means... witty... a night's rest in spite of his teeth... wants sleep... Lady Verinder's medicine chest... five and twenty minims... without his knowing it.. to morrow morning... Well, Mr. Blake... medicine to day... never... without it... out, Mr. Candy... excellent... without it... down on him... truth... something besides... excellent... dose of laudanum, sir... bed... what... medicine now.'

There, the first of the two sheets of paper came to an end. I handed it back to Ezra Jennings.

'That is what you heard at his bedside?' I said.

'Literally and exactly what I heard,' he answered 'except that the repetitions are not transferred here from my shorthand notes. He reiterated certain words and phrases a dozen times over, fifty times over, just as he attached more

or less importance to the idea which they represented. The repetitions, in this sense, were of some assistance to me in putting together those fragments. Don't suppose,' he added, pointing to the second sheet of paper, 'that I claim to have reproduced the expressions which Mr. Candy himself would have used if he had been capable of speaking connectedly. I only say that I have penetrated through the obstacle of the disconnected expression, to the thought which was underlying it connectedly all the time. Judge for yourself.'

I turned to the second sheet of paper, which I now knew to be the key to the first.

Once more, Mr. Candy's wanderings appeared, copied in black ink; the intervals between the phrases being filled up by Ezra Jennings in red ink. I reproduce the result here, in one plain form; the original language and the interpretation of it coming close enough together in these pages to be easily compared and verified.

'... Mr. Franklin Blake is clever and agreeable, but he

wants taking down a peg when he talks of medicine. He confesses that he has been suffering from want of sleep at night. I tell him that his nerves are out of order, and that he ought to take medicine. He tells me that taking medicine and groping in the dark mean one and the same thing. This before all the company at the dinner table. I say to him, you are groping after sleep, and nothing but medicine can help you to find it. He says to me, I have heard of the blind leading the blind, and now I know what it means. Witty but I can give him a night's rest in spite of his teeth. He really wants sleep; and Lady Verinder's medicine chest is at my disposal. Give him five and twenty minims of laudanum to night, without his knowing it; and then call to morrow morning. "Well, Mr. Blake, will you try a little medicine to day? You will never sleep without it." "There you are out, Mr. Candy: I have had an excellent night's rest without it." Then, come down on him with the truth! "You have had something besides an excellent night's rest; you had a dose of laudanum, sir, before you went to bed. What do you say



to the art of medicine, now?" '

Admiration of the ingenuity which had woven this smooth and finished texture out of the ravelled skein was naturally the first impression that I felt, on handing the manuscript back to Ezra Jennings. He modestly interrupted the first few words in which my sense of surprise expressed itself, by asking me if the conclusion which he had drawn from his notes was also the conclusion at which my own mind had arrived.

'Do you believe as I believe,' he said, 'that you were acting under the influence of the laudanum in doing all that you did, on the night of Miss Verinder's birthday, in Lady Verinder's house?'

'I am too ignorant of the influence of laudanum to have an opinion of my own,' I answered. 'I can only follow your opinion, and feel convinced that you are right.'

'Very well. The next question is this. You are convinced; and I am convinced how are we to carry our conviction to the minds of other people?'

I pointed to the two manuscripts, lying on the table between us. Ezra Jennings shook his head.

‘Useless, Mr. Blake! Quite useless, as they stand now, for three unanswerable reasons. In the first place, those notes have been taken under circumstances entirely out of the experience of the mass of mankind. Against them, to begin with! In the second place, those notes represent a medical and metaphysical theory. Against them, once more! In the third place, those notes are of my making; there is nothing but my assertion to the contrary, to guarantee that they are not fabrications. Remember what I told you on the moor and ask yourself what my assertion is worth. No! my notes have but one value, looking to the verdict of the world outside. Your innocence is to be vindicated; and they show how it can be done. We must put our conviction to the proof and You are the man to prove it!’

‘How?’ I asked.

He leaned eagerly nearer to me across the table that divided us.

‘Are you willing to try a bold experiment?’

‘I will do anything to clear myself of the suspicion that rests on me now.’

‘Will you submit to some personal inconvenience for a time?’

‘To any inconvenience, no matter what it may be.’

‘Will you be guided implicitly by my advice? It may expose you to the ridicule of fools; it may subject you to the remonstrances of friends whose opinions you are bound to respect ’

‘Tell me what to do!’ I broke out impatiently. ‘And, come what may, I’ll do it.’

‘You shall do this, Mr. Blake,’ he answered. ‘You shall steal the Diamond, unconsciously, for the second time, in the presence of witnesses whose testimony is beyond dispute.’

I started to my feet. I tried to speak. I could only look at him.

‘I believe it can be done,’ he went on. ‘And it shall be

done if you will only help me. Try to compose yourself sit down, and hear what I have to say to you. You have resumed the habit of smoking; I have seen that for myself. How long have you resumed it?

‘For nearly a year.’

‘Do you smoke more or less than you did?’

‘More.’

‘Will you give up the habit again? Suddenly, mind! as you gave it up before.’

I began dimly to see his drift. ‘I will give it up, from this moment,’ I answered.

‘If the same consequences follow, which followed last June,’ said Ezra Jennings ‘if you suffer once more as you suffered then, from sleepless nights, we shall have gained our first step. We shall have put you back again into something assimilating to your nervous condition on the birthday night. If we can next revive, or nearly revive, the domestic circumstances which surrounded you, and if we can occupy your mind again with the various questions

concerning the Diamond which formerly agitated it, we shall have replaced you, as nearly as possible, in the same position, physically and morally, in which the opium found you last year. In that case we may fairly hope that a repetition of the dose will lead, in a greater or lesser degree, to a repetition of the result. There is my proposal, expressed in a few hasty words. You shall now see what reasons I have to justify me in making it.'

He turned to one of the books at his side, and opened it at a place marked by a small slip of paper.

'Don't suppose that I am going to weary you with a lecture on physiology,' he said. 'I think myself bound to prove, in justice to both of us, that I am not asking you to try this experiment in deference to any theory of my own devising. Admitted principles, and recognized authorities, justify me in the view that I take. Give me five minutes of your attention; and I will undertake to show you that Science sanctions my proposal, fanciful as it may seem. Here, in the first place, is the physiological principle on

which I am acting, stated by no less a person than Dr. Carpenter. Read it for yourself.'

He handed me the slip of paper which had marked the place in the book. It contained a few lines of writing, as follows:

'There seems much ground for the belief, that every sensory impression which has once been recognized by the perceptive consciousness, is registered (so to speak) in the brain, and may be reproduced at some subsequent time, although there may be no consciousness of its existence in the mind during the whole intermediate period.'

'Is that plain, so far?' asked Ezra Jennings.

'Perfectly plain.'

He pushed the open book across the table to me, and pointed to a passage marked by pencil lines.

'Now,' he said, 'read that account of a case, which has as I believe a direct bearing on your own position, and on the experiment which I am tempting you to try. Observe, Mr. Blake, before you begin, that I am now referring you to

one of the greatest of English physiologists. The book in your hand is Doctor Elliotson's Human Physiology; and the case which the doctor cites rests on the well known authority of Mr. Combe.'

The passage pointed out to me was expressed in these terms:

'Dr. Abel informed me,' says Mr. Combe, 'of an Irish porter to a warehouse, who forgot, when sober, what he had done when drunk; but, being drunk, again recollected the transactions of his former state of intoxication. On one occasion, being drunk, he had lost a parcel of some value, and in his sober moments could give no account of it. Next time he was intoxicated, he recollected that he had left the parcel at a certain house, and there being no address on it, it had remained there safely, and was got on his calling for it.'

'Plain again?' asked Ezra Jennings.

'As plain as need be.'

He put back the slip of paper in its place, and closed the book.

‘Are you satisfied that I have not spoken without good authority to support me?’ he asked. ‘If not, I have only to go to those bookshelves and you have only to read the passages which I can point out to you.’

‘I am quite satisfied,’ I said, ‘without reading a word more.’

‘In that case, we may return to your own personal interest in this matter. I am bound to tell you that there is something to be said against the experiment as well as for it. If we could, this year, exactly reproduce, in your case, the conditions as they existed last year, it is physiologically certain that we should arrive at exactly the same result. But this there is no denying it is simply impossible. We can only hope to approximate to the conditions; and if we don't succeed in getting you nearly enough back to what you were, this venture of ours will fail. If we do succeed and I am myself hopeful of success you may at least so far repeat your proceedings on the birthday night, as to satisfy any reasonable person that you are guiltless, morally speaking,



of the theft of the Diamond. I believe, Mr. Blake, I have now stated the question, on both sides of it, as fairly as I can, within the limits that I have imposed on myself. If there is anything that I have not made clear to you, tell me what it is and if I can enlighten you, I will.'

'All that you have explained to me,' I said, 'I understand perfectly. But I own I am puzzled on one point, which you have not made clear to me yet.'

'What is the point?'

'I don't understand the effect of the laudanum on me. I don't understand my walking downstairs, and along corridors, and my opening and shutting the drawers of a cabinet, and my going back again to my own room. All these are active proceedings. I thought the influence of opium was first to stupefy you, and then to send you to sleep.'

'The common error about opium, Mr. Blake! I am, at this moment, exerting my intelligence (such as it is) in your service, under the influence of a dose of laudanum, some

ten times larger than the dose Mr. Candy administered to you. But don't trust to my authority even on a question which comes within my own personal experience. I anticipated the objection you have just made: and I have again provided myself with independent testimony which will carry its due weight with it in your own mind and in the minds of your friends.'

He handed me the second of the two books which he had by him on the table.

'There,' he said, 'are the far famed Confessions of an English Opium Eater! Take the book away with you, and read it. At the passage which I have marked, you will find that when De Quincey had committed what he calls "a debauch of opium," he either went to the gallery at the Opera to enjoy the music, or he wandered about the London markets on Saturday night, and interested himself in observing all the little shifts and bargainings of the poor in providing their Sunday's dinner. So much for the capacity of a man to occupy himself actively, and to move

about from place to place under the influence of opium.'

'I am answered so far,' I said; 'but I am not answered yet as to the effect produced by the opium on myself.'

'I will try to answer you in a few words,' said Ezra Jennings. 'The action of opium is comprised, in the majority of cases, in two influences a stimulating influence first, and a sedative influence afterwards. Under the stimulating influence, the latest and most vivid impressions left on your mind namely, the impressions relating to the Diamond would be likely, in your morbidly sensitive nervous condition, to become intensified in your brain, and would subordinate to themselves your judgment and your will exactly as an ordinary dream subordinates to itself your judgment and your will. Little by little, under this action, any apprehensions about the safety of the Diamond which you might have felt during the day would be liable to develop themselves from the state of doubt to the state of certainty would impel you into practical action to preserve the jewel would direct your steps, with that motive in view,

into the room which you entered and would guide your hand to the drawers of the cabinet, until you had found the drawer which held the stone. In the spiritualized intoxication of opium, you would do all that. Later, as the sedative action began to gain on the stimulant action, you would slowly become inert and stupefied. Later still you would fall into a deep sleep. When the morning came, and the effect of the opium had been all slept off, you would wake as absolutely ignorant of what you had done in the night as if you had been living at the Antipodes. Have I made it tolerably clear to you so far?'

‘You have made it so clear,’ I said, ‘that I want you to go farther. You have shown me how I entered the room, and how I came to take the Diamond. But Miss Verinder saw me leave the room again, with the jewel in my hand. Can you trace my proceedings from that moment? Can you guess what I did next?’

‘That is the very point I was coming to,’ he rejoined. ‘It is a question with me whether the experiment which I

propose as a means of vindicating your innocence, may not also be made a means of recovering the lost Diamond as well. When you left Miss Verinder's sitting room, with the jewel in your hand, you went back in all probability to your own room '

‘Yes? And what then?’

‘It is possible, Mr. Blake I dare not say more that your idea of preserving the Diamond led, by a natural sequence, to the idea of hiding the Diamond, and that the place in which you hid it was somewhere in your bedroom. In that event, the case of the Irish porter may be your case. You may remember, under the influence of the second dose of opium, the place in which you hid the Diamond under the influence of the first.’

It was my turn, now, to enlighten Ezra Jennings. I stopped him, before he could say any more.

‘You are speculating,’ I said, ‘on a result which cannot possibly take place. The Diamond is, at this moment, in London.’

He started, and looked at me in great surprise.

‘In London?’ he repeated. ‘How did it get to London from Lady Verinder’s house?’

‘Nobody knows.’

‘You removed it with your own hand from Miss Verinder’s room. How was it taken out of your keeping?’

‘I have no idea how it was taken out of my keeping.’

‘Did you see it, when you woke in the morning?’

‘No.’

‘Has Miss Verinder recovered possession of it?’

‘No.’

‘Mr. Blake! there seems to be something here which wants clearing up. May I ask how you know that the Diamond is, at this moment, in London?’

I had put precisely the same question to Mr. Bruff, when I made my first inquiries about the Moonstone, on my return to England. In answering Ezra Jennings, I accordingly repeated what I had myself heard from the lawyer’s own lips and what is already familiar to the

readers of these pages.

He showed plainly that he was not satisfied with my reply.

‘With all deference to you,’ he said, ‘and with all deference to your legal adviser, I maintain the opinion which I expressed just now. It rests, I am well aware, on a mere assumption. Pardon me for reminding you, that your opinion also rests on a mere assumption as well.’

The view he took of the matter was entirely new to me. I waited anxiously to hear how he would defend it.

‘I assume,’ pursued Ezra Jennings, ‘that the influence of the opium after impelling you to possess yourself of the Diamond, with the purpose of securing its safety might also impel you, acting under the same influence and the same motive, to hide it somewhere in your own room. You assume that the Hindoo conspirators could by no possibility commit a mistake. The Indians went to Mr. Luker's house after the Diamond and, therefore, in Mr. Luker's possession the Diamond must be! Have you any evidence to prove that

the Moonstone was taken to London at all? You can't even guess how, or by whom, it was removed from Lady Verinder's house! Have you any evidence that the jewel was pledged to Mr. Luker? He declares that he never heard of the Moonstone; and his bankers' receipt acknowledges nothing but the deposit of a valuable of great price. The Indians assume that Mr. Luker is lying and you assume again that the Indians are right. All I say, in differing with you, is that my view is possible. What more, Mr. Blake, either logically or legally, can be said for yours?

It was put strongly; but there was no denying that it was put truly as well.

'I confess you stagger me,' I replied. 'Do you object to my writing to Mr. Bruff, and telling him what you have said?'

'On the contrary, I shall be glad if you will write to Mr. Bruff. If we consult his experience, we may see the matter under a new light. For the present, let us return to our experiment with the opium. We have decided that you leave



off the habit of smoking from this moment.'

'From this moment?'

'That is the first step. The next step is to reproduce, as nearly as we can, the domestic circumstances which surrounded you last year.'

How was this to be done? Lady Verinder was dead. Rachel and I, so long as the suspicion of theft rested on me, were parted irrevocably. Godfrey Ablewhite was away travelling on the Continent. It was simply impossible to reassemble the people who had inhabited the house, when I had slept in it last. The statement of this objection did not appear to embarrass Ezra Jennings. He attached very little importance, he said, to reassembling the same people seeing that it would be vain to expect them to reassume the various positions which they had occupied towards me in the past times. On the other hand, he considered it essential to the success of the experiment, that I should see the same objects about me which had surrounded me when I was last in the house.

‘Above all things,’ he said, ‘you must sleep in the room which you slept in, on the birthday night, and it must be furnished in the same way. The stairs, the corridors, and Miss Verinder's sitting room, must also be restored to what they were when you saw them last. It is absolutely necessary, Mr. Blake, to replace every article of furniture in that part of the house which may now be put away. The sacrifice of your cigars will be useless, unless we can get Miss Verinder's permission to do that.’

‘Who is to apply to her for permission?’ I asked.

‘Is it not possible for you to apply?’

‘Quite out of the question. After what has passed between us on the subject of the lost Diamond, I can neither see her, nor write to her, as things are now.’

Ezra Jennings paused, and considered for a moment.

‘May I ask you a delicate question?’ he said.

I signed to him to go on.

‘Am I right, Mr. Blake, in fancying (from one or two things which have dropped from you) that you felt no

common interest in Miss Verinder, in former times?'

'Quite right.'

'Was the feeling returned?'

'It was.'

'Do you think Miss Verinder would be likely to feel a strong interest in the attempt to prove your innocence?'

'I am certain of it.'

'In that case, I will write to Miss Verinder if you will give me leave.'

'Telling her of the proposal that you have made to me?'

'Telling her of everything that has passed between us today.'

It is needless to say that I eagerly accepted the service which he had offered to me.

'I shall have time to write by to day's post,' he said, looking at his watch. 'Don't forget to lock up your cigars, when you get back to the hotel! I will call to morrow morning and hear how you have passed the night.'

I rose to take leave of him; and attempted to express the grateful sense of his kindness which I really felt.

He pressed my hand gently. 'Remember what I told you on the moor,' he answered. 'If I can do you this little service, Mr.Blake, I shall feel it like a last gleam of sunshine, falling on the evening of a long and clouded day.'

We parted. It was then the fifteenth of June. The events of the next ten days every one of them more or less directly connected with the experiment of which I was the passive object are all placed on record, exactly as they happened, in the Journal habitually kept by Mr. Candy's assistant. In the pages of Ezra Jennings nothing is concealed, and nothing is forgotten. Let Ezra Jennings tell how the venture with the opium was tried, and how it ended.

## FOURTH NARRATIVE

### EXTRACTED FROM THE JOURNAL OF EZRA JENNINGS

1849. JUNE 15TH.... With some interruption from patients, and some interruption from pain, I finished my letter to Miss Verinder in time for to day's post. I failed to make it as short a letter as I could have wished. But I think I have made it plain. It leaves her entirely mistress of her own decision. If she consents to assist the experiment, she consents of her own free will, and not as a favour to Mr. Franklin Blake or to me.

June 16th. Rose late, after a dreadful night; the vengeance of yesterday's opium, pursuing me through a series of frightful dreams. At one time I was whirling through empty space with the phantoms of the dead, friends and enemies together. At another, the one beloved face which I shall never see again, rose at my bedside, hideously phosphorescent in the black darkness, and glared and

grinned at me. A slight return of the old pain, at the usual time in the early morning, was welcome as a change. It dispelled the visions and it was bearable because it did that.

My bad night made it late in the morning, before I could get to Mr. Franklin Blake. I found him stretched on the sofa, breakfasting on brandy and soda water, and a dry biscuit.

‘I am beginning, as well as you could possibly wish,’ he said. ‘A miserable, restless night; and a total failure of appetite this morning. Exactly what happened last year, when I gave up my cigars. The sooner I am ready for my second dose of laudanum, the better I shall be pleased.’

‘You shall have it on the earliest possible day,’ I answered. ‘In the meantime, we must be as careful of your health as we can. If we allow you to become exhausted, we shall fail in that way. You must get an appetite for your dinner. In other words, you must get a ride or a walk this morning, in the fresh air.’

‘I will ride, if they can find me a horse here. By the by,

I wrote to Mr. Bruff, yesterday. Have you written to Miss Verinder?'

‘Yes by last night's post.'

