

The "Gloria Scott"

By SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

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"Have some papers here," said my friend, Sherlock Holmes, as we sat one winter's night on either side of the fire, "which I really think, Watson, that it would be worth your while to glance over. These are the documents in the extraordinary case of the 'Gloria Scott,' and this is the message which struck Justice of the Peace Trevor dead with horror when he read it."

He had picked from a drawer a little tarnished cylinder, and undoing its tape, he handed me a short note scrawled upon a half-sheet of slate.

"The supply of game for London is going steadily up," it ran. "Head-keeper Hudson, I believe, has been now told to receive all orders for fly-paper and for preservation of your hen-peasant's life."

As I glanced up from reading this enigmatical message, I saw Holmes chuckling at the expression upon my face.

"You look a little bewildered," said he.

"I cannot see how such a message as this could inspire horror. It seems to me to be rather grotesque than otherwise."

"Very likely. Yet the fact remains that the reader, who was a fine, robust old man was knocked clean down by it as if it had been the butt end of a pistol."

"You arouse my curiosity," said I. "But why did you say just now that there were very particular reasons why I should study this case?"

"Because it was the first in which I was ever engaged."

I had often endeavored to elicit from my companion what had first turned his mind in the direction of criminal research, but had never caught him before in a communicative humor. Now he sat forward in his arm-chair and spread out the documents upon his knees. Then he lit his pipe and sat for some time smoking and thinking them over.

"You never heard me talk of Victor Trevor?" he asked. "He was the only friend I made during the two years I was at college. I was never a very sociable fellow, Watson, always rather fond of moping in my rooms and working out my own little methods of thought, so that I never mixed much with the men of my year. Bar fencing and boxing I had few athletic tastes, and then my line of study was quite distinct from that of the other fellows, so that we had no points of contact at all. Trevor was the only man I knew, and that only through the accident of his bull terrier freezing on to my ankle one morning as I went down to chapel."

"It was a prosaic way of forming a friendship, but it was effective. I was laid by the heels for 10 days, and Trevor used to come in to inquire after me. At first it was only a minute's chat, but soon his visits lengthened, and before the end of the term we were close friends. He was a hearty, full-blooded fellow, full of spirits and energy, the very opposite to me in most respects, but we had some subjects in common, and it was a bond of union when I found that he was as friendless as I. Finally, he invited me down to his father's place at Donnington, in Norfolk, and I accepted his hospitality for a month of the long vacation."

"Old Trevor was evidently a man of some wealth and consideration, a J.P., and a landed proprietor. Donnington is a little hamlet just to the north of Langmere, in the country of the Broads. The house was an old-fashioned, wide-spread, oak-beamed brick building, with a fine lime-lined avenue leading up to it. There was excellent wild-duck shooting in the fens, remarkably good fishing, a small but select library, taken over, as I understood, from a former occupant, and a tolerable cook, so that he would be a fastidious man who could not put in a pleasant month there."

"Trevor senior was a widower, and my friend his only son."

"There had been a daughter, I heard, but she had died of diphtheria while on a visit to Birmingham. The father interested me extremely. He was a man of little culture, but with a considerable amount of rude strength, both physically and mentally. He knew hardly any books, but he had travelled far, had seen much of the world, and had remembered all that he had learned. In person he was a thick-set, burly man with a shock of frizzled hair, a brown, weather-beaten face, and blue eyes which were keen to the verge of fierceness. Yet he had a reputation for kindness and charity on the leniency of his sentences from the bench."

"One evening, shortly after my arrival, we were sitting over a glass of

COMPLETE

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derstood, if a program is agreed upon which will permit each power represented at the conference to reduce its land and naval forces to a minimum mutually agreed upon and provide for a curtailment of future naval construction to the end that an effective "naval holiday" may be proclaimed.

The United States would undoubtedly be prepared to proceed the farthest toward a goal of complete disarmament. It is generally understood, however, that the other powers are in no mood at this time to consider such a proposal.

The governments of these nations do not share the view expressed by Dr. Edwards that "if ever there should come a time when a nation could disarm without danger, it is now."

Conditions Acute.

They point to the fact that conditions in eastern Europe and in many

parts of Asia continue in an acute stage, and this situation is generally diagnosed as the result of racial hatreds stirred up by the unsatisfactory division of territories and the tracing of new lines in old boundary disputes set forth in the peace pact of Paris.

The European powers are vitally affected by the disturbances in eastern Europe and in Asia Minor, and in the face of them they have no thought of complete disarmament. They are interested only in a limitation of armaments to a point where the burden of Japan Reluctant.

taxation can be made less burdensome to their peoples. Japan will come to the Washington

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conference convinced that her position as a Pacific power depends upon her ability to defend herself. She has been disturbed by the reluctance shown by Great Britain to renew the treaty of alliance between the two countries, and she is far from satisfied that America's policy in the Pacific presents no threat to the island empire.

It is expected that Japan will be prepared to drive a sharp bargain even if she consents to become a party to an agreement for the limitation of armaments. American diplomacy entertains no hope that Japan would par-

ticipate in any discussion of the subject of complete disarmament.

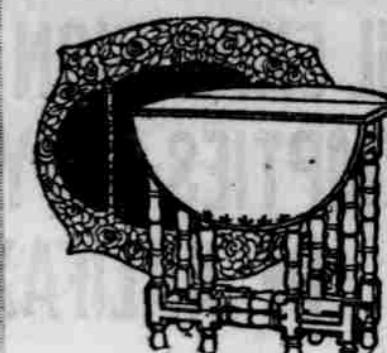


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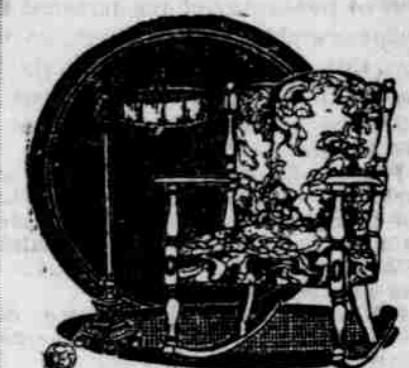
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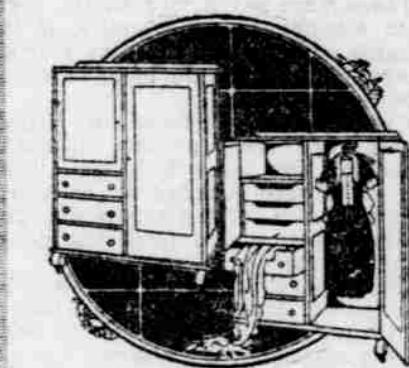
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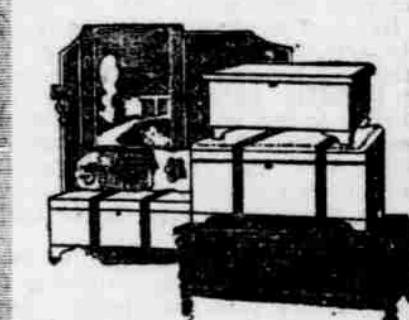
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