

## RETURN OF NORMALCY PREDICTED BY HAYS; HARDING IS FACTOR

That the nation is headed toward an early return of normalcy and that an early ratification of the peace with Germany by the senate will do much toward speeding normalcy's return, is opinion of Postmaster General Will Hays, as recently expressed in a speech in Cleveland, O.

"In its more obvious sense," said Mr. Hays, "normalcy is a condition which can be expressed in concrete facts and figures. But in a larger and more important sense, though a more subtle one, normalcy is a psychological condition. It is a state of mind. At any time and under any presidency, the state of mind of the country is largely influenced by the state of mind of the man in the White House."

**Personality Reflected.**

"Placed in so high and so conspicuous a station, emanations from his personality radiate throughout the country, and affect or create the state of mind of the country. The White House is, indeed, the 'biggest pulpit in the country.'"

"In this present time the operation of one of those higher laws that work for the world's good has brought to the White House exactly the personality that was needed to lead the country away from the turbulent passions of war back to the normal human nature of peace."

"If you, throughout the country, have been able to 'sense' the curing and restorative qualities of President Harding's personality, much more vividly do we, who serve in contact with him, appreciate him as one whose greatest concern is justice and good faith, who cures excitement with serenity, who meets passion with gentleness, who conquers anger with tolerance, who overcomes violence with patience, who shames greed with unselfishness, whose test for every decision is: 'What does good faith call on us to do?' whose approach to every problem is: 'Which of these alternatives is just?'"

**Taxation Important.**

The matter of taxation, the postmaster general declared, is the most important one thing in process of adjustment.

"The country has been confronted with an almost insurmountable difficulty," he said. "War debts must be paid of course, and shall be paid. They are paid with money which must be raised. Taxes which had been raised must be repealed and steps are being taken as rapidly as possible to that end."

It is the idea of those carrying the largest responsibility that for the immediate present the method of raising revenue can probably not be fundamentally changed, but that there shall be a readjustment of that method providing new and lower rates, with the repeal of obsolete features, such as the excess profits tax.

**Must Repeal Income Tax.**

"Personally, I am willing to say most emphatically that this country cannot go on indefinitely during peace time with either the form or the degree of taxation which was originally devised to meet the emergency of war. Our colossal income taxes were adopted with an eye single to one thing, namely, raising money in the largest quantity and with the greatest speed. We took the device of going straight where the money was and taking it ruthlessly."

"Our present system of taxation destroys the incentive to save. The time is too short and the government's need of money too great to turn around immediately, but express the hope and expectation that soon we shall be able to change our system of taxation so as to raise less of our revenue through burdensome income taxes and more of it through some other form of direct tax on the production or consumption of goods."

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## The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle

By SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE  
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"When you see a man with whiskers that cut and the 'pink un' protruding out of his pocket, you can always draw him by a bet," said he. "I dare say that if I had put £100 down in front of him, that man would not have given me such complete information as was drawn from him by the idea that he was doing me on a wager. Well, Watson, we are, I fancy, nearing the end of our quest, and the only point which remains to be determined is whether we should go on to this Mrs. Oakshott tonight, or whether we should reserve it for tomorrow. It is clear from what that surly fellow said there are others besides ourselves who are anxious about the matter, and I should—"

His remarks were suddenly cut short by a loud hubbub which broke out from the stall which we had just left. Turning round, we saw a little rat-faced fellow standing in the centre of the circle of yellow light which was thrown by the swinging lamp, while Breckinbridge, the salesman, framed in the door of his stall, was shaking his fists fiercely at the cringing figure.

"I have had enough of you and your geese," he shouted. "I wish you were all at the devil together. If you come pestering me any more with your silly talk I will set the dog at you. You bring Mrs. Oakshott here and I will answer her, but what have you to do with it? Did I buy the geese off you?"

"No, but one of them was mine all the same," whined the little man. "Well, then ask Mrs. Oakshott for it."

"She told me to ask you."

"Well, you can ask the King of Prussia for all I care. I have had enough of it. Get out of this!" He rushed fiercely forward, and the inquirer flitted away into the darkness.

"Ha, that may save us a visit to Brixton Road," whispered Holmes. "Come with me and we will see what is to be made of this fellow."

Striding through the scattered knots of people who lounged around the flaring stalls, my companion speedily overtook the little man and touched him upon the shoulder. He sprang round, and I could see in the gaslight that every vestige of color had been driven from his face.

"Who are you then? What do you want?" he asked, in a quivering voice. "You will excuse me," said Holmes, blandly, "but I could not help overhearing the questions which you put to the salesman just now. I think that I could be of assistance to you."

"You? Who are you? How could you know anything of the matter?"

"My name is Sherlock Holmes. It is my business to know what other people don't know."

"But you can know nothing of this?"

"Excuse me, I know everything of it. You are endeavoring to trace some geese which were sold by Mrs.