‘Very good. We shall have some news worth hearing, to tell each other to morrow. Don't go yet! I have a word to say to you. You appeared to think, yesterday, that our experiment with the opium was not likely to be viewed very favourably by some of my friends. You were quite right. I call old Gabriel Betteredge one of my friends; and you will be amused to hear that he protested strongly when I saw him yesterday. "You have done a wonderful number of foolish things in the course of your life, Mr. Franklin, but this tops them all!" There is Betteredge's opinion! You will make allowance for his prejudices, I am sure, if you and he happen to meet?'

I left Mr. Blake, to go my rounds among my patients; feeling the better and the happier even for the short interview that I had had with him.

What is the secret of the attraction that there is for me

in this man? Does it only mean that I feel the contrast between the frankly kind manner in which he has allowed me to become acquainted with him, and the merciless dislike and distrust with which I am met by other people? Or is there really something in him which answers to the yearning that I have for a little human sympathy the yearning, which has survived the solitude and persecution of many years; which seems to grow keener and keener, as the time comes nearer and nearer when I shall endure and feel no more? How useless to ask these questions! Mr. Blake has given me a new interest in life. Let that be enough, without seeking to know what the new interest is.

June 17th. Before breakfast, this morning, Mr. Candy informed me that he was going away for a fortnight, on a visit to a friend in the south of England. He gave me as many special directions, poor fellow, about the patients, as if he still had the large practice which he possessed before he was taken ill. The practice is worth little enough now! Other doctors have superseded him; and nobody who can



help it will employ me.

It is perhaps fortunate that he is to be away just at this time. He would have been mortified if I had not informed him of the experiment which I am going to try with Mr. Blake. And I hardly know what undesirable results might not have happened, if I had taken him into my confidence. Better as it is. Unquestionably, better as it is.

The post brought me Miss Verinder's answer, after Mr. Candy had left the house.

A charming letter! It gives me the highest opinion of her. There is no attempt to conceal the interest that she feels in our proceedings. She tells me, in the prettiest manner, that my letter has satisfied her of Mr. Blake's innocence, without the slightest need (so far as she is concerned) of putting my assertion to the proof. She even upbraids herself most undeservedly, poor thing! for not having divined at the time what the true solution of the mystery might really be. The motive underlying all this proceeds evidently from something more than a generous eagerness to make

atonement for a wrong which she has innocently inflicted on another person. It is plain that she has loved him, throughout the estrangement between them. In more than one place the rapture of discovering that he has deserved to be loved, breaks its way innocently through the stoutest formalities of pen and ink, and even defies the stronger restraint still of writing to a stranger. Is it possible (I ask myself, in reading this delightful letter) that I, of all men in the world, am chosen to be the means of bringing these two young people together again? My own happiness has been trampled underfoot; my own love has been torn from me. Shall I live to see a happiness of others, which is of my making a love renewed, which is of my bringing back? Oh merciful Death, let me see it before your arms enfold me, before your voice whispers to me, 'Rest at last!'

There are two requests contained in the letter. One of them prevents me from showing it to Mr. Franklin Blake. I am authorized to tell him that Miss Verinder willingly consents to place her house at our disposal; and, that said, I

am desired to add no more.

So far, it is easy to comply with her wishes. But the second request embarrasses me seriously.

Not content with having written to Mr. Betteredge, instructing him to carry out whatever directions I may have to give, Miss Verinder asks leave to assist me, by personally superintending the restoration of her own sitting room. She only waits a word of reply from me to make the journey to Yorkshire, and to be present as one of the witnesses on the night when the opium is tried for the second time.

Here, again, there is a motive under the surface; and, here again, I fancy that I can find it out.

What she has forbidden me to tell Mr. Franklin Blake, she is (as I interpret it) eager to tell him with her own lips, before he is put to the test which is to vindicate his character in the eyes of other people. I understand and admire this generous anxiety to acquit him, without waiting until his innocence may, or may not, be proved. It is the

atonement that she is longing to make, poor girl, after having innocently and inevitably wronged him. But the thing cannot be done. I have no sort of doubt that the agitation which a meeting between them would produce on both sides reviving dormant feelings, appealing to old memories, awakening new hopes would, in their effect on the mind of Mr. Blake, be almost certainly fatal to the success of our experiment. It is hard enough, as things are, to reproduce in him the conditions as they existed, or nearly as they existed, last year. With new interests and new emotions to agitate him, the attempt would be simply useless.

And yet, knowing this, I cannot find it in my heart to disappoint her. I must try if I can discover some new arrangement, before post time, which will allow me to say Yes to Miss Verinder, without damage to the service which I have bound myself to render to Mr. Franklin Blake.

Two o'clock. I have just returned from my round of medical visits; having begun, of course, by calling at the

hotel.

Mr. Blake's report of the night is the same as before. He has had some intervals of broken sleep, and no more. But he feels it less to day, having slept after yesterday's dinner. This after dinner sleep is the result, no doubt, of the ride which I advised him to take. I fear I shall have to curtail his restorative exercise in the fresh air. He must not be too well; he must not be too ill. It is a case (as a sailor would say) of very fine steering.

He has not heard yet from Mr. Bruff. I found him eager to know if I had received any answer from Miss Verinder.

I told him exactly what I was permitted to tell, and no more. It was quite needless to invent excuses for not showing him the letter. He told me bitterly enough, poor fellow, that he understood the delicacy which disinclined me to produce it. 'She consents, of course, as a matter of common courtesy and common justice,' he said. 'But she keeps her own opinion of me, and waits to see the result.' I

was sorely tempted to hint that he was now wronging her as she had wronged him. On reflection, I shrank from forestalling her in the double luxury of surprising and forgiving him.

My visit was a very short one. After the experience of the other night, I have been compelled once more to give up my dose of opium. As a necessary result, the agony of the disease that is in me has got the upper hand again. I felt the attack coming on, and left abruptly, so as not to alarm or distress him. It only lasted a quarter of an hour this time, and it left me strength enough to go on with my work.

Five o'clock. I have written my reply to Miss Verinder.

The arrangement I have proposed reconciles the interests on both sides, if she will only consent to it. After first stating the objections that there are to a meeting between Mr. Blake and herself, before the experiment is tried, I have suggested that she should so time her journey as to arrive at the house privately, on the evening when we make the attempt. Travelling by the afternoon train from

London, she would delay her arrival until nine o'clock. At that hour, I have undertaken to see Mr. Blake safely into his bedchamber; and so to leave Miss Verinder free to occupy her own rooms until the time comes for administering the laudanum. When that has been done, there can be no objection to her watching the result, with the rest of us. On the next morning, she shall show Mr. Blake (if she likes) her correspondence with me, and shall satisfy him in that way that he was acquitted in her estimation, before the question of his innocence was put to the proof.

In that sense, I have written to her. This is all that I can do to day. To morrow I must see Mr. Betteredge, and give the necessary directions for reopening the house.

June 18th. Late again, in calling on Mr. Franklin Blake. More of that horrible pain in the early morning; followed, this time, by complete prostration, for some hours. I foresee, in spite of the penalties which it exacts from me, that I shall have to return to the opium for the hundredth time. If I had only myself to think of, I should prefer the sharp pains to

the frightful dreams. But the physical suffering exhausts me. If I let myself sink, it may end in my becoming useless to Mr. Blake at the time when he wants me most.

It was nearly one o'clock before I could get to the hotel to day. The visit, even in my shattered condition, proved to be a most amusing one thanks entirely to the presence on the scene of Gabriel Betteredge.

I found him in the room, when I went in. He withdrew to the window and looked out, while I put my first customary question to my patient. Mr. Blake had slept badly again, and he felt the loss of rest this morning more than he had felt it yet.

I asked next if he had heard from Mr. Bruff.

A letter had reached him that morning. Mr. Bruff expressed the strongest disapproval of the course which his friend and client was taking under my advice. It was mischievous for it excited hopes that might never be realized. It was quite unintelligible to his mind, except that it looked like a piece of trickery, akin to the trickery of



mesmerism, clairvoyance, and the like. It unsettled Miss Verinder's house, and it would end in unsettling Miss Verinder herself. He had put the case (without mentioning names) to an eminent physician; and the eminent physician had smiled, had shaken his head, and had said nothing. On these grounds, Mr. Bruff entered his protest, and left it there.

My next inquiry related to the subject of the Diamond. Had the lawyer produced any evidence to prove that the jewel was in London?

No, the lawyer had simply declined to discuss the question. He was himself satisfied that the Moonstone had been pledged to Mr. Luker. His eminent absent friend, Mr. Murthwaite (whose consummate knowledge of the Indian character no one could deny), was satisfied also. Under these circumstances, and with the many demands already made on him, he must decline entering into any disputes on the subject of evidence. Time would show; and Mr. Bruff was willing to wait for time.

It was quite plain even if Mr. Blake had not made it plainer still by reporting the substance of the letter, instead of reading what was actually written that distrust of me was at the bottom of all this. Having myself foreseen that result, I was neither mortified nor surprised. I asked Mr. Blake if his friend's protest had shaken him. He answered emphatically, that it had not produced the slightest effect on his mind. I was free after that to dismiss Mr. Bruff from consideration and I did dismiss him accordingly.

A pause in the talk between us followed and Gabriel Betteredge came out from his retirement at the window.

'Can you favour me with your attention, sir?' he inquired, addressing himself to me.

'I am quite at your service,' I answered.

Betteredge took a chair and seated himself at the table. He produced a huge old fashioned leather pocket book, with a pencil of dimensions to match. Having put on his spectacles, he opened the pocket book, at a blank page, and addressed himself to me once more.

‘I have lived,’ said Betteredge, looking at me sternly, ‘nigh on fifty years in the service of my late lady. I was page boy before that, in the service of the old lord, her father. I am now somewhere between seventy and eighty years of age never mind exactly where! I am reckoned to have got as pretty a knowledge and experience of the world as most men. And what does it all end in? It ends, Mr. Ezra Jennings, in a conjuring trick being performed on Mr. Franklin Blake, by a doctor's assistant with a bottle of laudanum and by the living jingo, I'm appointed, in my old age, to be conjurer's boy!’

Mr. Blake burst out laughing. I attempted to speak. Betteredge held up his hand, in token that he had not done yet.

‘Not a word, Mr. Jennings!’ he said. ‘It don't want a word, sir, from you. I have got my principles, thank God. If an order comes to me, which is own brother to an order come from Bedlam, it don't matter. So long as I get it from my master or mistress, as the case may be, I obey it. I may

have my own opinion, which is also, you will please to remember, the opinion of Mr. Bruff the Great Mr. Bruff!' said Betteredge, raising his voice, and shaking his head at me solemnly. 'It don't matter; I withdraw my opinion, for all that. My young lady says, "Do it." And I say, "Miss, it shall be done." Here I am, with my book and my pencil the latter not pointed so well as I could wish; but when Christians take leave of their senses, who is to expect that pencils will keep their points? Give me your orders, Mr. Jennings. I'll have them in writing, sir. I'm determined not to be behind 'em, or before 'em, by so much as a hair's breadth. I'm a blind agent that's what I am. A blind agent!' repeated Betteredge, with infinite relish of his own description of himself.

'I am very sorry,' I began, 'that you and I don't agree '

'Don't bring me into it!' interposed Betteredge. 'This is not a matter of agreement, it's a matter of obedience. Issue your directions, sir issue your directions!'

Mr. Blake made me a sign to take him at his word. I

‘issued my directions’ as plainly and as gravely as I could.

‘I wish certain parts of the house to be reopened,’ I said, ‘and to be furnished, exactly as they were furnished at this time last year.’

Betteredge gave his imperfectly pointed pencil a preliminary lick with his tongue. ‘Name the parts, Mr. Jennings!’ he said loftily.

‘First, the inner hall, leading to the chief staircase.’

“First, the inner hall,” Betteredge wrote. ‘Impossible to furnish that, sir, as it was furnished last year to begin with.’

‘Why?’

‘Because there was a stuffed buzzard, Mr. Jennings, in the hall last year. When the family left, the buzzard was put away with the other things. When the buzzard was put away he burst.’

‘We will except the buzzard then.’

Betteredge took a note of the exception. “The inner hall to be furnished again, as furnished last year. A burst

buzzard alone excepted." Please go on, Mr. Jennings.'

‘The carpet to be laid down on the stairs, as before.'

“The carpet to be laid down on the stairs, as before."

Sorry to disappoint you, sir. But that can't be done either.'

‘Why not?'

‘Because the man who laid that carpet down is dead, Mr. Jennings and the like of him for reconciling together a carpet and a corner, is not to be found in all England, look where you may.'

‘Very well. We must try the next best man in England.'

Betteredge took another note; and I went on issuing my directions.

‘Miss Verinder's sitting room to be restored exactly to what it was last year. Also, the corridor leading from the sitting room to the first landing. Also, the second corridor, leading from the second landing to the best bedrooms. Also, the bedroom occupied last June by Mr. Franklin Blake.'

Betteredge's blunt pencil followed me conscientiously, word by word. ‘Go on, sir,' he said, with sardonic gravity.

‘There's a deal of writing left in the point of this pencil yet.’

I told him that I had no more directions to give. ‘Sir,’ said Betteredge, ‘in that case, I have a point or two to put on my own behalf.’ He opened his pocket book at a new page, and gave the inexhaustible pencil another preliminary lick.

‘I wish to know,’ he began, ‘whether I may, or may not, wash my hands ’

‘You may decidedly,’ said Mr. Blake. ‘I’ll ring for the waiter.’ ‘ of certain responsibilities,’ pursued Betteredge, impenetrably declining to see anybody in the room but himself and me. ‘As to Miss Verinder's sitting room, to begin with. When we took up the carpet last year, Mr. Jennings, we found a surprising quantity of pins. Am I responsible for putting back the pins?’

‘Certainly not.’

Betteredge made a note of that concession, on the spot.

‘As to the first corridor next,’ he resumed. ‘When we

moved the ornaments in that part, we moved a statue of a fat naked child profanely described in the catalogue of the house as "Cupid, god of Love." He had two wings last year, in the fleshy part of his shoulders. My eye being off him, for the moment, he lost one of them. Am I responsible for Cupid's wing?'

I made another concession, and Betteredge made another note.

‘As to the second corridor,’ he went on. ‘There having been nothing in it last year, but the doors of the rooms (to every one of which I can swear, if necessary), my mind is easy, I admit, respecting that part of the house only. But, as to Mr. Franklin's bedroom (if that is to be put back to what it was before), I want to know who is responsible for keeping it in a perpetual state of litter, no matter how often it may be set right his trousers here, his towels there, and his French novels everywhere. I say, who is responsible for untidying the tidiness of Mr. Franklin's room, him or me?’

Mr. Blake declared that he would assume the whole



responsibility with the greatest pleasure. Betteredge obstinately declined to listen to any solution of the difficulty, without first referring it to my sanction and approval. I accepted Mr. Blake's proposal; and Betteredge made a last entry in the pocket book to that effect.

‘Look in when you like, Mr. Jennings, beginning from tomorrow,’ he said, getting on his legs. ‘You will find me at work, with the necessary persons to assist me. I respectfully beg to thank you, sir, for overlooking the case of the stuffed buzzard, and the other case of the Cupid's wing as also for permitting me to wash my hands of all responsibility in respect of the pins on the carpet, and the litter in Mr. Franklin's room. Speaking as a servant, I am deeply indebted to you. Speaking as a man, I consider you to be a person whose head is full of maggots, and I take up my testimony against your experiment as a delusion and a snare. Don't be afraid, on that account, of my feelings as a man getting in the way of my duty as a servant! You shall be obeyed. The maggots notwithstanding, sir, you shall be

obeyed. If it ends in your setting the house on fire, damme if I send for the engines, unless you ring the bell and order them first!'

With that farewell assurance, he made me a bow, and walked out of the room.

'Do you think we can depend on him?' I asked.

'Implicitly,' answered Mr. Blake. 'When we go to the house, we shall find nothing neglected, and nothing forgotten.'

June 19th. Another protest against our contemplated proceedings! From a lady this time.

The morning's post brought me two letters. One, from Miss Verinder, consenting, in the kindest manner, to the arrangement that I have proposed. The other from the lady under whose care she is living one Mrs. Merridew.

Mrs. Merridew presents her compliments, and does not pretend to understand the subject on which I have been corresponding with Miss Verinder, in its scientific bearings. Viewed in its social bearings, however, she feels free to

pronounce an opinion. I am probably, Mrs. Merridew thinks, not aware that Miss Verinder is barely nineteen years of age. To allow a young lady at her time of life, to be present (without a 'chaperon') in a house full of men among whom a medical experiment is being carried on, is an outrage on propriety which Mrs. Merridew cannot possibly permit. If the matter is allowed to proceed, she will feel it to be her duty at a serious sacrifice of her own personal convenience to accompany Miss Verinder to Yorkshire. Under these circumstances, she ventures to request that I will kindly reconsider the subject; seeing that Miss Verinder declines to be guided by any opinion but mine. Her presence cannot possibly be necessary; and a word from me, to that effect, would relieve both Mrs. Merridew and myself of a very unpleasant responsibility.

Translated from polite commonplace into plain English, the meaning of this is, as I take it, that Mrs. Merridew stands in mortal fear of the opinion of the world. She has unfortunately appealed to the very last man in

existence who has any reason to regard that opinion with respect. I won't disappoint Miss Verinder; and I won't delay a reconciliation between two young people who love each other, and who have been parted too long already. Translated from plain English into polite commonplace, this means that Mr. Jennings presents his compliments to Mrs. Merridew, and regrets that he cannot feel justified in interfering any further in the matter.

Mr. Blake's report of himself, this morning, was the same as before. We determined not to disturb Betteredge by overlooking him at the house to day. To morrow will be time enough for our first visit of inspection.

June 20th. Mr. Blake is beginning to feel his continued restlessness at night. The sooner the rooms are refurnished, now, the better.

On our way to the house, this morning, he consulted me, with some nervous impatience and irresolution, about a letter (forwarded to him from London) which he had received from Sergeant Cuff.

The Sergeant writes from Ireland. He acknowledges the receipt (through his housekeeper) of a card and message which Mr. Blake left at his residence near Dorking, and announces his return to England as likely to take place in a week or less. In the meantime, he requests to be favoured with Mr. Blake's reasons for wishing to speak to him (as stated in the message) on the subject of the Moonstone. If Mr. Blake can convict him of having made any serious mistake, in the course of his last year's inquiry concerning the Diamond, he will consider it a duty (after the liberal manner in which he was treated by the late Lady Verinder) to place himself at that gentleman's disposal. If not, he begs permission to remain in his retirement, surrounded by the peaceful floricultural attractions of a country life.

After reading the letter, I had no hesitation in advising Mr. Blake to inform Sergeant Cuff, in reply, of all that had happened since the inquiry was suspended last year, and to leave him to draw his own conclusions from the plain facts.

On second thoughts I also suggested inviting the

Sergeant to be present at the experiment, in the event of his returning to England in time to join us. He would be a valuable witness to have, in any case; and, if I proved to be wrong in believing the Diamond to be hidden in Mr. Blake's room, his advice might be of great importance, at a future stage of the proceedings over which I could exercise no control. This last consideration appeared to decide Mr. Blake. He promised to follow my advice.

