

On Tuesday the disappointed young man received a letter from Mrs Greenhow saying she was coming up to town for a few days, and that she would call upon him on Wednesday afternoon at three o'clock. After the terrible defeat of his schemes Stanford was rather afraid to face the lady who had furnished the money, but he nerved himself for the interview, and at three o'clock she entered, her face radiant with smiles.

"Well," she cried, "we have won, have we not?" and she laughed as she gazed at his doleful countenance, and added, "It was by a very narrow majority though."

"Won?" he groaned. "We have not had a single candidate returned."

"Oh, I see, you are thinking of the Land Nationalisation party, while I am speaking of the Conservatives."

"I thought," said Stanford, dejectedly, "that you had lent money to help the Land Restoration."

"Oh, yes," she said, smiling, "but I told you that I did not at all believe in it, and never thought for a moment you would succeed, you see, during the last two or three weeks I have become a staunch Conservative. I have been electioneering for my father. You saw, I suppose, that he had been elected by a majority of one hundred and fifty, whilst last election he was returned by a majority of only fifteen. We consider it all due to your land candidate, who drew votes from the Liberal side."

"Did you supply me the money, then, in order to assist the Tory party?" asked the young man severely.

"Oh, dear no; but that is invariably the result of these advanced schemes. They always help the Conservative party. You look most dreadfully shocked, but you must make allowances for human nature, you know. As I told you, I am always Conservative during election time, fiercely so, much more than my father is. I shall be my normal self again in a few days."

"Well, there is one consolation," said Stanford, "which is this Government, with its small majority, will not last long, and we can have another try."

"Oh, yes, and that reminds me," said Mrs Greenhow, "is the money all spent? I suppose it is. Shall I send another twenty thousand?"

"No, it is not all gone. You see we have only had a hundred men at thirty shillings a week for ten weeks, and that has only amounted to about fifteen hundred pounds. There has been spent in office expenses and printing about another five hundred."

"Well, I must say," said the lady, "though your campaign has not been successful you have conducted it with great economy. How do you account for your lack of success?"

"Lack of votes, I suppose," said Stanford.

Mrs Greenhow laughed, and added: "And how do you account for lack of votes?"

"That I cannot account for. I shall have first to look over the reports my candidates send me. They will all be in shortly. Then I must examine with some minuteness all the polls where I had candidates standing for a constituency. When all this is done I hope to be able to tell with some degree of certainty the cause of our failure. I suppose, however, that your own case furnishes a reason for our defeat."

"I don't understand you."
"Well, you said you became a firm Conservative the moment the election began, and no doubt that is the case with many others. People who at ordinary times might join our cause go back to their old allegiance the moment the fight is on. I have apparently under-estimated the motive force of the beating of tom-toms and the general unreasoning bulla-bulloo which accompanies an election."

"Undoubtedly, there is much in that," said Mrs Greenhow, rising, "but I will tell you where I think you made your great mistake. It was in sending strangers to each of the constituencies. Instead of sending young men down from London you should have gone to each of the divisions yourself and discovered who was the most popular man of advanced opinions in each district. You certainly ignored local feeling. Then a local man, if he is shrewd, knows how to appeal to each of his constituents."

"I think that a most excellent idea," said Stanford, musing over the problem; "but still a man has enemies as well as friends where he is known, and it might arouse local jealousy."

"Oh, that applies to any candidate, so it just comes to choosing the man who has the most friends and the fewest enemies. You must bear in mind that when a stranger is sent from London to contest an election all the local jealousies are united against him."

"I am convinced you are right," said Stanford, brightening up, "and in that way success lies. I will act at once on your suggestion and secure the right man for the right place before the next election. He must have time to prepare to work for himself and for us. I'm afraid, Mrs Greenhow," he continued, "you must think very poorly of me indeed, for you are not only furnishing the money, but the real ideas as well."

Mrs Greenhow laughed and disclaimed any praise.

(To be continued.)

Sherlock Holmes.

DR. DOYLE TELLS THE HISTORY OF A GREAT IDEA.

The idea of Sherlock Holmes was, says Dr. Conan Doyle in the thousandth number of "Tit-Bits," suggested by a professor under whom he had worked in Edinburgh, and in part by Edgar Allan Poe's detectives, which, after all, ran on the lines of all other detectives who have appeared in literature.

"In work which consists in the drawing of detectives there are only one or two qualities which one can use, and an author is forced to hark back upon them constantly, so that every detective must really resemble every other detective to a greater or less extent. There is no great originality required in devising or constructing such a man, and the only possible originality which one can get into a story about a detective is in giving him original plots and problems to solve, as in his equipment there must be of necessity an alert acuteness of mind to grasp facts and the relation which each of them bears

to the other.
"At the time I first thought of a detective—it was about 1886—I had been reading some detective stories, and it struck me what nonsense they were, because for getting the solution of the mystery the authors always depended on some coincidence. This struck me as not a fair way of playing the game, because the detective ought really to depend for his success on something in his own mind and not on merely adventitious circumstances, which do not by any means always occur in real life.

"For fun, therefore, I started constructing a story, and giving my detective a scientific system, so as to make him reason everything out. Intellectually that had been done before by Edgar Allan Poe with M. Dupin, but where Holmes differed from Dupin was that he had an immense fund of exact knowledge to draw upon in consequence of his previous scientific education. I mean by this, that by looking at a man's hand he knew what the man's trade was, as by looking at his trousers leg he could deduce the character of the man. He was practical and he was systematic, and his success in the detection of crime was to be the fruit, not of luck, but of his qualities."

Dr. Doyle explains his reasons for bringing the detective series to an end. "I was still a young man and a young novelist, and I have always noticed that the ruin of every novelist who has come up has been effected by driving him into a groove. . . . Now, why should a man be driven into a groove and not write about what interests him?"

"My objection to detective stories is that they only call for the use of a certain portion of one's imaginative faculty, the invention of a plot, without giving any scope for character drawing.

"The best literary work is that which leaves the reader better for having read it. Now, nobody can possibly be the better—in the high sense in which I mean it—for reading Sherlock Holmes, although he may have passed a pleasant hour in doing so."

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