Oakshott, of Brixton Road, to a salesman named Breckinbridge, by him in turn to Mr. Wingate, of the 'Alpha,' and by him to his club, of which Mr. Henry Baker was a member.

"Oh, sir, you are the man whom I have longed to meet," cried the little fellow, with outstretched hands and quivering fingers. "I can hardly explain to you how interested I am in this matter."

Sherlock Holmes hailed a four-wheeler which was passing. "In that case we had better discuss it in a cozy room rather than in this wind-swept market place," but pray tell me before we go further, who is it that I have the pleasure of assisting?

"The man hesitated for an instant. 'My name is John Robinson,' he answered with a sidelong glance. 'No, no; the real name,' said Holmes, sweetly. 'It is always awkward doing business with an alias.' A flush sprang to the white cheeks of the stranger. 'Well, then,' said he, 'my real name is James Ryder.'"

"Precisely so. Head attendant at the 'Hotel Cosmopolitan.' Pray step into the cab, and I shall soon be able to tell you everything you wish to know."

The little man stood glancing from one to the other of us with half-frightened, half-hopeful eyes, as one who is not sure whether he is on the verge of windfall or a catastrophe. Then we stepped into the cab and in half an hour we were back in the sitting room at Baker street. Nothing had been said during our ride, but the high thin breathing of our companion, and the claspings and unclaspings of his hands, spoke of the nervous tension within him.

"Here we are!" said Holmes, cheerily, as we filed into the room. "The fire looks very reasonable in this weather. You look cold, Mr. Ryder. Pray take the basket chair. I will just put on my slippers before we settle this little matter of yours. Now, then! You want to know what became of those geese?"

"Yes, sir."

"Or, rather, I fancy, of that goose. It was one bird, I imagine, in which you were interested—white, with a black bar across the tail."

Ryder quivered with emotion. "Oh, sir," he cried, "can you tell me where it went to?"

"It came here."

"Here?"

"Yes, and a most remarkable bird it proved. I don't wonder that you should take an interest in it. It laid an egg after it was dead—the bonniest, brightest little blue egg that ever was seen. I have it here in my museum."

Our visitor staggered to his feet and clutched the mantel piece with his right hand. Holmes unlocked his strong-box and held out the blue carbuncle, which shone out like a star, with a cold, brilliant, many-pointed radiance. Ryder stood glaring with a

drawn face, uncertain whether to claim or disown it.

"The game's up, Ryder," said Holmes, quietly. "Hold up, man, or you will be into the fire! Give him an arm back into his chair, Watson. He's not got blood enough to go in for felony with impunity. Give him a dash of brandy. So! Now he looks a little more human. What a shrimp it is to be sure!"

For a moment he had staggered and nearly fallen, but the brandy brought a tinge of color into his cheeks, and he sat staring with frightened eyes at his accuser.

"I have almost every link in my hands, and all the proofs which I could possibly need, so there is little which you need tell me. Still that little may as well be cleared up to make the case complete. You had heard, Ryder, of this blue stone of the Countess of Morcar's?"

"It was Catherine Cusack who told me of it," said he, in a crackling voice. "I see her ladyship's waiting maid. Well, the temptation of sudden wealth so easily acquired was too much for you, as it has been for better men before you; you were not very scrupulous in the means you used. It seems to me, Ryder, that there is the making of a very petty villain in you. You know that this man Horner, the plumber, had been concerned in some such matter before, and that suspicion would rest the more readily upon him. What do you do, then? You made some small job in my lady's room—you and your confederate Cusack—and you managed that he should be the man sent for. Then, when he had left, you rifled the jewel-case, raised the alarm and had this unfortunate man arrested. You then—"

Ryder threw himself down suddenly upon the rug and clutched at my companion's knees. "For God's sake, have

mercy!" he shrieked. "Think of my father! of my mother! It would break their hearts. I never went wrong before! I never will again. I swear it. I'll swear it on a Bible. Oh, don't bring me into court! For Christ's sake, don't!"

"Get back into your chair!" said Holmes, sternly. "It's very well to cringe and crawl now, but you thought little enough of his poor Hoerner, in the dock for a crime of which he knew nothing."

"I will fly, Mr. Holmes. I will leave the country, sir. Then the charge against him will break down."

"Hum! We will talk about that. And now let's hear a true account of the next act. How came the stone into the open market? Tell us the truth for there lies your only hope of safety."

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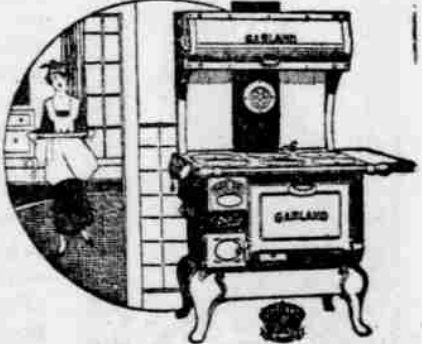
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