The sound of the hammer informed us that the work of refurnishing was in full progress, as we entered the drive that led to the house.

Betteredge, attired for the occasion in a fisherman's red cap, and an apron of green baize, met us in the outer hall. The moment he saw me, he pulled out the pocket book and pencil, and obstinately insisted on taking notes of everything that I said to him. Look where we might, we found, as Mr. Blake had fore told, that the work was advancing as rapidly and as intelligently as it was possible to desire. But there was still much to be done in the inner

hall, and in Miss Verinder's room. It seemed doubtful whether the house would be ready for us before the end of the week.

Having congratulated Betteredge on the progress that he had made (he persisted in taking notes every time I opened my lips; declining, at the same time, to pay the slightest attention to anything said by Mr. Blake), and having promised to return for a second visit of inspection in a day or two, we prepared to leave the house, going out by the back way. Before we were clear of the passages downstairs, I was stopped by Betteredge, just as I was passing the door which led into his own room.

‘Could I say two words to you in private?’ he asked, in a mysterious whisper.

I consented of course. Mr. Blake walked on to wait for me in the garden, while I accompanied Betteredge into his room. I fully anticipated a demand for certain new concessions, following the precedent already established in the cases of the stuffed buzzard, and the Cupid's wing. To

my great surprise, Betteredge laid his hand confidentially on my arm, and put this extraordinary question to me:

‘Mr. Jennings, do you happen to be acquainted with Robinson Crusoe?’

I answered that I had read Robinson Crusoe when I was a child.

‘Not since then?’ inquired Betteredge.

‘Not since then.’

He fell back a few steps, and looked at me with an expression of compassionate curiosity, tempered by superstitious awe.

‘He has not read Robinson Crusoe since he was a child,’ said Betteredge, speaking to himself not to me. ‘Let’s try how Robinson Crusoe strikes him now!’

He unlocked a cupboard in a corner, and produced a dirty and dog-eared book, which exhaled a strong odour of stale tobacco as he turned over the leaves. Having found a passage of which he was apparently in search, he requested me to join him in the corner; still mysteriously confidential,



and still speaking under his breath.

‘In respect to this hocus pocus of yours, sir, with the laudanum and Mr. Franklin Blake,’ he began. ‘While the workpeople are in the house, my duty as a servant gets the better of my feelings as a man. When the workpeople are gone, my feelings as a man get the better of my duty as a servant. Very good. Last night, Mr. Jennings, it was borne in powerfully on my mind that this new medical enterprise of yours would end badly. If I had yielded to that secret Dictate, I should have put all the furniture away again with my own hand, and have warned the workmen off the premises when they came the next morning.’

‘I am glad to find, from what I have seen upstairs,’ I said, ‘that you resisted the secret Dictate.’

‘Resisted isn’t the word,’ answered Betteredge. ‘Wrosted is the word. I wrosted, sir, between the silent orders in my bosom pulling me one way, and the written orders in my pocket book pushing me the other, until (saving your presence) I was in a cold sweat. In that

dreadful perturbation of mind and laxity of body, to what remedy did I apply? To the remedy, sir, which has never failed me yet for the last thirty years and more to This Book!'

He hit the book a sounding blow with his open hand, and struck out of it a stronger smell of stale tobacco than ever.

‘What did I find here,’ pursued Betteredge, ‘at the first page I opened? This awful bit, sir, page one hundred and seventy eight, as follows: "Upon these, and many like Reflections, I afterwards made it a certain rule with me, That whenever I found those secret Hints or Pressings of my Mind, to doing, or not doing any Thing that presented; or to going this Way, or that Way, I never failed to obey the secret Dictate." As I live by bread, Mr. Jennings, those were the first words that met my eye, exactly at the time when I myself was setting the secret Dictate at defiance! You don't see anything at all out of the common in that, do you, sir?’

‘I see a coincidence nothing more.’

‘You don't feel at all shaken, Mr. Jennings, in respect to this medical enterprise of yours?’

‘Not the least in the world.’

Betteredge stared hard at me, in dead silence. He closed the book with great deliberation; he locked it up again in the cupboard with extraordinary care; he wheeled round, and stared hard at me once more. Then he spoke.

‘Sir,’ he said gravely, ‘there are great allowances to be made for a man who has not read Robinson Crusoe since he was a child. I wish you good morning.’

He opened his door with a low bow, and left me at liberty to find my own way into the garden. I met Mr. Blake returning to the house.

‘You needn't tell me what has happened,’ he said. ‘Betteredge has played his last card: he has made another prophetic discovery in Robinson Crusoe. Have you humoured his favourite delusion? No? You have let him see that you don't believe in Robinson Crusoe? Mr. Jennings! you have fallen to the lowest possible place in Betteredge's

estimation. Say what you like, and do what you like, for the future. You will find that he won't waste another word on you now.'

June 21st. A short entry must suffice in my journal to day.

Mr. Blake has had the worst night that he has passed yet. I have been obliged, greatly against my will, to prescribe for him. Men of his sensitive organization are fortunately quick in feeling the effect of remedial measures. Otherwise, I should be inclined to fear that he will be totally unfit for the experiment when the time comes to try it.

As for myself, after some little remission of my pains for the last two days I had an attack this morning, of which I shall say nothing but that it has decided me to return to the opium. I shall close this book, and take my full dose five hundred drops.

June 22nd. Our prospects look better to day. Mr. Blake's nervous suffering is greatly allayed. He slept a little

last night. My night, thanks to the opium, was the night of a man who is stunned. I can't say that I woke this morning; the fitter expression would be, that I recovered my senses.

We drove to the house to see if the refurnishing was done. It will be completed to morrow Saturday. As Mr. Blake foretold, Betteredge raised no further obstacles. From first to last, he was ominously polite, and ominously silent.

My medical enterprise (as Betteredge calls it) must now, inevitably, be delayed until Monday next. To morrow evening the workmen will be late in the house. On the next day, the established Sunday tyranny which is one of the institutions of this free country, so times the trains as to make it impossible to ask anybody to travel to us from London. Until Monday comes, there is nothing to be done but to watch Mr. Blake carefully, and to keep him, if possible, in the same state in which I find him to day.

In the meanwhile, I have prevailed on him to write to Mr. Bruff, making a point of it that he shall be present as

one of the witnesses. I especially choose the lawyer, because he is strongly prejudiced against us. If we convince him, we place our victory beyond the possibility of dispute.

Mr. Blake has also written to Sergeant Cuff; and I have sent a line to Miss Verinder. With these, and with old Betteredge (who is really a person of importance in the family), we shall have witnesses enough for the purpose without including Mrs. Merridew, if Mrs. Merridew persists in sacrificing herself to the opinion of the world.

June 23rd. The vengeance of the opium overtook me again last night. No matter; I must go on with it now till Monday is past and gone.

Mr. Blake is not so well again to day. At two this morning, he confesses that he opened the drawer in which his cigars are put away. He only succeeded in locking it up again by a violent effort. His next proceeding, in case of temptation, was to throw the key out of window. The waiter brought it in this morning, discovered at the bottom of an empty cistern such is Fate! I have taken possession of the

key until Tuesday next.

June 24th. Mr. Blake and I took a long drive in an open carriage. We both felt beneficially the blessed influence of the soft summer air. I dined with him at the hotel. To my great relief for I found him in an over wrought, over excited state this morning he had two hours' sound sleep on the sofa after dinner. If he has another bad night, now I am not afraid of the consequence.

June 25th, Monday. The day of the experiment! It is five o'clock in the afternoon. We have just arrived at the house.

The first and foremost question, in the question of Mr. Blake's health.

So far as it is possible for me to judge, he promises (physically speaking) to be quite as susceptible to the action of the opium to night as he was at this time last year. He is, this afternoon, in a state of nervous sensitiveness which just stops short of nervous irritation. He changes colour readily; his hand is not quite steady; and he starts at

chance noises, and at unexpected appearances of persons and things.

These results have all been produced by deprivation of sleep, which is in its turn the nervous consequence of a sudden cessation in the habit of smoking, after that habit has been carried to an extreme. Here are the same causes at work again, which operated last year; and here are, apparently, the same effects. Will the parallel still hold good, when the final test has been tried? The events of the night must decide.

While I write these lines, Mr. Blake is amusing himself at the billiard table in the inner hall, practising different strokes in the game, as he was accustomed to practise them when he was a guest in this house in June last. I have brought my journal here, partly with a view to occupying the idle hours which I am sure to have on my hands between this and to morrow morning; partly in the hope that something may happen which it may be worth my while to place on record at the time.



Have I omitted anything, thus far? A glance at yesterday's entry shows me that I have forgotten to note the arrival of the morning's post. Let me set this right before I close these leaves for the present, and join Mr. Blake.

I received a few lines then, yesterday, from Miss Verinder. She has arranged to travel by the afternoon train, as I recommended. Mrs. Merridew has insisted on accompanying her. The note hints that the old lady's generally excellent temper is a little ruffled, and requests all due indulgence for her, in consideration of her age and her habits. I will endeavour, in my relations with Mrs. Merridew, to emulate the moderation which Betteredge displays in his relations with me. He received us to day, portentously arrayed in his best black suit, and his stiffest white cravat. Whenever he looks my way, he remembers that I have not read Robinson Crusoe since I was a child, and he respectfully pities me.

Yesterday, also, Mr. Blake had the lawyer's answer. Mr. Bruff accepts the invitation under protest. It is, he thinks,

clearly necessary that a gentleman possessed of the average allowance of common sense, should accompany Miss Verinder to the scene of, what we will venture to call, the proposed exhibition. For want of a better escort, Mr. Bruff himself will be that gentleman. So here is poor Miss Verinder provided with two 'chaperons.' It is a relief to think that the opinion of the world must surely be satisfied with this!

Nothing has been heard of Sergeant Cuff. He is no doubt still in Ireland. We must not expect to see him to night.

Betteredge has just come in, to say that Mr. Blake has asked for me. I must lay down my pen for the present.

Seven o'clock. We have been all over the refurnished rooms and staircases again; and we have had a pleasant stroll in the shrubbery, which was Mr. Blake's favourite walk when he was here last. In this way, I hope to revive the old impressions of places and things as vividly as possible in his mind.

We are now going to dine, exactly at the hour at which the birthday dinner was given last year. My object, of course, is a purely medical one in this case. The laudanum must find the process of digestion, as nearly as may be, where the laudanum found it last year.

At a reasonable time after dinner I propose to lead the conversation back again as inartificially as I can to the subject of the Diamond, and of the Indian conspiracy to steal it. When I have filled his mind with these topics, I shall have done all that it is in my power to do, before the time comes for giving him the second dose.

Half past eight. I have only this moment found an opportunity of attending to the most important duty of all; the duty of looking in the family medicine chest, for the laudanum which Mr. Candy used last year.

Ten minutes since, I caught Betteredge at an unoccupied moment, and told him what I wanted. Without a word of objection, without so much as an attempt to produce his pocket book, he led the way (making

allowances for me at every step) to the store room in which the medicine chest is kept.

I discovered the bottle, carefully guarded by a glass stopper tied over with leather. The preparation which it contained was, as I had anticipated, the common Tincture of Opium. Finding the bottle still well filled, I have resolved to use it, in preference to employing either of the two preparations with which I had taken care to provide myself, in case of emergency.

The question of the quantity which I am to administer presents certain difficulties. I have thought it over, and have decided on increasing the dose.

My notes inform me that Mr. Candy only administered twenty five minims. This is a small dose to have produced the results which followed even in the case of a person so sensitive as Mr. Blake. I think it highly probable that Mr. Candy gave more than he supposed himself to have given knowing, as I do, that he has a keen relish of the pleasures of the table, and that he measured out the laudanum on the

birthday, after dinner. In any case, I shall run the risk of enlarging the dose to forty minims. On this occasion, Mr. Blake knows beforehand that he is going to take the laudanum which is equivalent, physiologically speaking, to his having (unconsciously to himself) a certain capacity in him to resist the effects. If my view is right, a larger quantity is therefore imperatively required, this time, to repeat the results which the smaller quantity produced, last year.

Ten o'clock. The witnesses, or the company (which shall I call them?) reached the house an hour since.

A little before nine o'clock I prevailed on Mr. Blake to accompany me to his bedroom; stating, as a reason, that I wished him to look round it, for the last time, in order to make quite sure that nothing had been forgotten in the refurnishing of the room. I had previously arranged with Betteredge, that the bedchamber prepared for Mr. Bruff should be the next room to Mr. Blake's, and that I should be informed of the lawyer's arrival by a knock at the door.

Five minutes after the clock in the hall had struck nine, I heard the knock; and, going out immediately, met Mr. Bruff in the corridor.

My personal appearance (as usual) told against me. Mr. Bruff's distrust looked at me plainly enough out of Mr. Bruff's eyes. Being well used to producing this effect on strangers, I did not hesitate a moment in saying what I wanted to say, before the lawyer found his way into Mr. Blake's room.

‘You have travelled here, I believe, in company with Mrs. Merridew and Miss Verinder?’ I said.

‘Yes,’ answered Mr. Bruff, as drily as might be.

‘Miss Verinder has probably told you, that I wish her presence in the house (and Mrs. Merridew's presence of course) to be kept a secret from Mr. Blake, until my experiment on him has been tried first?’

‘I know that I am to hold my tongue, sir!’ said Mr. Bruff impatiently. ‘Being habitually silent on the subject of human folly, I am all the readier to keep my lips closed on

this occasion. Does that satisfy you?'

I bowed, and left Betteredge to show him to his room. Betteredge gave me one look at parting, which said, as if in so many words, 'You have caught a Tartar, Mr. Jennings and the name of him is Bruff.'

It was next necessary to get the meeting over with the two ladies. I descended the stairs a little nervously, I confess on my way to Miss Verinder's sitting room.

The gardener's wife (charged with looking after the accommodation of the ladies) met me in the first floor corridor. This excellent woman treats me with an excessive civility which is plainly the offspring of downright terror. She stares, trembles, and \$\$Word\$\$ whenever I speak to her. On my asking for Miss Verinder, she stared, trembled, and would no doubt have curtsied next, if Miss Verinder herself had not cut that ceremony short, by suddenly opening her sitting room door.

'Is that Mr. Jennings?' she asked.

Before I could answer, she came out eagerly to speak

to me in the corridor. We met under the light of a lamp on a bracket. At the first sight of me, Miss Verinder stopped, and hesitated. She recovered herself instantly, coloured for a moment and then, with a charming frankness, offered me her hand.

‘I can't treat you like a stranger, Mr. Jennings,' she said. ‘Oh, if you only knew how happy your letters have made me!’

She looked at my ugly wrinkled face, with a bright gratitude so new to me in my experience of my fellow creatures, that I was at a loss how to answer her. Nothing had prepared me for her kindness and her beauty. The misery of many years has not hardened my heart, thank God. I was as awkward and as shy with her, as if I had been a lad in my teens.

‘Where is he now?’ she asked, giving free expression to her one dominant interest the interest in Mr. Blake. ‘What is he doing? Has he spoken of me? Is he in good spirits? How does he bear the sight of the house, after what



happened in it last year? When are you going to give him the laudanum? May I see you pour it out? I am so interested; I am so excited I have ten thousand things to say to you, and they all crowd together so that I don't know what to say first. Do you wonder at the interest I take in this?

‘No,’ I said. ‘I venture to think that I thoroughly understand it.’

She was far above the paltry affectation of being confused. She answered me as she might have answered a brother or a father.

‘You have relieved me of indescribable wretchedness; you have given me a new life. How can I be ungrateful enough to have any concealment from you? I love him,’ she said simply, ‘I have loved him from first to last even when I was wronging him in my own thoughts; even when I was saying the hardest and the cruellest words to him. Is there any excuse for me, in that? I hope there is I am afraid it is the only excuse I have. When to morrow comes, and he knows that I am in the house, do you think?’

She stopped again, and looked at me very earnestly.

‘When to morrow comes,’ I said, ‘I think you have only to tell him what you have just told me.’

Her face brightened; she came a step nearer to me. Her fingers trifled nervously with a flower which I had picked in the garden, and which I had put into the button hole of my coat.

‘You have seen a great deal of him lately,’ she said. ‘Have you, really and truly, seen that?’

‘Really and truly,’ I answered. ‘I am quite certain of what will happen to morrow. I wish I could feel as certain of what will happen to night.’

At that point in the conversation, we were interrupted by the appearance of Betteredge with the tea tray. He gave me another significant look as he passed on into the sitting room. ‘Aye! aye! make your hay while the sun shines. The Tartar’s upstairs, Mr. Jennings the Tartar’s upstairs!’

We followed him into the room. A little old lady, in a corner, very nicely dressed, and very deeply absorbed over

a smart piece of embroidery, dropped her work in her lap, and uttered a faint little scream at the first sight of my gipsy complexion and my piebald hair.

‘Mrs. Merridew,’ said Miss Verinder, ‘this is Mr. Jennings.’

‘I beg Mr. Jennings’s pardon,’ said the old lady, looking at Miss Verinder, and speaking at me. ‘Railway travelling always makes me nervous. I am endeavouring to quiet my mind by occupying myself as usual. I don’t know whether my embroidery is out of place, on this extraordinary occasion. If it interferes with Mr. Jennings’s medical views, I shall be happy to put it away, of course.’

I hastened to sanction the presence of the embroidery, exactly as I had sanctioned the absence of the burst buzzard and the Cupid’s wing. Mrs. Merridew made an effort a grateful effort to look at my hair. No! it was not to be done. Mrs. Merridew looked back again at Miss Verinder.

‘If Mr. Jennings will permit me,’ pursued the old lady, ‘I should like to ask a favour. Mr. Jennings is about to try a

scientific experiment to night. I used to attend scientific experiments when I was a girl at school. They invariably ended in an explosion. If Mr. Jennings will be so very kind, I should like to be warned of the explosion this time. With a view to getting it over, if possible, before I go to bed.'

I attempted to assure Mrs. Merridew that an explosion was not included in the programme on this occasion.

'No,' said the old lady. 'I am much obliged to Mr. Jennings I am aware that he is only deceiving me for my own good. I prefer plain dealing. I am quite resigned to the explosion but I do want to get it over, if possible, before I go to bed.'

Here the door opened, and Mrs. Merridew uttered another little scream. The advent of the explosion? No: only the advent of Betteredge.

'I beg your pardon, Mr. Jennings,' said Betteredge, in his most elaborately confidential manner. 'Mr. Franklin wishes to know where you are. Being under your orders to deceive him, in respect to the presence of my young lady in

the house, I have said I don't know. That, you will please to observe, was a lie. Having one foot already in the grave, sir, the fewer lies you expect me to tell, the more I shall be indebted to you, when my conscience pricks me and my time comes.'

There was not a moment to be wasted on the purely speculative question of Betteredge's conscience. Mr. Blake might make his appearance in search of me, unless I went to him at once in his own room. Miss Verinder followed me out into the corridor.

'They seem to be in a conspiracy to persecute you,' she said. 'What does it mean?'

'Only the protest of the world, Miss Verinder on a very small scale against anything that is new.'

'What are we to do with Mrs. Merridew?'

'Tell her the explosion will take place at nine to-morrow morning.'

'So as to send her to bed?'

'Yes so as to send her to bed.'

Miss Verinder went back to the sitting room, and I went upstairs to Mr. Blake.

To my surprise I found him alone; restlessly pacing his room, and a little irritated at being left by himself.

‘Where is Mr. Bruff?’ I asked.

He pointed to the closed door of communication between the two rooms. Mr. Bruff had looked in on him, for a moment; had attempted to renew his protest against our proceedings; and had once more failed to produce the smallest impression on Mr. Blake. Upon this, the lawyer had taken refuge in a black leather bag, filled to bursting with professional papers. ‘The serious business of life,’ he admitted, ‘was sadly out of place on such an occasion as the present. But the serious business of life must be carried on, for all that. Mr. Blake would perhaps kindly make allowance for the old fashioned habits of a practical man. Time was money and, as for Mr. Jennings, he might depend on it that Mr. Bruff would be forthcoming when called upon.’ With that apology, the lawyer had gone back to his

own room, and had immersed himself obstinately in his black bag.

I thought of Mrs. Merridew and her embroidery, and of Betteredge and his conscience. There is a wonderful sameness in the solid side of the English character just as there is a wonderful sameness in the solid expression of the English face.

‘When are you going to give me the laudanum?’ asked Mr. Blake impatiently.

‘You must wait a little longer,’ I said. ‘I will stay and keep you company till the time comes.’

It was then not ten o'clock. Inquiries which I had made, at various times, of Betteredge and Mr. Blake, had led me to the conclusion that the dose of laudanum given by Mr. Candy could not possibly have been administered before eleven. I had accordingly determined not to try the second dose until that time.

We talked a little; but both our minds were preoccupied by the coming ordeal. The conversation soon

flagged then dropped altogether. Mr. Blake idly turned over the books on his bedroom table. I had taken the precaution of looking at them, when we first entered the room. The Guardian; The Tatler; Richardson's Pamela; Mackenzie's Man of Feeling; Roscoe's Lorenzo de' Medici; and Robertson's Charles the Fifth all classical works; all (of course) immeasurably superior to anything produced in later times; and (from my present point of view) possessing the one great merit of enchaining nobody's interest, and exciting nobody's brain. I left Mr. Blake to the composing influence of Standard Literature, and occupied myself in making this entry in my journal.

My watch informs me that it is close on eleven o'clock. I must shut up these leaves once more.

Two o'clock A.M. The experiment has been tried. With what result, I am now to describe.

At eleven o'clock, I rang the bell for Betteredge, and told Mr. Blake that he might at last prepare himself for bed.

I looked out of the window at the night. It was mild



and rainy, resembling, in this respect, the night of the birthday the twenty first of June, last year. Without professing to believe in omens, it was at least encouraging to find no direct nervous influences no stormy or electric perturbations in the atmosphere. Betteredge joined me at the window, and mysteriously put a little slip of paper into my hand. It contained these lines:

‘Mrs. Merridew has gone to bed, on the distinct understanding that the explosion is to take place at nine to morrow morning, and that I am not to stir out of this part of the house until she comes and sets me free. She has no idea that the chief scene of the experiment is my sitting room or she would have remained in it for the whole night! I am alone, and very anxious. Pray let me see you measure out the laudanum; I want to have something to do with it, even in the unimportant character of a mere looker on. R.V.’

I followed Betteredge out of the room, and told him to remove the medicine chest into Miss Verinder's sitting room.

The order appeared to take him completely by surprise. He looked as if he suspected me of some occult medical design on Miss Verinder! 'Might I presume to ask,' he said, 'what my young lady and the medicine chest have got to do with each other?'

'Stay in the sitting room, and you will see.'

Betteredge appeared to doubt his own unaided capacity to superintend me effectually, on an occasion when a medicine chest was included in the proceedings.

'Is there any objection, sir,' he asked, 'to taking Mr. Bruff into this part of the business?'

'Quite the contrary! I am now going to ask Mr. Bruff to accompany me downstairs.'

Betteredge withdrew to fetch the medicine chest, without another word. I went back into Mr. Blake's room, and knocked at the door of communication. Mr. Bruff opened it, with his papers in his hand immersed in Law; impenetrable to Medicine.

'I am sorry to disturb you,' I said. 'But I am going to

prepare the laudanum for Mr. Blake; and I must request you to be present, and to see what I do.'

'Yes?' said Mr. Bruff, with nine tenths of his attention riveted on his papers, and with one tenth unwillingly accorded to me. 'Anything else?'

'I must trouble you to return here with me, and to see me administer the dose.'

'Anything else?'

'One thing more. I must put you to the inconvenience of remaining in Mr. Blake's room, and of waiting to see what happens.'

'Oh, very good!' said Mr. Bruff. 'My room, or Mr. Blake's room it doesn't matter which; I can go on with my papers anywhere. Unless you object, Mr. Jennings, to my importing that amount of common sense into the proceedings?'

Before I could answer, Mr. Blake addressed himself to the lawyer, speaking from his bed.

'Do you really mean to say that you don't feel any

interest in what we are going to do?' he asked. 'Mr. Bruff, you have no more imagination than a cow!'

'A cow is a very useful animal, Mr. Blake,' said the lawyer. With that reply he followed me out of the room, still keeping his papers in his hand.

We found Miss Verinder, pale and agitated, restlessly pacing her sitting room from end to end. At a table in a corner stood Betteredge, on guard over the medicine chest. Mr. Bruff sat down on the first chair that he could find, and (emulating the usefulness of the cow) plunged back again into his papers on the spot.

Miss Verinder drew me aside, and reverted instantly to her one all absorbing interest her interest in Mr. Blake.

'How is he now?' she asked. 'Is he nervous? is he out of temper? Do you think it will succeed? Are you sure it will do no harm?'

'Quite sure. Come, and see me measure it out.'

'One moment! It is past eleven now. How long will it be before anything happens?'

‘It is not easy to say. An hour perhaps.’

‘I suppose the room must be dark, as it was last year?’

‘Certainly.’

‘I shall wait in my bedroom just as I did before. I shall keep the door a little way open. It was a little way open last year. I will watch the sitting room door; and the moment it moves, I will blow out my light. It all happened in that way, on my birthday night. And it must all happen again in the same way, mustn't it?’

‘Are you sure you can control yourself, Miss Verinder?’

‘In his interests, I can do anything!’ she answered fervently.

One look at her face told me that I could trust her. I addressed myself again to Mr. Bruff.

‘I must trouble you to put your papers aside for a moment,’ I said.

‘Oh, certainly!’ He got up with a start as if I had disturbed him at a particularly interesting place and

followed me to the medicine chest. There, deprived of the breathless excitement incidental to the practice of his profession, he looked at Betteredge and yawned wearily.

Miss Verinder joined me with a glass jug of cold water, which she had taken from a side table. 'Let me pour out the water,' she whispered. 'I must have a hand in it!'

I measured out the forty minims from the bottle, and poured the laudanum into a medicine glass. 'Fill it till it is three parts full,' I said, and handed the glass to Miss Verinder. I then directed Betteredge to lock up the medicine chest; informing him that I had done with it now. A look of unutterable relief overspread the old servant's countenance. He had evidently suspected me of a medical design on his young lady!

After adding the water as I had directed, Miss Verinder seized a moment while Betteredge was locking the chest, and while Mr. Bruff was looking back at his papers and slyly kissed the rim of the medicine glass. 'When you give it to him,' said the charming girl, 'give it to him on that

side!"

I took the piece of crystal which was to represent the Diamond from my pocket, and gave it to her.

‘You must have a hand in this, too,’ I said. ‘You must put it where you put the Moonstone last year.’

She led the way to the Indian cabinet, and put the mock Diamond into the drawer which the real Diamond had occupied on the birthday night. Mr. Bruff witnessed this proceeding, under protest, as he had witnessed everything else. But the strong dramatic interest which the experiment was now assuming, proved (to my great amusement) to be too much for Betteredge's capacity of self restraint. His hand trembled as he held the candle, and he whispered anxiously, ‘Are you sure, miss, it's the right drawer?’

I led the way out again, with the laudanum and water in my hand. At the door, I stopped to address a last word to Miss Verinder.

‘Don't be long in putting out the lights,’ I said.

‘I will put them out at once,’ she answered. ‘And I will wait in my bedroom, with only one candle alight.’

She closed the sitting room door behind us. Followed by Mr. Bruff and Betteredge, I went back to Mr. Blake's room.

We found him moving restlessly from side to side of the bed, and wondering irritably whether he was to have the laudanum that night. In the presence of the two witnesses, I gave him the dose, and shook up his pillows, and told him to lie down again quietly and wait.

His bed, provided with light chintz curtains, was placed, with the head against the wall of the room, so as to leave a good open space on either side of it. On one side, I drew the curtains completely and in the part of the room thus screened from his view, I placed Mr. Bruff and Betteredge, to wait for the result. At the bottom of the bed I half drew the curtains and placed my own chair at a little distance, so that I might let him see me or not see me, speak to me or not speak to me, just as the circumstances



might direct. Having already been informed that he always slept with a light in the room, I placed one of the two lighted candles on a little table at the head of the bed, where the glare of the light would not strike on his eyes. The other candle I gave to Mr. Bruff; the light, in this instance, being subdued by the screen of the chintz curtains. The window was open at the top, so as to ventilate the room. The rain fell softly, the house was quiet. It was twenty minutes past eleven, by my watch, when the preparations were completed, and I took my place on the chair set apart at the bottom of the bed.

Mr. Bruff resumed his papers, with every appearance of being as deeply interested in them as ever. But looking towards him now, I saw certain signs and tokens which told me that the Law was beginning to lose its hold on him at last. The suspended interest of the situation in which we were now placed was slowly asserting its influence even on his unimaginative mind. As for Betteredge, consistency of principle and dignity of conduct had become, in his case,

mere empty words. He forgot that I was performing a conjuring trick on Mr. Franklin Blake; he forgot that I had upset the house from top to bottom; he forgot that I had not read Robinson Crusoe since I was a child. 'For the Lord's sake, sir,' he whispered to me, 'tell us when it will begin to work.'

'Not before midnight,' I whispered back. 'Say nothing, and sit still.'

Betteredge dropped to the lowest depth of familiarity with me, without a struggle to save himself. He answered by a wink!

Looking next towards Mr. Blake, I found him as restless as ever in his bed; fretfully wondering why the influence of the laudanum had not begun to assert itself yet. To tell him, in his present humour, that the more he fidgeted and wondered, the longer he would delay the result for which we were now waiting, would have been simply useless. The wiser course to take was to dismiss the idea of the opium from his mind, by leading him insensibly to

think of something else.

With this view, I encouraged him to talk to me; contriving so to direct the conversation, on my side, as to lead it back again to the subject which had engaged us earlier in the evening the subject of the Diamond. I took care to revert to those portions of the story of the Moonstone, which related to the transport of it from London to Yorkshire; to the risk which Mr. Blake had run in removing it from the bank at Frizinghall; and to the unexpected appearance of the Indians at the house, on the evening of the birthday. And I purposely assumed, in referring to these events, to have misunderstood much of what Mr. Blake himself had told me a few hours since. In this way, I set him talking on the subject with which it was now vitally important to fill his mind without allowing him to suspect that I was making him talk for a purpose. Little by little, he became so interested in putting me right that he forgot to fidget in the bed. His mind was far away from the question of the opium, at the all important time when his

eyes first told me that the opium was beginning to lay its hold on his brain.

I looked at my watch. It wanted five minutes to twelve, when the premonitory symptoms of the working of the laudanum first showed themselves to me.

At this time, no unpractised eyes would have detected any change in him. But, as the minutes of the new morning wore away, the swiftly subtle progress of the influence began to show itself more plainly. The sublime intoxication of opium gleamed in his eyes; the dew of a stealthy perspiration began to glisten on his face. In five minutes more, the talk which he still kept up with me, failed in coherence. He held steadily to the subject of the Diamond; but he ceased to complete his sentences. A little later, the sentences dropped to single words. Then, there was an interval of silence. Then, he sat up in bed. Then, still busy with the subject of the Diamond, he began to talk again not to me, but to himself. That change told me that the first stage in the experiment was reached. The stimulant

influence of the opium had got him.

The time, now, was twenty three minutes past twelve. The next half hour, at most, would decide the question of whether he would, or would not, get up from his bed, and leave the room.

In the breathless interest of watching him in the unutterable triumph of seeing the first result of the experiment declare itself in the manner, and nearly at the time, which I had anticipated I had utterly forgotten the two companions of my night vigil. Looking towards them now, I saw the Law (as represented by Mr. Bruff's papers) lying unheeded on the floor. Mr. Bruff himself was looking eagerly through a crevice left in the imperfectly drawn curtains of the bed. And Betteredge, oblivious of all respect for social distinctions, was peeping over Mr. Bruff's shoulder.

They both started back, on finding that I was looking at them, like two boys caught out by their schoolmaster in a fault. I signed to them to take off their boots quietly, as I

was taking off mine. If Mr. Blake gave us the chance of following him, it was vitally necessary to follow him without noise.

Ten minutes passed and nothing happened. Then, he suddenly threw the bed clothes off him. He put one leg out of bed. He waited.

‘I wish I had never taken it out of the bank,’ he said to himself. ‘It was safe in the bank.’

My heart throbbed fast; the pulses at my temples beat furiously. The doubt about the safety of the Diamond was, once more, the dominant impression in his brain! On that one pivot, the whole success of the experiment turned. The prospect thus suddenly opened before me was too much for my shattered nerves. I was obliged to look away from him or I should have lost my selfcontrol.

There was another interval of silence.

When I could trust myself to look back at him he was out of his bed, standing erect at the side of it. The pupils of his eyes were now contracted; his eyeballs gleamed in the

light of the candle as he moved his head slowly to and fro.

He was thinking; he was doubting he spoke again.

‘How do I know?’ he said. ‘The Indians may be hidden in the house.’

He stopped, and walked slowly to the other end of the room. He turned waited came back to the bed.

‘It's not even locked up,’ he went on. ‘It's in the drawer of her cabinet. And the drawer doesn't lock.’

He sat down on the side of the bed. ‘Anybody might take it,’ he said.

He rose again restlessly, and reiterated his first words.

‘How do I know? The Indians may be hidden in the house.’

He waited again. I drew back behind the half curtain of the bed. He looked about the room, with a vacant glitter in his eyes. It was a breathless moment. There was a pause of some sort. A pause in the action of the opium? a pause in the action of the brain? Who could tell? Everything depended, now, on what he did next.

He laid himself down again on the bed!

A horrible doubt crossed my mind. Was it possible that the sedative action of the opium was making itself felt already? It was not in my experience that it should do this. But what is experience, where opium is concerned? There are probably no two men in existence on whom the drug acts in exactly the same manner. Was some constitutional peculiarity in him feeling the influence in some new way? Were we to fail on the very brink of success?

No! He got up again abruptly. 'How the devil am I to sleep,' he said, 'with this on my mind?'

He looked at the light, burning on the table at the head of his bed. After a moment, he took the candle in his hand.

I blew out the second candle, burning behind the closed curtains. I drew back, with Mr. Bruff and Betteredge, into the farthest corner by the bed. I signed to them to be silent, as if their lives had depended on it.

We waited seeing and hearing nothing. We waited, hidden from him by the curtains.



The light which he was holding on the other side of us moved suddenly. The next moment he passed us, swift and noiseless, with the candle in his hand.

He opened the bedroom door, and went out.

We followed him along the corridor. We followed him down the stairs. We followed him along the second corridor. He never looked back; he never hesitated.

He opened the sitting room door, and went in, leaving it open behind him.

The door was hung (like all the other doors in the house) on large old fashioned hinges. When it was opened, a crevice was opened between the door and the post. I signed to my two companions to look through this, so as to keep them from showing themselves. I placed myself outside the door also on the opposite side. A recess in the wall was at my left hand, in which I could instantly hide myself, if he showed any signs of looking back into the corridor.

He advanced to the middle of the room, with the

candle still in his hand; he looked about him but he never looked back.

I saw the door of Miss Verinder's bedroom standing ajar. She had put out her light. She controlled herself nobly. The dim white outline of her summer dress was all that I could see. Nobody who had not known it beforehand would have suspected that there was a living creature in the room. She kept back, in the dark: not a word, not a movement escaped her.

It was now ten minutes past one. I heard, through the dead silence, the soft drip of the rain and the tremulous passage of the night air through the trees.

After waiting irresolute, for a minute or more, in the middle of the room, he moved to the corner near the window, where the Indian cabinet stood.

He put his candle on the top of the cabinet. He opened, and shut, one drawer after another, until he came to the drawer in which the mock Diamond was put. He looked into the drawer for a moment. Then he took the mock

Diamond out with his right hand. With the other hand, he took the candle from the top of the cabinet.

He walked back a few steps towards the middle of the room, and stood still again.

Thus far, he had exactly repeated what he had done on the birthday night. Would his next proceeding be the same as the proceeding of last year? Would he leave the room? Would he go back now, as I believed he had gone back then, to his bedchamber? Would he show us what he had done with the Diamond, when he had returned to his own room?

His first action, when he moved once more, proved to be an action which he had not performed, when he was under the influence of the opium for the first time. He put the candle down on a table, and wandered on a little towards the farther end of the room. There was a sofa here. He leaned heavily on the back of it, with his left hand then roused himself, and returned to the middle of the room. I could now see his eyes. They were getting dull and heavy; the glitter in them was fast dying out.

The suspense of the moment proved too much for Miss Verinder's self control. She advanced a few steps then stopped again. Mr. Bruff and Betteredge looked across the open doorway at me for the first time. The prevision of a coming disappointment was impressing itself on their minds as well as on mine.

Still, so long as he stood where he was, there was hope. We waited, in unutterable expectation, to see what would happen next.

The next event was decisive. He let the mock Diamond drop out of his hand.

It fell on the floor, before the doorway plainly visible to him, and to everyone. He made no effort to pick it up: he looked down at it vacantly, and, as he looked, his head sank on his breast. He staggered roused himself for an instant walked back unsteadily to the sofa and sat down on it. He made a last effort; he tried to rise, and sank back. His head fell on the sofa cushions. It was then twenty five minutes past one o'clock. Before I had put my watch back in my

pocket, he was asleep.

It was all over now. The sedative influence had got him; the experiment was at an end.

I entered the room, telling Mr. Bruff and Betteredge that they might follow me. There was no fear of disturbing him. We were free to move and speak.

‘The first thing to settle,’ I said, ‘is the question of what we are to do with him. He will probably sleep for the next six or seven hours, at least. It is some distance to carry him back to his own room. When I was younger, I could have done it alone. But my health and strength are not what they were I am afraid I must ask you to help me.’

Before they could answer, Miss Verinder called to me softly. She met me at the door of her room, with a light shawl, and with the counterpane from her own bed.

‘Do you mean to watch him while he sleeps?’ she asked.

‘Yes, I am not sure enough of the action of the opium in his case to be willing to leave him alone.’

She handed me the shawl and the counterpane.

‘Why should you disturb him?’ she whispered. ‘Make his bed on the sofa. I can shut my door, and keep in my room.’

It was infinitely the simplest and the safest way of disposing of him for the night. I mentioned the suggestion to Mr. Bruff and Betteredge who both approved of my adopting it. In five minutes I had laid him comfortably on the sofa, and had covered him lightly with the counterpane and the shawl. Miss Verinder wished us good night, and closed the door. At my request, we three then drew round the table in the middle of the room, on which the candle was still burning, and on which writing materials were placed.

‘Before we separate,’ I began. ‘I have a word to say about the experiment which has been tried to night. Two distinct objects were to be gained by it. The first of these objects was to prove, that Mr. Blake entered this room, and took the Diamond, last year, acting unconsciously and

irresponsibly, under the influence of opium. After what you have both seen, are you both satisfied, so far?'

They answered me in the affirmative, without a moment's hesitation.

'The second object,' I went on, 'was to discover what he did with the Diamond, after he was seen by Miss Verinder to leave her sitting room with the jewel in his hand, on the birthday night. The gaining of this object depended, of course, on his still continuing exactly to repeat his proceedings of last year. He has failed to do that; and the purpose of the experiment is defeated accordingly. I can't assert that I am not disappointed at the result but I can honestly say that I am not surprised by it. I told Mr. Blake from the first, that our complete success in this matter depended on our completely reproducing in him the physical and moral conditions of last year and I warned him that this was the next thing to a downright impossibility. We have only partially reproduced the conditions, and the experiment has been only partially successful in

consequence. It is also possible that I may have administered too large a dose of laudanum. But I myself look upon the first reason that I have given, as the true reason why we have to lament a failure, as well as to rejoice over a success.'

After saying those words, I put the writing materials before Mr. Bruff, and asked him if he had any objection before we separated for the night to draw out, and sign, a plain statement of what he had seen. He at once took the pen, and produced the statement with the fluent readiness of a practised hand.

'I owe you this,' he said, signing the paper, 'as some atonement for what passed between us earlier in the evening. I beg your pardon, Mr. Jennings, for having doubted you. You have done Franklin Blake an inestimable service. In our legal phrase, you have proved your case.'

Betteredge's apology was characteristic of the man.

'Mr. Jennings,' he said, 'when you read Robinson Crusoe again (which I strongly recommend you to do), you



will find that he never scruples to acknowledge it, when he turns out to have been in the wrong. Please to consider me, sir, as doing what Robinson Crusoe did, on the present occasion.' With those words he signed the paper in his turn.

Mr. Bruff took me aside, as we rose from the table.

'One word about the Diamond,' he said. 'Your theory is that Franklin Blake hid the Moonstone in his room. My theory is, that the Moonstone is in the possession of Mr. Luker's bankers in London. We won't dispute which of us is right. We will only ask, which of us is in a position to put his theory to the test?'

'The test, in my case,' I answered, 'has been tried to night, and has failed.'

'The test, in my case,' rejoined Mr. Bruff, 'is still in process of trial. For the last two days I have had a watch set for Mr. Luker at the bank; and I shall cause that watch to be continued until the last day of the month. I know that he must take the Diamond himself out of his banker's hands and I am acting on the chance that the person who has

pledged the Diamond may force him to do this by redeeming the pledge. In that case I may be able to lay my hand on the person. If I succeed, I clear up the mystery, exactly at the point where the mystery baffles us now! Do you admit that, so far?'

I admitted it readily.

'I am going back to town by the morning train,' pursued the lawyer. 'I may hear, when I return, that a discovery has been made and it may be of the greatest importance that I should have Franklin Blake at hand to appeal to, if necessary. I intend to tell him, as soon as he wakes, that he must return with me to London. After all that has happened, may I trust to your influence to back me?'

'Certainly!' I said.

Mr. Bruff shook hands with me, and left the room. Betteredge followed him out.

I went to the sofa to look at Mr. Blake. He had not moved since I had laid him down and made his bed he lay locked in a deep and quiet sleep.

While I was still looking at him, I heard the bedroom door softly opened. Once more, Miss Verinder appeared on the threshold, in her pretty summer dress.

‘Do me a last favour?’ she whispered. ‘Let me watch him with you.’

I hesitated not in the interests of propriety; only in the interest of her night's rest. She came close to me, and took my hand.

‘I can't sleep; I can't even sit still, in my own room,’ she said. ‘Oh, Mr. Jennings, if you were me, only think how you would long to sit and look at him. Say, yes! Do!’

Is it necessary to mention that I gave way? Surely not!

She drew a chair to the foot of the sofa. She looked at him in a silent ecstasy of happiness, till the tears rose in her eyes. She dried her eyes, and said she would fetch her work. She fetched her work, and never did a single stitch of it. It lay in her lap she was not even able to look away from him long enough to thread her needle. I thought of my own youth; I thought of the gentle eyes which had once looked

love at me. In the heaviness of my heart I turned to my Journal for relief, and wrote in it what is written here.

So we kept our watch together in silence. One of us absorbed in his writing; the other absorbed in her love.

Hour after hour he lay in his deep sleep. The light of the new day grew and grew in the room, and still he never moved.

Towards six o'clock, I felt the warning which told me that my pains were coming back. I was obliged to leave her alone with him for a little while. I said I would go upstairs, and fetch another pillow for him out of his room. It was not a long attack, this time. In a little while I was able to venture back, and let her see me again.

I found her at the head of the sofa, when I returned. She was just touching his forehead with her lips. I shook my head as soberly as I could, and pointed to her chair. She looked back at me with a bright smile, and a charming colour in her face. 'You would have done it,' she whispered, 'in my place!'

It is just eight o'clock. He is beginning to move for the first time.

Miss Verinder is kneeling by the side of the sofa. She has so placed herself that when his eyes first open, they must open on her face.

Shall I leave them together?

Yes!

Eleven o'clock. The house is empty again. They have arranged it among themselves; they have all gone to London by the ten o'clock train. My brief dream of happiness is over. I have awakened again to the realities of my friendless and lonely life.

I dare not trust myself to write down the kind words that have been said to me especially by Miss Verinder and Mr. Blake. Besides, it is needless. Those words will come back to me in my solitary hours, and will help me through what is left of the end of my life. Mr. Blake is to write, and tell me what happens in London. Miss Verinder is to return to Yorkshire in the autumn (for her marriage, no doubt);

and I am to take a holiday, and be a guest in the house. Oh me, how I felt, as the grateful happiness looked at me out of her eyes, and the warm pressure of her hand said, 'This is your doing!'

My poor patients are waiting for me. Back again, this morning, to the old routine! Back again, to night, to the dreadful alternative between the opium and the pain!

God be praised for His mercy! I have seen a little sunshine I have had a happy time.

## FIFTH NARRATIVE

### THE STORY RESUMED BY FRANKLIN BLAKE

#### CHAPTER I

BUT few words are needed, on my part, to complete the narrative that has been presented in the Journal of Ezra Jennings.

Of myself, I have only to say that I awoke on the morning of the twenty sixth, perfectly ignorant of all that I had said and done under the influence of the opium from the time when the drug first laid its hold on me, to the time when I opened my eyes, in Rachel's sitting room.

Of what happened after my waking, I do not feel called upon to render an account in detail. Confining myself merely to results, I have to report that Rachel and I thoroughly understood each other, before a single word of explanation had passed on either side. I decline to account, and Rachel declines to account, for the extraordinary

rapidity of our reconciliation. Sir and Madam, look back at the time when you were passionately attached to each other and you will know what happened, after Ezra Jennings had shut the door of the sitting room, as well as I know it myself.

I have, however, no objection to add, that we should have been certainly discovered by Mrs. Merridew, but for Rachel's presence of mind. She heard the sound of the old lady's dress in the corridor, and instantly ran out to meet her. I heard Mrs. Merridew say, 'What is the matter?' and I heard Rachel answer, 'The explosion!' Mrs. Merridew instantly permitted herself to be taken by the arm, and led into the garden, out of the way of the impending shock. On her return to the house, she met me in the hall, and expressed herself as greatly struck by the vast improvement in Science, since the time when she was a girl at school. 'Explosions, Mr. Blake, are infinitely milder than they were. I assure you, I barely heard Mr. Jennings's explosion from the garden. And no smell afterwards, that I can detect, now



we have come back to the house. I must really apologize to your medical friend. It is only due to him to say that he has managed it beautifully!'

So, after vanquishing Betteredge and Mr. Bruff, Ezra Jennings vanquished Mrs. Merridew herself. There is a great deal of un developed liberal feeling in the world, after all!

At breakfast, Mr. Bruff made no secret of his reasons for wishing that I should accompany him to London by the morning train. The watch kept at the bank, and the result which might yet come of it, appealed so irresistibly to Rachel's curiosity, that she at once decided (if Mrs. Merridew had no objection) on accompanying us back to town so as to be within reach of the earliest news of our proceedings.

Mrs. Merridew proved to be all pliability and indulgence, after the truly considerate manner in which the explosion had conducted itself; and Betteredge was accordingly informed that we were all four to travel back

together by the morning train. I fully expected that he would have asked leave to accompany us. But Rachel had wisely provided her faithful old servant with an occupation that interested him. He was charged with completing the refurnishing of the house, and was too full of his domestic responsibilities to feel the 'detective fever' as he might have felt it under other circumstances.

Our one subject of regret, in going to London, was the necessity of parting, more abruptly than we could have wished, with Ezra Jennings. It was impossible to persuade him to accompany us. I could only promise to write to him and Rachel could only insist on his coming to see her when she returned to Yorkshire. There was every prospect of our meeting again in a few months and yet there was something very sad in seeing our best and dearest friend left standing alone on the platform, as the train moved out of the station.

On our arrival in London, Mr. Bruff was accosted at the terminus by a small boy, dressed in a jacket and trousers of thread bare black cloth, and personally remarkable in

virtue of the extraordinary prominence of his eyes. They projected so far, and they rolled about so loosely, that you wondered uneasily why they remained in their sockets. After listening to the boy, Mr. Bruff asked the ladies whether they would excuse our accompanying them back to Portland Place. I had barely time to promise Rachel that I would return, and tell her everything that had happened, before Mr. Bruff seized me by the arm, and hurried me into a cab. The boy with the ill secured eyes took his place on the box by the driver, and the driver was directed to go to Lombard Street.

‘News from the bank?’ I asked, as we started.

‘News of Mr. Luker,’ said Mr. Bruff. ‘An hour ago, he was seen to leave his house at Lambeth, in a cab, accompanied by two men, who were recognized by my men as police officers in plain clothes. If Mr. Luker's dread of the Indians is at the bottom of this precaution, the inference is plain enough. He is going to take the Diamond out of the bank.’

‘And we are going to the bank to see what comes of it?’

‘Yes or to hear what has come of it, if it is all over by this time. Did you notice my boy on the box, there?’

‘I noticed his eyes.’

Mr. Bruff laughed. ‘They call the poor little wretch "Gooseberry" at the office,’ he said. ‘I employ him to go on errands and I only wish my clerks who have nicknamed him were as thoroughly to be depended on as he is. Gooseberry is one of the sharpest boys in London, Mr. Blake, in spite of his eyes.’

It was twenty minutes to five when we drew up before the bank in Lombard Street. Gooseberry looked longingly at his master, as he opened the cab door.

‘Do you want to come in too?’ asked Mr. Bruff kindly. ‘Come in then, and keep at my heels till further orders. He's as quick as lightning,’ pursued Mr. Bruff, addressing me in a whisper. ‘Two words will do with Gooseberry, where twenty would be wanted with another boy.’

We entered the bank. The outer office with the long counter, behind which the cashiers sat was crowded with people; all waiting their turn to take money out, or to pay money in, before the bank closed at five o'clock.

Two men among the crowd approached Mr. Bruff, as soon as he showed himself.

‘Well,’ asked the lawyer. ‘Have you seen him?’

‘He passed us here half an hour since, sir, and went on into the inner office.’

‘Has he not come out again yet?’

‘No, sir.’

Mr. Bruff turned to me. ‘Let us wait,’ he said.

I looked round among the people about me for the three Indians. Not a sign of them was to be seen anywhere. The only person present with a noticeably dark complexion was a tall man in a pilot coat, and a round hat, who looked like a sailor. Could this be one of them in disguise? Impossible! The man was taller than any of the Indians; and his face, where it was not hidden by a bushy black beard,

was twice the breadth of any of their faces at least.

‘They must have their spy somewhere,’ said Mr. Bruff, looking at the dark sailor in his turn. ‘And he may be the man.’

Before he could say more, his coat tail was respectfully pulled by his attendant sprite with the gooseberry eyes. Mr. Bruff looked where the boy was looking. ‘Hush!’ he said. ‘Here is Mr. Luker!’

The money lender came out from the inner regions of the bank, followed by his two guardian policemen in plain clothes.

‘Keep you eye on him,’ whispered Mr. Bruff. ‘If he passes the Diamond to anybody, he will pass it here.’

Without noticing either of us, Mr. Luker slowly made his way to the door now in the thickest, now in the thinnest part of the crowd. I distinctly saw his hand move, as he passed a short, stout man, respectably dressed in a suit of sober grey. The man started a little, and looked after him. Mr. Luker moved on slowly through the crowd. At the door

his guard placed themselves on either side of him. They were all three followed by one of Mr. Bruff's men and I saw them no more.

I looked round at the lawyer, and then looked significantly towards the man in the suit of sober grey. 'Yes!' whispered Mr. Bruff, 'I saw it too!' He turned about, in search of his second man. The second man was nowhere to be seen. He looked behind him for his attendant sprite. Gooseberry had disappeared.

'What the devil does it mean?' said Mr. Bruff angrily. 'They have both left us at the very time when we want them most.'

It came to the turn of the man in the grey suit to transact his business at the counter. He paid in a cheque received a receipt for it and turned to go out.

'What is to be done?' asked Mr. Bruff. 'We can't degrade ourselves by following him.'

'I can!' I said. 'I wouldn't lose sight of that man for ten thousand pounds!'

‘In that case,’ rejoined Mr. Bruff, ‘I wouldn’t lose sight of you, for twice the money. A nice occupation for a man in my position,’ he muttered to himself, as we followed the stranger out of the bank. ‘For Heaven’s sake don’t mention it. I should be ruined if it was known.’

The man in the grey suit got into an omnibus, going westward. We got in after him. There were latent reserves of youth still left in Mr. Bruff. I assert it positively when he took his seat in the omnibus, he blushed!

The man with the grey suit stopped the omnibus, and got out in Oxford Street. We followed him again. He went into a chemist’s shop.

Mr. Bruff started. ‘My chemist!’ he exclaimed. ‘I am afraid we have made a mistake.’

We entered the shop. Mr. Bruff and the proprietor exchanged a few words in private. The lawyer joined me again, with a very crestfallen face.

‘It’s greatly to our credit,’ he said, as he took my arm, and led me out ‘that’s one comfort!’



‘What is to our credit?’ I asked.

‘Mr. Blake! you and I are the two worst amateur detectives that ever tried their hands at the trade. The man in the grey suit has been thirty years in the chemist's service. He was sent to the bank to pay money to his master's account and he knows no more of the Moonstone than the babe unborn.’

I asked what was to be done next.

‘Come back to my office,’ said Mr. Bruff. ‘Gooseberry, and my second man, have evidently followed somebody else. Let us hope they had their eyes about them at any rate!’

When we reached Gray's Inn Square, the second man had arrived there before us. He had been waiting for more than a quarter of an hour.

‘Well!’ asked Mr. Bruff. ‘What's your news?’

‘I am sorry to say, sir,’ replied the man, ‘that I have made a mistake. I could have taken my oath that I saw Mr. Luker pass something to an elderly gentleman, in a light

coloured paletot. The elderly gentleman turns out, sir, to be a most respectable master ironmonger in Eastcheap.'

'Where is Gooseberry?' asked Mr. Bruff resignedly.

The man stared. 'I don't know, sir. I have seen nothing of him since I left the bank.'

Mr. Bruff dismissed the man. 'One of two things,' he said to me. 'Either Gooseberry has run away, or he is hunting on his own account. What do you say to dining here, on the chance that the boy may come back in an hour or two? I have got some good wine in the cellar, and we can get a chop from the coffee house.'

We dined at Mr. Bruff's chambers. Before the cloth was removed, 'a person' was announced as wanting to speak to the lawyer. Was the person Gooseberry? No: only the man who had been employed to follow Mr. Luker when he left the bank.

The report, in this case, presented no feature of the slightest interest. Mr. Luker had gone back to his own house, and had there dismissed his guard. He had not gone

out again afterwards. Towards dusk, the shutters had been put up, and the doors had been bolted. The street before the house, and the alley behind the house, had been carefully watched. No signs of the Indians had been visible. No person whatever had been seen loitering about the premises. Having stated these facts, the man waited to know whether there were any further orders. Mr. Bruff dismissed him for the night.

‘Do you think Mr. Luker has taken the Moonstone home with him?’ I asked.

‘Not he,’ said Mr. Bruff. ‘He would never have dismissed his two policemen, if he had run the risk of keeping the Diamond in his own house again.’

We waited another half hour for the boy, and waited in vain. It was then time for Mr. Bruff to go to Hampstead, and for me to return to Rachel in Portland Place. I left my card, in charge of the porter at the chambers, with a line written on it to say that I should be at my lodgings at half past ten, that night. The card was to be given to the boy, if

the boy came back.

Some men have a knack of keeping appointments; and other men have a knack of missing them. I am one of the other men. Add to this, that I passed the evening at Portland Place, on the same seat with Rachel, in a room forty feet long, with Mrs. Merridew at the farther end of it. Does anybody wonder that I got home at half past twelve instead of half past ten? How thoroughly heartless that person must be! And how earnestly I hope I may never make that person's acquaintance!

My servant handed me a morsel of paper when he let me in. I read in a neat legal handwriting, these words: 'If you please, sir, I am getting sleepy. I will come back to morrow morning, between nine and ten.' Inquiry proved that a boy, with very extraordinary looking eyes, had called, and presented my card and message, had waited an hour, had done nothing but fall asleep and wake up again, had written a line for me, and had gone home after gravely informing the servant that 'he was fit for nothing unless he

got his night's rest.'

At nine, the next morning, I was ready for my visitor. At half past nine, I heard steps outside my door. 'Come in, Gooseberry!' I called out. 'Thank you, sir,' answered a grave and melancholy voice. The door opened. I started to my feet, and confronted Sergeant Cuff.

'I thought I would look in here, Mr. Blake, on the chance of your being in town, before I wrote to Yorkshire,' said the Sergeant.

He was as dreary and as lean as ever. His eyes had not lost their old trick (so subtly noticed in Betteredge's Narrative) of 'looking as if they expected something more from you than you were aware of yourself.' But, so far as dress can alter a man, the great Cuff was changed beyond all recognition. He wore a broad brimmed white hat, a light shooting jacket, white trousers, and drab gaiters. He carried a stout oak stick. His whole aim and object seemed to be to look as if he had lived in the country all his life. When I complimented him on his Metamorphosis, he declined to

take it as a joke. He complained, quite gravely, of the noises and the smells of London. I declare I am far from sure that he did not speak with a slightly rustic accent! I offered him breakfast. The innocent countryman was quite shocked. His breakfast hour was half past six and he went to bed with the cocks and hens!

‘I only got back from Ireland last night,’ said the Sergeant, coming round to the practical object of his visit, in his own impenetrable manner. ‘Before I went to bed, I read your letter, telling me what has happened since my inquiry after the Diamond was suspended last year. There's only one thing to be said about the matter on my side. I completely mistook my case. How any man living was to have seen things in their true light, in such a situation as mine was at the time, I don't profess to know. But that doesn't alter the facts as they stand. I own that I made a mess of it. Not the first mess, Mr. Blake, which has distinguished my professional career! It's only in books that the offices of the detective force are superior to the

weakness of making a mistake.'

'You have come in the nick of time to recover your reputation,' I said.

'I beg your pardon, Mr. Blake,' rejoined the Sergeant. 'Now I have retired from business, I don't care a straw about my reputation. I have done with my reputation, thank God! I am here, sir, in grateful remembrance of the late Lady Verinder's liberality to me. I will go back to my old work if you want me, and if you will trust me on that consideration, and on no other. Not a farthing of money is to pass, if you please, from you to me. This is on honour. Now tell me, Mr. Blake, how the case stands since you wrote to me last.'

I told him of the experiment with the opium, and of what had occurred afterwards at the bank in Lombard Street. He was greatly struck by the experiment it was something entirely new in his experience. And he was particularly interested in the theory of Ezra Jennings, relating to what I had done with the Diamond after I had left Rachel's sitting

room, on the birthday night.

‘I don't hold with Mr. Jennings that you hid the Moonstone,’ said Sergeant Cuff. ‘But I agree with him, that you must certainly have taken it back to your own room.’

‘Well?’ I asked. ‘And what happened then?’

‘Have you no suspicion yourself of what happened, sir?’

‘None whatever.’

‘Has Mr. Bruff no suspicion?’

‘No more than I have.’

Sergeant Cuff rose, and went to my writing table. He came back with a sealed envelope. It was marked ‘Private’; it was addressed to me; and it had the Sergeant's signature in the corner.

‘I suspected the wrong person, last year,’ he said: ‘and I may be suspecting the wrong person now. Wait to open the envelope, Mr. Blake, till you have got at the truth. And then compare the name of the guilty person, with the name that I have written in that sealed letter.’



I put the letter into my pocket and then asked for the Sergeant's opinion of the measures which we had taken at the bank.

‘Very well intended, sir,’ he answered, ‘and quite the right thing to do. But there was another person who ought to have been looked after besides Mr. Luker.’

‘The person named in the letter you have just given to me?’

‘Yes, Mr. Blake, the person named in the letter. It can't be helped now. I shall have something to propose to you and Mr. Bruff, sir, when the time comes. Let's wait, first, and see if the boy has anything to tell us that is worth hearing.’

It was close on ten o'clock, and the boy had not made his appearance. Sergeant Cuff talked of other matters. He asked after his old friend Betteredge, and his old enemy the gardener. In a minute more, he would no doubt have got from this, to the subject of his favourite roses, if my servant had not interrupted us by announcing that the boy was

below.

On being brought into the room, Gooseberry stopped at the threshold of the door, and looked distrustfully at the stranger who was in my company. I told the boy to come to me.

‘You may speak before this gentleman,’ I said. ‘He is here to assist me; and he knows all that has happened. Sergeant Cuff,’ I added, ‘this is the boy from Mr. Bruff’s office.’

In our modern system of civilization, celebrity (no matter of what kind) is the lever that will move anything. The fame of the great Cuff had even reached the ears of the small Gooseberry. The boy’s ill fixed eyes rolled, when I mentioned the illustrious name, till I thought they really must have dropped on the carpet.

‘Come here, my lad,’ said the Sergeant, ‘and let’s hear what you have got to tell us.’

The notice of the great man the hero of many a famous story in every lawyer’s office in London appeared to

fascinate the boy. He placed himself in front of Sergeant Cuff, and put his hands behind him, after the approved fashion of a neophyte who is examined in his catechism.

‘What is your name?’ said the Sergeant, beginning with the first question in the catechism.

‘Octavius Guy,’ answered the boy. ‘They call me Gooseberry at the office because of my eyes.’

‘Octavius Guy, otherwise Gooseberry,’ pursued the Sergeant with the utmost gravity, ‘you were missed at the bank yesterday. What were you about?’

‘If you please, sir, I was following a man.’

‘Who was he?’

‘A tall man, sir, with a big black beard, dressed like a sailor.’

‘I remember the man!’ I broke in. ‘Mr. Bruff and I thought he was a spy employed by the Indians.’

Sergeant Cuff did not appear to be much impressed by what Mr. Bruff and I had thought. He went on catechizing Gooseberry.

‘Well?’ he said ‘and why did you follow the sailor?’

‘If you please, sir, Mr. Bruff wanted to know whether Mr. Luker passed anything to anybody on his way out of the bank. I saw Mr. Luker pass something to the sailor with the black beard.’

‘Why didn't you tell Mr. Bruff what you saw?’

‘I hadn't time to tell anybody, sir, the sailor went out in such a hurry.’

‘And you ran out after him eh?’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘Gooseberry,’ said the Sergeant, patting his head, ‘you have got something in that small skull of yours and it isn't cotton wool. I am greatly pleased with you, so far.’

The boy blushed with pleasure. Sergeant Cuff went on.

‘Well? and what did the sailor do, when he got into the street?’

‘He called a cab, sir.’

‘And what did you do?’

‘Held on behind, and run after it.’

Before the Sergeant could put his next question, another visitor was announced the head clerk from Mr. Bruff’s office.

Feeling the importance of not interrupting Sergeant Cuff’s examination of the boy, I received the clerk in another room. He came with bad news of his employer. The agitation and excitement of the last two days had proved too much for Mr. Bruff. He had awoke that morning with an attack of gout; he was confined to his room at Hampstead; and, in the present critical condition of our affairs, he was very uneasy at being compelled to leave me without the advice and assistance of an experienced person. The chief clerk had received orders to hold himself at my disposal, and was willing to do his best to replace Mr. Bruff.

I wrote at once to quiet the old gentleman’s mind, by telling him of Sergeant Cuff’s visit: adding that Gooseberry was at that moment under examination; and promising to

inform Mr. Bruff, either personally or by letter, of whatever might occur later in the day. Having dispatched the clerk to Hampstead with my note, I returned to the room which I had left, and found Sergeant Cuff at the fireplace, in the act of ringing the bell.

‘I beg your pardon, Mr. Blake,’ said the Sergeant. ‘I was just going to send word by your servant that I wanted to speak to you. There isn’t a doubt on my mind that this boy this most meritorious boy,’ added the Sergeant, patting Gooseberry on the head, ‘has followed the right man. Precious time has been lost, sir, through your unfortunately not being home at half past ten last night. The only thing to do, now, is to send for a cab immediately.’

In five minutes more, Sergeant Cuff and I (with Gooseberry on the box to guide the driver) were on our way eastward, towards the City.

‘One of these days,’ said the Sergeant, pointing through the front window of the cab, ‘that boy will do great things in my late profession. He is the brightest and

cleverest little chap I have met with, for many a long year past. You shall hear the substance, Mr. Blake, of what he told me while you were out of the room. You were present, I think, when he mentioned that he held on behind the cab, and ran after it?'

‘Yes.’

‘Well, sir, the cab went from Lombard Street to the Tower Wharf. The sailor with the black beard got out, and spoke to the steward of the Rotterdam steamboat, which was to start next morning. He asked if he could be allowed to go on board at once, and sleep in his berth overnight. The steward said, No. The cabins, and berths, and bedding were all to have a thorough cleaning that evening, and no passenger could be allowed to come on board, before the morning. The sailor turned round, and left the wharf. When he got into the street again, the boy noticed for the first time a man dressed like a respectable mechanic, walking on the opposite side of the road, and apparently keeping the sailor in view. The sailor stopped at an eating house in the

neighbourhood, and went in. The boy not being able to make up his mind, at the moment hung about among some other boys, staring at the good things in the eating house window. He noticed the mechanic waiting, as he himself was waiting but still on the opposite side of the street. After a minute, a cab came by slowly and stopped where the mechanic was standing. The boy could only see plainly one person in the cab, who leaned forward at the window to speak to the mechanic. He described that person, Mr. Blake, without any prompting from me, as having a dark face, like the face of an Indian.'

It was plain, by this time, that Mr. Bruff and I had made another mistake. The sailor with the black beard was clearly not a spy in the service of the Indian conspiracy. Was he, by any possibility, the man who had got the Diamond?

'After a little,' pursued the Sergeant, 'the cab moved on slowly down the street. The mechanic crossed the road, and went into the eating house. The boy waited outside till



he was hungry and tired and then went into the eating house, in his turn. He had a shilling in his pocket; and he dined sumptuously, he tells me, on a black pudding, an eel pie, and a bottle of ginger beer. What can a boy not digest? The substance in question has never been found yet!

‘What did he see in the eating house?’ I asked.

‘Well, Mr. Blake, he saw the sailor reading the newspaper at one table, and the mechanic reading the newspaper at another. It was dusk before the sailor got up, and left the place. He looked about him suspiciously when he got out into the street. The boy being a boy passed unnoticed. The mechanic had not come out yet. The sailor walked on, looking about him, and apparently not very certain of where he was going next. The mechanic appeared once more, on the opposite side of the road. The sailor went on, till he got to Shore Lane, leading into Lower Thames Street. There he stopped before a public house, under the sign of "The Wheel of Fortune," and, after examining the place outside, went in. Gooseberry went in too. There were

a great many people, mostly of the decent sort, at the bar. "The Wheel of Fortune" is a very respectable house, Mr. Blake; famous for its porter and porkpies.'

The Sergeant's digressions irritated me. He saw it; and confined himself more strictly to Gooseberry's evidence when he went on.

'The sailor,' he resumed, 'asked if he could have a bed. The landlord said "No; they were full." The barmaid corrected him, and said "Number Ten was empty." A waiter was sent for to show the sailor to Number Ten. Just before that, Gooseberry had noticed the mechanic among the people at the bar. Before the waiter had answered the call, the mechanic had vanished. The sailor was taken off to his room. Not knowing what to do next, Gooseberry had the wisdom to wait and see if anything happened. Something did happen. The landlord was called for. Angry voices were heard upstairs. The mechanic suddenly made his appearance again, collared by the landlord, and exhibiting, to Gooseberry's great surprise, all the signs and tokens of

being drunk. The landlord thrust him out at the door, and threatened him with the police if he came back. From the altercation between them, while this was going on, it appeared that the man had been discovered in Number Ten, and had declared with drunken obstinacy that he had taken the room. Gooseberry was so struck by this sudden intoxication of a previously sober person, that he couldn't resist running out after the mechanic into the street. As long as he was in sight of the public house, the man reeled about in the most disgraceful manner. The moment he turned the corner of the street, he recovered his balance instantly, and became as sober a member of society as you could wish to see. Gooseberry went back to "The Wheel of Fortune," in a very bewildered state of mind. He waited about again, on the chance of something happening. Nothing happened; and nothing more was to be heard, or seen, of the sailor. Gooseberry decided on going back to the office. Just as he came to this conclusion, who should appear, on the opposite side of the street as usual, but the mechanic again!

He looked up at one particular window at the top of the public house, which was the only one that had a light in it. The light seemed to relieve his mind. He left the place directly. The boy made his way back to Gray's Inn got your card and message called and failed to find you. There you have the state of the case, Mr. Blake, as it stands at the present time.'

‘What is your own opinion of the case, Sergeant?’

‘I think it's serious, sir. Judging by what the boy saw, the Indians are in it, to begin with.'

‘Yes. And the sailor is evidently the person to whom Mr. Luker passed the Diamond. It seems odd that Mr. Bruff, and I, and the man in Mr. Bruff's employment, should all have been mistaken about who the person was.'

‘Not at all, Mr. Blake. Considering the risk that person ran, it's likely enough that Mr. Luker purposely misled you, by previous arrangement between them.'

‘Do you understand the proceedings at the public house?’ I asked. ‘The man dressed like a mechanic was

acting of course in the employment of the Indians. But I am as much puzzled to account for his sudden assumption of drunkenness as Gooseberry himself.'

'I think I can give a guess at what it means, sir,' said the Sergeant. 'If you will reflect, you will see that the man must have had some pretty strict instructions from the Indians. They were far too noticeable themselves to risk being seen at the bank, or in the public house they were obliged to trust everything to their deputy. Very good. Their deputy hears a certain number named in the public house, as the number of the room which the sailor is to have for the night that being also the room (unless our notion is all wrong) which the Diamond is to have for the night, too. Under those circumstance, the Indians, you may rely on it, would insist on having a description of the room of its position in the house, of its capability of being approached from the outside, and so on. What was the man to do, with such orders as these? Just what he did! He ran upstairs to get a look at the room, before the sailor was taken into it.

He was found there, making his observations and he shammed drunk, as the easiest way of getting out of the difficulty. That's how I read the riddle. After he was turned out of the public house, he probably went with his report to the place where his employers were waiting for him. And his employers, no doubt, sent him back to make sure that the sailor was really settled at the public house till the next morning. As for what happened at "The Wheel of Fortune," after the boy left we ought to have discovered that last night. It's eleven in the morning, now. We must hope for the best, and find out what we can.'

In a quarter of an hour more, the cab stopped in Shore Lane, and Gooseberry opened the door for us to get out.

'All right?' asked the Sergeant.

'All right,' answered the boy.

The moment we entered 'The Wheel of Fortune' it was plain even to my inexperienced eyes that there was something wrong in the house.

The only person behind the counter at which the

liquors were served, was a bewildered servant girl, perfectly ignorant of the business. One or two customers, waiting for their morning drink, were tapping impatiently on the counter with their money. The barmaid appeared from the inner regions of the parlour, excited and preoccupied. She answered Sergeant Cuff's inquiry for the landlord, by telling him sharply that her master was upstairs, and was not to be bothered by anybody.

‘Come along with me, sir,’ said Sergeant Cuff, coolly leading the way upstairs, and beckoning to the boy to follow him.

The barmaid called to her master, and warned him that strangers were intruding themselves into the house. On the first floor we were encountered by the landlord, hurrying down, in a highly irritated state, to see what was the matter.

‘Who the devil are you? and what do you want here?’ he asked.

‘Keep your temper,’ said the Sergeant quietly. ‘I’ll tell you who I am to begin with. I am Sergeant Cuff.’

The illustrious name instantly produced its effect. The angry landlord threw open the door of a sitting room, and asked the Sergeant's pardon.

‘I am annoyed and out of sort, sir that's the truth,’ he said. ‘Something unpleasant has happened in the house this morning. A man in my way of business has a deal to upset his temper, Sergeant Cuff.’

‘Not a doubt of it,’ said the Sergeant. ‘I’ll come at once, if you will allow me, to what brings us here. This gentleman and I want to trouble you with a few inquiries, on a matter of some interest to both of us.’

‘Relating to what, sir?’ asked the landlord.

‘Relating to a dark man, dressed like a sailor, who slept here last night.’

‘Good God! that's the man who is upsetting the whole house at this moment!’ exclaimed the landlord. ‘Do you, or does this gentleman know anything about him?’

‘We can't be certain till we see him,’ answered the Sergeant.



‘See him?’ echoed the landlord. ‘That’s the one thing that nobody has been able to do since seven o’clock this morning. That was the time when he left word, last night, that he was to be called. He was called and there was no getting an answer from him, and no opening his door to see what was the matter. They tried again at eight, and they tried again at nine. No use! There was the door still locked and not a sound to be heard in the room! I have been out this morning and I only got back a quarter of an hour ago. I have hammered at the door myself and all to no purpose. The potboy has gone to fetch a carpenter. If you can wait a few minutes, gentlemen, we will have the door opened, and see what it means.’

‘Was the man drunk last night?’ asked Sergeant Cuff.

‘Perfectly sober, sir or I would never have let him sleep in my house.’

‘Did he pay for his bed beforehand?’

‘No.’

‘Could he leave the room in any way, without going

out by the door?'

‘The room is a garret,’ said the landlord. ‘But there’s a trap door in the ceiling, leading out on to the roof and a little lower down the street, there’s an empty house under repair. Do you think, Sergeant, the blackguard has got off in that way, without paying?’

‘A sailor,’ said Sergeant Cuff, ‘might have done it early in the morning, before the street was astir. He would be used to climbing, and his head wouldn’t fail him on the roofs of the houses.’

As he spoke, the arrival of the carpenter was announced. We all went upstairs, at once, to the top story. I noticed that the Sergeant was unusually grave, even for him. It also struck me as odd that he told the boy (after having previously encouraged him to follow us), to wait in the room below till we came down again.

The carpenter’s hammer and chisel disposed of the resistance of the door in a few minutes. But some article of furniture had been placed again inside, as a barricade. By

pushing at the door, we thrust this obstacle aside, and so got admission to the room. The landlord entered first; the Sergeant second; and I third. The other persons present followed us.

We all looked towards the bed, and all started.

The man had not left the room. He lay, dressed, on the bed with a white pillow over his face, which completely hid it from view.

‘What does that mean?’ said the landlord, pointing to the pillow.

Sergeant Cuff led the way to the bed, without answering, and removed the pillow.

The man's swarthy face was placid and still; his black hair and beard were slightly, very slightly, discomposed. His eyes stared wide open, glassy and vacant, at the ceiling. The filmy look and the fixed expression of them horrified me. I turned away, and went to the open window. The rest of them remained, where Sergeant Cuff remained, at the bed.

‘He's in a fit!’ I heard the landlord say.

‘He's dead,’ the Sergeant answered. ‘Send for the nearest doctor, and send for the police.’

The waiter was dispatched on both errands. Some strange fascination seemed to hold Sergeant Cuff to the bed. Some strange curiosity seemed to keep the rest of them waiting, to see what the Sergeant would do next.

I turned again to the window. The moment afterwards, I felt a soft pull at my coat tails, and a small voice whispered, ‘Look here, sir!’

Gooseberry had followed us into the room. His loose eyes rolled frightfully not in terror, but in exultation. He had made a detective discovery on his own account. ‘Look here, sir,’ he repeated and led me to a table in the corner of the room.

On the table stood a little wooden box, open, and empty. On one side of the box lay some jewellers' cotton. On the other side, was a torn sheet of white paper, with a seal on it, partly destroyed, and with an inscription in

writing, which was still perfectly legible. The inscription was in these words:

‘Deposited with Messrs. Bushe, Lysaught, and Bushe, by Mr. Septimus Luker, of Middlesex Place, Lambeth, a small wooden box, sealed up in this envelope, and containing a valuable of great price. The box, when claimed, to be only given up by Messrs. Bushe and Co. on the personal application of Mr. Luker.’

Those lines removed all further doubt, on one point at least. The sailor had been in possession of the Moonstone, when he had left the bank on the previous day.

I felt another pull at my coat tails. Gooseberry had not done with me yet.

‘Robbery!’ whispered the boy, pointing, in high delight, to the empty box.

‘You were told to wait downstairs,’ I said. ‘Go away!’

‘And Murder!’ added Gooseberry, pointing, with a keener relish still, to the man on the bed.

There was something so hideous in the boy's

enjoyment of the horror of the scene, that I took him by the two shoulders and put him out of the room.

At the moment when I crossed the threshold of the door, I heard Sergeant Cuff's voice, asking where I was. He met me, as I returned into the room, and forced me to go back with him to the bedside.

‘Mr. Blake!’ he said. ‘Look at the man's face. It is a face disguised and here's a proof of it!’

He traced with his finger a thin line of livid white, running backward from the dead man's forehead, between the swarthy complexion and the slightly disturbed black hair. ‘Let's see what is under this,’ said the Sergeant, suddenly seizing the black hair, with a firm grip of his hand.

My nerves were not strong enough to bear it. I turned away again from the bed.

The first sight that met my eyes, at the other end of the room, was the irrepressible Gooseberry, perched on a chair, and looking with breathless interest, over the heads of his

elders, at the Sergeant's proceedings.

‘He's pulling off his wig!’ whispered Gooseberry, compassionating my position, as the only person in the room who could see nothing.

There was a pause and then a cry of astonishment among the people round the bed.

‘He's pulled off his beard!’ cried Gooseberry.

There was another pause Sergeant Cuff asked for something. The landlord went to the washhand stand, and returned to the bed with a basin of water and a towel.

Gooseberry danced with excitement on the chair. ‘Come up here, along with me, sir! He's washing off his complexion now!’

The Sergeant suddenly burst his way through the people about him, and came, with horror in his face, straight to the place where I was standing.

‘Come back to the bed, sir!’ he began. He looked at me closer, and checked himself. ‘No!’ he resumed. ‘Open the sealed letter first the letter I gave you this morning.’

I opened the letter.

‘Read the name, Mr. Blake, that I have written inside.’

I read the name that he had written. It was Godfrey Ablewhite.

‘Now,’ said the Sergeant, ‘come with me, and look at the man on the bed.’

I went with him, and looked at the man on the bed.

GODFREY ABLEWHITE!

## SIXTH NARRATIVE

CONTRIBUTED BY SERGEANT CUFF

### CHAPTER I

DORKING, Surrey, July 30th, 1849. To Franklin Blake, Esq. Sir, I beg to apologize for the delay that has occurred in the production of the Report, with which I engaged to furnish you. I have waited to make it a complete Report; and I have been met, here and there, by obstacles which it was only possible to remove by some little



expenditure of patience and time.

The object which I proposed to myself has now, I hope, been attained. You will find, in these pages, answers to the greater part if not all of the questions, concerning the late Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite, which occurred to your mind when I last had the honour of seeing you.

I propose to tell you in the first place what is known of the manner in which your cousin met his death; appending to the statement such inferences and conclusions as we are justified (according to my opinion) in drawing from the facts.

I shall then endeavour in the second place to put you in possession of such discoveries as I have made, respecting the proceedings of Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite, before, during, and after the time, when you and he met as guests at the late Lady Verinder's country house.

## CHAPTER II

As to your cousin's death, then, first.

It appears to me to be established, beyond any reasonable doubt, that he was killed (while he was asleep, or immediately on his waking) by being smothered with a pillow from his bed that the persons guilty of murdering him are the three Indians and that the object contemplated (and achieved) by the crime, was to obtain possession of the diamond, called the Moonstone.

The facts from which this conclusion is drawn, are derived partly from an examination of the room at the tavern; and partly from the evidence obtained at the Coroner's Inquest.

On forcing the door of the room, the deceased gentleman was discovered, dead, with the pillow of the bed over his face. The medical man who examined him, being informed of this circumstance, considered the post mortem appearances as being perfectly compatible with murder by

smothering that is to say, with murder committed by some person, or persons, pressing the pillow over the nose and mouth of the deceased, until death resulted from congestion of the lungs.

Next, as to the motive for the crime.

A small box, with a sealed paper torn off from it (the paper containing an inscription) was found open, and empty, on a table in the room. Mr. Luker has himself personally identified the box, the seal, and the inscription. He has declared that the box did actually contain the diamond, called the Moonstone; and he has admitted having given the box (thus sealed up) to Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite (then concealed under a disguise), on the afternoon of the twenty sixth of June last. The fair inference from all this is, that the stealing of the Moonstone was the motive of the crime.

Next, as to the manner in which the crime was committed.

On examination of the room (which is only seven feet high), a trap door in the ceiling, leading out on to the roof

of the house, was discovered open. The short ladder, used for obtaining access to the trap door (and kept under the bed), was found placed at the opening, so as to enable any person, or persons, in the room, to leave it again easily. In the trap door itself was found a square aperture cut in the wood, apparently with some exceedingly sharp instrument, just behind the bolt which fastened the door on the inner side. In this way, any person from the outside could have drawn back the bolt, and opened the door, and have dropped (or have been noiselessly lowered by an accomplice) into the room its height, as already observed, being only seven feet. That some person, or persons, must have got admission in this way, appears evident from the fact of the aperture being there. As to the manner in which he (or they) obtained access to the roof of the tavern, it is to be remarked that the third house, lower down in the street, was empty, and under repair that a long ladder was left by the workmen, leading from the pavement to the top of the house and that, on returning to their work, on the morning

of the 27th, the men found the plank which they had tied to the ladder, to prevent anyone from using it in their absence, removed, and lying on the ground. As to the possibility of ascending by this ladder, passing over the roofs of the houses, passing back, and descending again, unobserved it is discovered, on the evidence of the night policeman, that he only passes through Shore Lane twice in an hour, when out on his beat. The testimony of the inhabitants also declares, that Shore Lane, after midnight, is one of the quietest and loneliest streets in London. Here again, therefore, it seems fair to infer that with ordinary caution, and presence of mind any man, or men, might have ascended by the ladder, and might have descended again, unobserved. Once on the roof of the tavern, it has been proved, by experiment, that a man might cut through the trap door, while lying down on it, and that in such a position, the parapet in front of the house would conceal him from the view of anyone passing in the street.

Lastly, as to the person, or persons, by whom the

crime was committed.

It is known (1) that the Indians had an interest in possessing themselves of the Diamond. (2) It is at least probable that the man looking like an Indian, whom Octavius Guy saw at the window of the cab, speaking to the man dressed like a mechanic, was one of the three Hindoo conspirators. (3) It is certain that this same man dressed like a mechanic, was seen keeping Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite in view, all through the evening of the 26th, and was found in the bedroom (before Mr. Ablewhite was shown into it) under circumstances which lead to the suspicion that he was examining the room. (4) A morsel of torn gold thread was picked up in the bedroom, which persons expert in such matters, declare to be of Indian manufacture and to be a species of gold thread not known in England. (5) On the morning of the 27th, three men, answering to the description of the three Indians, were observed in Lower Thames Street, were traced to the Tower Wharf, and were seen to leave London by the steamer bound for Rotterdam.

There is here, moral, if not legal, evidence, that the murder was committed by the Indians.

Whether the man personating a mechanic was, or was not, an accomplice in the crime, it is impossible to say. That he could have committed the murder alone, seems beyond the limits of probability. Acting by himself, he could hardly have smothered Mr. Ablewhite who was the taller and stronger man of the two without a struggle taking place, or a cry being heard. A servant girl, sleeping in the next room, heard nothing. The landlord, sleeping in the room below, heard nothing. The whole evidence points to the inference that more than one man was concerned in this crime and the circumstances, I repeat, morally justify the conclusion that the Indians committed it.

I have only to add, that the verdict at the Coroner's Inquest was Wilful Murder against some person, or persons, unknown. Mr. Ablewhite's family have offered a reward, and no effort has been left untried to discover the guilty persons. The man dressed like a mechanic has eluded all

inquiries. The Indians have been traced. As to the prospect of ultimately capturing these last, I shall have a word to say to on that head, when I reach the end of the present Report.

In the meanwhile, having now written all that is needful on the subject of Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite's death, I may pass next to the narrative of his proceedings before, during, and after the time, when you and he met at the late Lady Verinder's house.

### CHAPTER III

WITH regard to the subject now in hand, I may state, at the outset, that Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite's life had two sides to it.

The side turned up to the public view, presented the spectacle of a gentleman, possessed of considerable reputation as a speaker at charitable meetings, and endowed with administrative abilities, which he placed at the disposal of various Benevolent Societies, mostly of the female sort. The side kept hidden from the general notice,



exhibited this same gentleman in the totally different character of a man of pleasure, with a villa in the suburbs which was not taken in his own name, and with a lady in the villa, who was not taken in his own name, either.

My investigations in the villa have shown me several fine pictures and statues; furniture tastefully selected, and admirably made; and a conservatory of the rarest flowers, the match of which it would not be easy to find in all London. My investigation of the lady has resulted in the discovery of jewels which are worthy to take rank with the flowers, and of carriages and horses which have (deservedly) produced a sensation in the Park, among persons well qualified to judge of the build of the one, and the breed of the others.

All this is, so far, common enough. The villa and the lady are such familiar objects in London life, that I ought to apologize for introducing them to notice. But what is not common and not familiar (in my experience), is that all these fine things were not only ordered, but paid for. The

pictures, the statues, the flowers, the jewels, the carriages and the horses inquiry proved, to my indescribable astonishment, that not a sixpence of debt was owing on any of them. As to the villa, it had been bought, out and out, and settled on the lady.

I might have tried to find the right reading of this riddle, and tried in vain but for Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite's death, which caused an inquiry to be made into the state of his affairs.

The inquiry elicited these facts:

That Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite was entrusted with the care of a sum of twenty thousand pounds as one of two Trustees for a young gentleman, who was still a minor in the year eighteen hundred and forty eight. That the Trust was to lapse, and that the young gentleman was to receive the twenty thousand pounds on the day when he came of age, in the month of February, eighteen hundred and fifty. That, pending the arrival of this period, an income of six hundred pounds was to be paid to him by his two Trustees,

half yearly at Christmas and Midsummer Day. That this income was regularly paid by the active Trustee, Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite. That the twenty thousand pounds (from which the income was supposed to be derived) had every farthing of it been sold out of the Funds, at different periods, ending with the end of the year eighteen hundred and forty seven. That the power of attorney, authorizing the bankers to sell out the stock, and the various written orders telling them what amounts to sell out, were formally signed by both the Trustees. That the signature of the second Trustee (a retired army officer, living in the country) was a signature forged, in every case, by the active Trustee otherwise Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite.

In these facts lies the explanation of Mr. Godfrey's honourable conduct, in paying the debts incurred for the lady and the villa and (as you will presently see) of more besides.

We may now advance to the date of Miss Verinder's birthday (in the year eighteen hundred and forty eight) the

twenty first of June.

On the day before, Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite arrived at his father's house, and asked (as I know from Mr. Ablewhite, senior, himself) for a loan of three hundred pounds. Mark the sum; and remember at the same time, that the half yearly payment to the young gentleman was due on the twenty fourth of the month. Also, that the whole of the young gentleman's fortune had been spent by his Trustee, by the end of the year 'forty seven.

Mr. Ablewhite, senior, refused to lend his son a farthing.

The next day Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite rode over, with you, to Lady Verinder's house. A few hours afterwards, Mr. Godfrey (as you yourself have told me) made a proposal of marriage to Miss Verinder. Here, he saw his way no doubt if accepted to the end of all his money anxieties, present and future. But, as events actually turned out, what happened? Miss Verinder refused him.

On the night of the birthday, therefore, Mr. Godfrey

Ablewhite's pecuniary position was this. He had three hundred pounds to find on the twenty fourth of the month, and twenty thousand pounds to find in February eighteen hundred and fifty. Failing to raise these sums, at these times, he was a ruined man.

Under those circumstances, what takes place next?

You exasperate Mr. Candy, the doctor, on the sore subject of his profession; and he plays you a practical joke, in return, with a dose of laudanum. He trusts the administration of the dose, prepared in a little phial, to Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite who has himself confessed the share he had in the matter, under circumstances which shall presently be related to you. Mr. Godfrey is all the readier to enter into the conspiracy, having himself suffered from your sharp tongue in the course of the evening. He joins Betteredge in persuading you to drink a little brandy and water before you go to bed. He privately drops the dose of laudanum into your cold grog. And you drink the mixture.

Let us now shift the scene, if you please, to Mr.

Luker's house at Lambeth. And allow me to remark, by way of preface, that Mr. Bruff and I, together, have found a means of forcing the money lender to made a clean breast of it. We have carefully sifted the statement he has addressed to us; and here it is at your service.

## CHAPTER IV

LATE on the evening of Friday, the twenty third of June ('forty eight), Mr. Luker was surprised by a visit from Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite. He was more than surprised, when Mr. Godfrey produced the Moonstone. No such Diamond (according to Mr. Luker's experience) was in the possession of any private person in Europe.

Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite had two modest proposals to make, in relation to this magnificent gem. First, Would Mr. Luker be so good as to buy it? Secondly, Would Mr. Luker (in default of seeing his way to the purchase) undertake to sell it on commission, and to pay a sum down, on the anticipated result?

Mr. Luker tested the Diamond, weighted the Diamond, and estimated the value of the Diamond, before he answered a word. His estimate (allowing for the flaw in the stone) was thirty thousand pounds.

Having reached that result, Mr. Luker opened his lips, and put a question: 'How did you come by this?' Only six words! But what volumes of meaning in them!

Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite began a story. Mr. Luker opened his lips again, and only said three words, this time. 'That won't do!'

Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite began another story. Mr. Luker wasted no more words on him. He got up, and rang the bell for the servant to show the gentleman out.

Upon this compulsion, Mr. Godfrey made an effort, and came out with a new and amended version of the affair, to the following effect.

After privately slipping the laudanum into your brandy and water, he wished you good night, and went into his own room. It was the next room to yours; and the two had a

door of communication between them. On entering his own room Mr. Godfrey (as he supposed) closed his door. His money troubles kept him awake. He sat, in his dressing gown and slippers, for nearly an hour, thinking over his position. Just as he was preparing to get into bed, he heard you, talking to yourself, in your own room, and going to the door of communication, found that he had not shut it as he supposed.

He looked into your room to see what was the matter. He discovered you with the candle in your hand, just leaving your bedchamber. He heard you say to yourself, in a voice quite unlike your own voice, 'How do I know? The Indians may be hidden in the house.'

Up to that time, he had simply supposed himself (in giving you the laudanum) to be helping to make you the victim of a harmless practical joke. It now occurred to him, that the laudanum had taken some effect on you, which had not been foreseen by the doctor, any more than by himself. In the fear of an accident happening he followed you softly



to see what you would do.

He followed you to Miss Verinder's sitting room, and saw you go in. You left the door open. He looked through the crevice thus produced, between the door and the post, before he ventured into the room himself.

In that position, he not only detected you in taking the Diamond out of the drawer he also detected Miss Verinder, silently watching you from her bedroom, through her open door. His own eyes satisfied him that she saw you take the Diamond, too.

Before you left the sitting room again, you hesitated a little. Mr. Godfrey took advantage of this hesitation to get back again to his bedroom before you came out, and discovered him. He had barely got back, before you got back too. You saw him (as he supposes) just as he was passing through the door of communication. At any rate, you called to him in a strange, drowsy voice.

He came back to you. You looked at him in a dull sleepy way. You put the Diamond into his hand. You said to

him, 'Take it back, Godfrey, to your father's bank. It's safe there it's not safe here.' You turned away unsteadily, and put on your dressing gown. You sat down in the large arm chair in your room. You said, 'I can't take it back to the bank. My head's like lead and I can't feel my feet under me.' Your head sank on the back of the chair you heaved a heavy sigh and you fell asleep.

Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite went back, with the Diamond, into his own room. His statement is, that he came to no conclusion, at that time except that he would wait, and see what happened in the morning.

When the morning came, your language and conduct showed that you were absolutely ignorant of what you had said and done overnight. At the same time, Miss Verinder's language and conduct showed that she was resolved to say nothing (in mercy to you) on her side. If Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite chose to keep the Diamond, he might do so with perfect impunity. The Moonstone stood between him and ruin. He put the Moonstone into his pocket.

## CHAPTER V

THIS was the story told by your cousin (under pressure of necessity) to Mr. Luker.

Mr. Luker believed the story to be, as to all main essentials, true on this ground, that Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite was too great a fool to have invented it. Mr. Bruff and I agree with Mr. Luker, in considering this test of the truth of the story to be a perfectly reliable one.

The next question, was the question of what Mr. Luker would do in the matter of the Moonstone. He proposed the following terms, as the only terms on which he would consent to mix himself up with, what was (even in his line of business) a doubtful and dangerous transaction.

Mr. Luker would consent to lend Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite the sum of two thousand pounds, on condition that the Moonstone was to be deposited with him as a pledge. If, at the expiration of one year from that date, Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite paid three thousand pounds to Mr.

Luker, he was to receive back the Diamond, as a pledge redeemed. If he failed to produce the money at the expiration of the year, the pledge (otherwise the Moonstone) was to be considered as forfeited to Mr. Luker who would, in this latter case, generously make Mr. Godfrey a present of certain promissory notes of his (relating to former dealings) which were then in the money lender's possession.

It is needless to say, that Mr. Godfrey indignantly refused to listen to these monstrous terms. Mr. Luker thereupon handed him back the Diamond, and wished him good night.

Your cousin went to the door, and came back again. How was he to be sure that the conversation of that evening would be kept strictly secret between his friend and himself?

Mr. Luker didn't profess to know how. If Mr. Godfrey had accepted his terms, Mr. Godfrey would have made him an accomplice, and might have counted on his silence as on

a certainty. As things were, Mr. Luker must be guided by his own interests. If awkward inquiries were made, how could he be expected to compromise himself, for the sake of a man who had declined to deal with him?

Receiving this reply, Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite did, what all animals (human and otherwise) do, when they find themselves caught in a trap. He looked about him in a state of helpless despair. The day of the month, recorded on a neat little card in a box on the money lender's chimney piece, happened to attract his eye. It was the twenty third of June. On the twenty fourth, he had three hundred pounds to pay to the young gentleman for whom he was trustee, and no chance of raising the money, except the chance that Mr. Luker had offered to him. But for this miserable obstacle, he might have taken the Diamond to Amsterdam, and have made a marketable commodity of it, by having it cut up into separate stones. As matters stood, he had no choice but to accept Mr. Luker's terms. After all, he had a year at his disposal, in which to raise the three thousand pounds and a

year is a long time.

Mr. Luker drew out the necessary documents on the spot. When they were signed, he gave Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite two cheques. One, dated June 23rd, for three hundred pounds. Another, dated a week on, for the remaining balance seventeen hundred pounds.

How the Moonstone was trusted to the keeping of Mr. Luker's bankers, and how the Indians treated Mr. Luker and Mr. Godfrey (after that had been done) you know already.

The next event in your cousin's life refers again to Miss Verinder. He proposed marriage to her for the second time and (after having been accepted) he consented, at her request, to consider the marriage as broken off. One of his reasons for making this concession has been penetrated by Mr. Bruff. Miss Verinder had only a life interest in her mother's property and there was no raising the twenty thousand pounds on that.

But you will say, he might have saved the three thousand pounds, to redeem the pledged Diamond, if he

had married. He might have done so certainly supposing neither his wife, nor her guardians and trustees, objected to his anticipating more than half of the income at his disposal, for some unknown purpose, in the first year of his marriage. But even if he got over this obstacle, there was another waiting for him in the background. The lady at the Villa had heard of his contemplated marriage. A superb woman, Mr. Blake, of the sort that are not to be trifled with the sort with the light complexion and the Roman nose. She felt the utmost contempt for Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite. It would be silent contempt, if he made a handsome provision for her. Otherwise, it would be contempt with a tongue to it. Miss Verinder's life interest allowed him no more hope of raising the 'provision' than of raising the twenty thousand pounds. He couldn't marry he really couldn't marry, under all the circumstances.

How he tried his luck again with another lady, and how that marriage also broke down on the question of money, you know already. You also know of the legacy of

five thousand pounds, left to him shortly afterwards, by one of those many admirers among the soft sex whose good graces this fascinating man had contrived to win. That legacy (as the event has proved) led him to his death.

I have ascertained that when he went abroad, on getting his five thousand pounds, he went to Amsterdam. There he made all the necessary arrangements for having the Diamond cut into separate stones. He came back (in disguise), and redeemed the Moonstone, on the appointed day. A few days were allowed to elapse (as a precaution agreed to by both parties) before the jewel was actually taken out of the bank. If he had got safe with it to Amsterdam, there would have been just time between July 'forty nine and February 'fifty (when the young gentleman came of age) to cut the Diamond, and to make a marketable commodity (polished or unpolished) of the separate stones. Judge from this, what motives he had to run the risk which he actually ran. It was 'neck or nothing' with him if ever it was 'neck or nothing' with a man yet.



I have only to remind you, before closing this Report, that there is a chance of laying hands on the Indians, and of recovering the Moonstone yet. They are now (there is every reason to believe) on their passage to Bombay, in an East Indiaman. The ship (barring accidents) will touch at no other port on her way out; and the authorities at Bombay (already communicated with by letter, overland) will be prepared to board the vessel, the moment she enters the harbour.

I have the honour to remain, dear sir, your obedient servant, RICHARD CUFF (late sergeant in the Detective Force, Scotland Yard, London).<sup>1</sup> <sup>1</sup>NOTE. Wherever the Report touches on the events of the birthday, or of the three days that followed it, compare with Betteredge's Narrative, Chapters VIII to XIII.

## SEVENTH NARRATIVE

### IN A LETTER FROM MR. CANDY

FRIZINGHALL, Wednesday, September 26th, 1849.

Dear Mr. Franklin Blake, you will anticipate the sad news I have to tell you, on finding your letter to Ezra Jennings returned to you, unopened, in this enclosure. He died in my arms, at sunrise, on Wednesday last.

I am not to blame for having failed to warn you that his end was at hand. He expressly forbade me to write to you. 'I am indebted to Mr. Franklin Blake,' he said, 'for having seen some happy days. Don't distress him, Mr. Candy don't distress him.'

His sufferings, up to the last six hours of his life, were terrible to see. In the intervals of remission, when his mind was clear, I entreated him to tell me of any relatives of his to whom I might write. He asked to be forgiven for refusing anything to me. And then he said not bitterly that he would die as he had lived, forgotten and unknown. He maintained

that resolution to the last. There is no hope now of making any discoveries concerning him. His story is a blank.

The day before he died, he told me where to find all his papers. I brought them to him on his bed. There was a little bundle of old letters which he put aside. There was his unfinished book. There was his Diary in many locked volumes. He opened the volume for this year, and tore out, one by one, the pages relating to the time when you and he were together. 'Give those,' he said, 'to Mr. Franklin Blake. In years to come, he may feel an interest in looking back at what is written there.' Then he clasped his hands, and prayed God fervently to bless you, and those dear to you. He said he should like to see you again. But the next moment he altered his mind. 'No,' he answered, when I offered to write. 'I won't distress him! I won't distress him!'

At his request I next collected the other papers that is to say, the bundle of letters, the unfinished book, and the volumes of the Diary and enclosed them all in one wrapper, sealed with my own seal. 'Promise,' he said, 'that you will

put this into my coffin with your own hand; and that you will see that no other hand touches it afterwards.'

I gave him my promise. And the promise has been performed.

He asked me to do one other thing for him which it cost me a hard struggle to comply with. He said, 'Let my grave be forgotten. Give me your word of honour that you will allow no monument of any sort not even the commonest tombstone to mark the place of my burial. Let me sleep, nameless. Let me rest, unknown.' When I tried to plead with him to alter his resolution, he became for the first, and only time, violently agitated. I could not bear to see it; and I gave way. Nothing but a little grass mound marks the place of his rest. In time, the tombstones will rise round it. And the people who come after us will look and wonder at the nameless grave.

As I have told you, for six hours before his death his sufferings ceased. He dozed a little. I think he dreamed. Once or twice he smiled. A woman's name, as I suppose the

name of 'Ella' was often on his lips at this time. A few minutes before the end came he asked me to lift him on his pillow, to see the sun rise through the window. He was very weak. His head fell on my shoulder. He whispered, 'It's coming!' Then he said, 'Kiss me!' I kissed his forehead. On a sudden he lifted his head. The sunlight touched his face. A beautiful expression, an angelic expression, came over it. He cried out three times, 'Peace! peace! peace!' His head sank back again on my shoulder, and the long trouble of his life was at an end.

So he has gone from us. This was, as I think, a great man though the world never knew him. He bore a hard life bravely. He had the sweetest temper I have ever met with. The loss of him makes me feel very lonely. Perhaps I have never been quite myself again since my illness. Sometimes, I think of giving up my practice, and going away, and trying what some of the foreign baths and waters will do for me.

It is reported here, that you and Miss Verinder are to

be married next month. Please to accept my best congratulations.

The pages of my poor friend's Journal are waiting for you at my house sealed up, with your name on the wrapper. I was afraid to trust them to the post.

My best respects and good wishes attend Miss Verinder. I remain, dear Mr. Franklin Blake, truly yours,  
THOMAS CANDY.

## EIGHTH NARRATIVE

CONTRIBUTED BY GABRIEL BETTEREDGE

I AM the person (as you remember no doubt) who led the way in these pages, and opened the story. I am also the person who is left behind, as it were, to close the story up.

Let nobody suppose that I have any last words to say here concerning the Indian Diamond. I hold that unlucky jewel in abhorrence and I refer you to other authority than mine, for such news of the Moonstone as you may, at the present time, be expected to receive. My purpose, in this

place, is to state a fact in the history of the family, which has been passed over by everybody, and which I won't allow to be disrespectfully smothered up in that way. The fact to which I allude is the marriage of Miss Rachel and Mr. Franklin Blake. This interesting event took place at our house in Yorkshire, on Tuesday, October ninth, eighteen hundred and forty nine. I had a new suit of clothes on the occasion. And the married couple went to spend the honeymoon in Scotland.

Family festivals having been rare enough at our house, since my poor mistress's death, I own on this occasion of the wedding to having (towards the latter part of the day) taken a drop too much on the strength of it.

If you have ever done the same sort of thing yourself, you will understand and feel for me. If you have not, you will very likely say, 'Disgusting old man! why does he tell us this?' The reason why is now to come.

Having, then, taken my drop (bless you! you have got your favourite vice, too; only your vice isn't mine, and

mine isn't yours), I next applied the one infallible remedy that remedy being, as you know, Robinson Crusoe. Where I opened that unrivalled book, I can't say. Where the lines of print at last left off running into each other, I know, however, perfectly well. It was at page three hundred and eighteen a domestic bit concerning Robinson Crusoe's marriage, as follows:

‘With those Thoughts, I considered my new Engagement, that I had a Wife' (Observe! so had Mr. Franklin!) ‘one Child born' (Observe again! that might yet be Mr. Franklin's case, too!) ‘and my Wife then' What Robinson Crusoe's wife did, or did not do, ‘then,' I felt no desire to discover. I scored the bit about the Child with my pencil, and put a morsel of paper for a mark to keep the place; ‘Lie you there,' I said, ‘till the marriage of Mr. Franklin and Miss Rachel is some months older and then we'll see!'

The months passed (more than I had bargained for), and no occasion presented itself for disturbing that mark in



the book. It was not till this present month of November, eighteen hundred and fifty, that Mr. Franklin came into my room, in high good spirits, and said, 'Betteredge! I have got some news for you! Something is going to happen in the house, before we are many months older.'

'Does it concern the family, sir?' I asked.

'It decidedly concerns the family,' says Mr. Franklin.

'Has your good lady anything to do with it, if you please, sir?'

'She has a great deal to do with it,' says Mr. Franklin, beginning to look a little surprised.

'You needn't say a word more, sir,' I answered. 'God bless you both! I'm heartily glad to hear it.'

Mr. Franklin stared like a person thunderstruck. 'May I venture to inquire where you got your information?' he asked. 'I only got mine (imparted in the strictest secrecy) five minutes since.'

Here was an opportunity of producing Robinson Crusoe! Here was a chance of reading that domestic bit

about the child which I had marked on the day of Mr. Franklin's marriage! I read those miraculous words with an emphasis which did them justice, and then I looked him severely in the face. 'Now, sir, do you believe in Robinson Crusoe?' I asked, with a solemnity suitable to the occasion.

'Betteredge!' says Mr. Franklin, with equal solemnity, 'I'm convinced at last.' He shook hands with me and I felt that I had converted him.

With the relation of this extraordinary circumstance, my reappearance in these pages comes to an end. Let nobody laugh at the unique anecdote here related. You are welcome to be as merry as you please over everything else I have written. But when I write of Robinson Crusoe, by the Lord it's serious and I request you to take it accordingly!

When this is said, all is said. Ladies and gentlemen, I make my bow, and shut up the story.

## EPILOGUE

### THE FINDING OF THE DIAMOND

#### I

#### THE STATEMENT OF SERGEANT CUFF'S MAN (1849)

ON the twenty seventh of June last, I received instructions from Sergeant Cuff to follow three men; suspected of murder, and described as Indians. They had been seen on the Tower Wharf that morning, embarking on board the steamer bound for Rotterdam.

I left London by a steamer belonging to another company, which sailed on the morning of Thursday the twenty eighth. Arriving at Rotterdam, I succeeded in finding the commander of the Wednesday's steamer. He informed me that the Indians had certainly been passengers on board his vessel but as far as Gravesend only. Off that place, one of the three had inquired at what time they

would reach Calais. On being informed that the steamer was bound to Rotterdam, the spokesman of the party expressed the greatest surprise and distress at the mistake which he and his two friends had made. They were all willing (he said) to sacrifice their passage money, if the commander of the steamer would only put them ashore. Commiserating their position, as foreigners in a strange land, and knowing no reason for detaining them, the commander signalled for a shore boat, and the three men left the vessel.

This proceeding of the Indians having been plainly resolved on beforehand, as a means of preventing their being traced, I lost no time in returning to England. I left the steamer at Gravesend, and discovered that the Indians had gone from that place to London. Thence, I again traced them as having left for Plymouth. Inquiries made at Plymouth proved that they had sailed, forty eight hours previously, in the *Bewley Castle*, East Indiaman, bound direct to Bombay.

On receiving this intelligence, Sergeant Cuff caused the authorities at Bombay to be communicated with, overland so that the vessel might be boarded by the police immediately on her entering the port. This step having been taken, my connection with the matter came to an end. I have heard nothing more of it since that time.

## II

### THE STATEMENT OF THE CAPTAIN (1849)

I'AM requested by Sergeant Cuff to set in writing certain facts, concerning three men (believed to be Hindoos) who were passengers, last summer, in the ship Bewley Castle, bound for Bombay direct, under my command.

The Hindoos joined us at Plymouth. On the passage out I heard no complaint of their conduct. They were berthed in the forward part of the vessel. I had but few occasions myself of personally noticing them.

In the latter part of the voyage, we had the misfortune to be becalmed for three days and nights, off the coast of

India. I have not got the ship's journal to refer to, and I cannot now call to mind the latitude and longitude. As to our position, therefore, I am only able to state generally that the currents drifted us in towards the land, and that when the wind found us again, we reached our port in twenty four hours afterwards.

The discipline of a ship (as all seafaring persons know) becomes relaxed in a long calm. The discipline of my ship became relaxed. Certain gentlemen among the passengers got some of the smaller boats lowered, and amused themselves by rowing about, swimming, when the sun at evening time was cool enough to let them divert themselves in that way. The boats when done with ought to have been slung up again in their places. Instead of this they were left moored to the ship's side. What with the heat, and what with the vexation of the weather, neither officers nor men seemed to be in heart for their duty while the calm lasted.

On the third night, nothing unusual was heard or seen by the watch on deck. When the morning came, the

smallest of the boats was missing and the three Hindoos were next reported to be missing too.

If these men had stolen the boat shortly after dark (which I have no doubt they did), we were near enough to the land to make it vain to send in pursuit of them, when the discovery was made in the morning. I have no doubt they got ashore, in that calm weather (making all due allowances for fatigue and clumsy rowing), before daybreak.

On reaching our port I there learnt, for the first time, the reason these passengers had for seizing their opportunity of escaping from the ship. I could only make the same statement to the authorities which I have made here. They considered me to blame for allowing the discipline of the vessel to be relaxed. I have expressed my regret on this score to them, and to my owners. Since that time, nothing has been heard to my knowledge of the three Hindoos. I have no more to add to what is here written.

### III

#### THE STATEMENT OF MR. MURTHWAITE (1850)

(In a letter to MR. BRUFF)

HAVE you any recollection, my dear sir, of a semi savage person whom you met out at dinner, in London, in the autumn of 'forty eight? Permit me to remind you that the person's name was Murthwaite, and that you and he had a long conversation together after dinner. The talk related to an Indian Diamond, called the Moonstone, and to a conspiracy then in existence to get possession of the gem.

Since that time, I have been wandering in Central Asia. Thence I have drifted back to the scene of some of my past adventures in the north and north west of India. About a fortnight since, I found myself in a certain district or province (but little known to Europeans) called Kattiawar.

Here an adventure befell me, in which (incredible as it may appear) you are personally interested.

In the wild regions of Kattiawar (and how wild they



are, you will understand, when I tell you that even the husbandmen plough the land, armed to the teeth), the population is fanatically devoted to the old Hindoo religion to the ancient worship of Bramah and Vishnu. The few Mahometan families, thinly scattered about the villages in the interior, are afraid to taste meat of any kind. A Mahometan even suspected of killing that sacred animal, the cow, is, as a matter of course, put to death without mercy in these parts by the pious Hindoo neighbours who surround them. To strengthen the religious enthusiasm of the people, two of the most famous shrines of Hindoo pilgrimage are contained within the boundaries of Kattiawar. One of them is Dwarka, the birthplace of the god Krishna. The other is the sacred city of Somnauth sacked, and destroyed, as long since as the eleventh century, by the Mahometan conqueror, Mahmood of Ghizni.

Finding myself, for the second time, in these romantic regions, I resolved not to leave Kattiawar, without looking once more on the magnificent desolation of Somnauth. At

the place where I planned to do this, I was (as nearly as I could calculate it) some three days distant, journeying on foot, from the sacred city.

I had not been long on the road, before I noticed that other people by twos and threes appeared to be travelling in the same direction as myself.

To such of these as spoke to me, I gave myself out as a Hindoo Boodhist, from a distant province, bound on a pilgrimage. It is needless to say that my dress was of the sort to carry out this description. Add, that I know the language as well as I know my own, and that I am lean enough and brown enough to make it no easy matter to detect my European origin and you will understand that I passed muster with the people readily: not as one of themselves, but as a stranger from a distant part of their own country.

On the second day, the number of Hindoos travelling in my direction had increased to fifties and hundreds. On the third day, the throng had swollen to thousands; all

slowly converging to one point the city of Somnauth.

A trifling service which I was able to render to one of my fellow pilgrims, during the third day's journey, proved the means of introducing me to certain Hindoos of the higher caste. From these men I learnt that the multitude was on its way to a great religious ceremony, which was to take place on a hill at a little distance from Somnauth. The ceremony was in honour of the god of the Moon; and it was to be held at night.

The crowd detained us as we drew near to the place of celebration. By the time we reached the hill the moon was high in the heaven. My Hindoo friends possessed some special privileges which enabled them to gain access to the shrine. They kindly allowed me to accompany them. When we arrived at the place, we found the shrine hidden from our view by a curtain hung between two magnificent trees. Beneath the trees a flat projection of rock jutted out, and formed a species of natural platform. Below this I stood, in company with my Hindoo friends.

Looking back down the hill, the view presented the grandest spectacle of Nature and Man, in combination, that I have ever seen. The lower slopes of the eminence melted imperceptibly into a grassy plain, the place of the meeting of three rivers. On one side, the graceful winding of the waters stretched away, now visible, now hidden by trees, as far as the eye could see. On the other, the waveless ocean slept in the calm of the night. People this lovely scene with tens of thousands of human creatures, all dressed in white, stretching down the sides of the hill, overflowing into the plain, and fringing the nearer banks of the winding rivers. Light this halt of the pilgrims by the wild red flames of cressets and torches, streaming up at intervals from every part of the innumerable throng. Imagine the moonlight of the East, pouring in unclouded glory over all and you will form some idea of the view that met me when I looked forth from the summit of the hill.

A strain of plaintive music, played on stringed instruments and flutes, recalled my attention to the hidden

shrine.

I turned, and saw on the rocky platform the figures of three men. In the central figure of the three I recognized the man to whom I had spoken in England, when the Indians appeared on the terrace at Lady Verinder's house. The other two who had been his companions on that occasion were no doubt his companions also on this.

One of the spectators, near whom I was standing, saw me start. In a whisper, he explained to me the apparition of the three figures on the platform of rock.

They were Brahmins (he said) who had forfeited their caste in the service of the god. The god had commanded that their purification should be the purification by pilgrimage. On that night, the three men were to part. In three separate directions, they were to set forth as pilgrims to the shrines of India. Never more were they to look on each other's faces. Never more were they to rest on their wanderings, from the day which witnessed their separation, to the day which witnessed their death.

As those words were whispered to me, the plaintive music ceased. The three men prostrated themselves on the rock, before the curtain which hid the shrine. They rose they looked on one another they embraced. Then they descended separately among the people. The people made way for them in dead silence. In three different directions I saw the crowd part, at one and the same moment. Slowly the grand white mass of the people closed together again. The track of the doomed men through the ranks of their fellow mortals was obliterated. We saw them no more.

A new strain of music, loud and jubilant, rose from the hidden shrine. The crowd around me shuddered, and pressed together.

The curtain between the trees was drawn aside, and the shrine was disclosed to view.

There, raised high on a throne seated on his typical antelope, with his four arms stretching towards the four corners of the earth there, soared above us, dark and awful in the mystic light of heaven, the god of the Moon. And

there, in the forehead of the deity, gleamed the yellow Diamond, whose splendour had last shone on me in England, from the bosom of a woman's dress!

Yes! after the lapse of eight centuries, the Moonstone looks forth once more, over the walls of the sacred city in which its story first began. How it has found its way back to its wild native land by what accident, or by what crime, the Indians regained possession of their sacred gem, may be in your knowledge, but is not in mine. You have lost sight of it in England, and (if I know anything of this people) you have lost sight of it for ever.

So the years pass, and repeat each other; so the same events revolve in the cycles of time. What will be the next adventures of the Moonstone? Who can tell?

• End •