

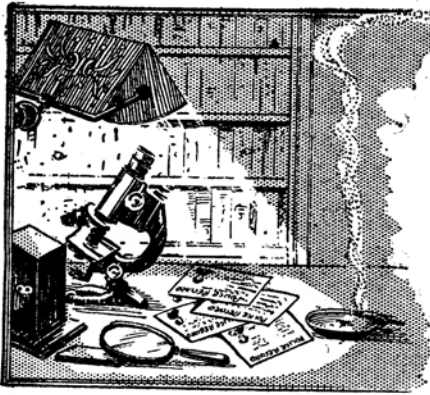
Another Wonderful Football Story Inside!

# The BOYS' HERALD

No. 100. ON SALE EVERY TUESDAY. Sept. 24, 1921.



**A SHOWER OF LEAFLETS FELL FROM THE AEROPLANES.**  
(See the Splendid, Long Complete Story Inside.)

**COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.**

# THE MISSING TREATY!

A Grand, Long Complete Detective Story introducing Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake.

BY OWEN CONQUEST.

**Ferrers Locke, the Up-to-Date Detective with New Methods.**

*In Safe Keeping.*

**C**APTAIN the Honourable Algernon Jervis, V.C., stepped into Ferrers Locke's consulting-room in Baker Street, just as the telephone bell rang loudly and sharply.

The famous detective rose to greet his visitor, and made a sign to Jack Drake to attend the telephone. The good-looking young V.C. shook hands with Ferrers Locke, with a smile.

"I suppose I've caught you at a busy moment, Locke. But you're always busy."

"Generally," said Locke. "But sit down, my dear fellow. Friends must come before clients sometimes. My assistant will stall off the impatient gentleman on the 'phone."

Jervis laughed, and sat down. He stretched out his long legs, crossed one over the other, and accepted a cigarette from the box Ferrers Locke pushed across to him.

"I'm just off," he said. "I leave by the boat train this evening, and I thought I'd look in to say good-bye, Locke, and to ask you a little favour before I go."

"You know I'm quite at your service," said the Baker Street detective, with a nod.

Drake, who had been speaking into the telephone at the further end of the room, glanced round.

"Excuse me, Mr. Locke—" he said hesitatingly.

"I am engaged at present, Drake."

"It is Sir Chetwynd Cheyne, sir—"

"You will tell him that I am engaged for ten minutes, Drake. He can ring me up again then, if he cares to do so."

"Very well, sir."

Drake spoke into the transmitter, and rang off. He returned quietly to his seat at the big desk, where he usually sat during Ferrers Locke's interviews with clients. He looked with some interest at the captain, as Jervis sat stretched in an easy chair, the smoke curling up from his cigarette.

Captain Jervis was worth looking at. He was tall—nearly six feet in height—broad in proportion, with the limbs of an Hercules, and the grace of an Apollo. His handsome face was marred only by a slight scar on one bronzed cheek, a relic of the war. Drake had seen the captain several times before in Ferrers Locke's rooms, and he knew the story of how Algernon Jervis had won the Victoria Cross, by an act of dare-devil courage and devotion, and he had a great liking and respect for the captain.

There was a rather whimsical smile on Jervis's handsome, bronzed face as he glanced at the detective.

"So you are wanted in high quarters, Locke," he said. "Isn't Sir Chetwynd Cheyne a terrific big gun in the diplomatic line?"

Locke nodded.

"And you're keeping him waiting on my account?" smiled Jervis. "I take that as a great compliment."

"I give you ten minutes, Jervis," said Ferrers Locke, smiling. "Now what is the favour you want to ask? It is granted, of course, before it is asked."

"Good man!" said the Honourable Algernon approvingly. "I knew I could depend on you. I'm going abroad, as I mentioned. I expect to spend the next six months in wild quarters of the earth—"

"Looking for trouble, as usual?" smiled Locke.

"Finding it, I've no doubt," said Jervis. "I generally land in trouble of some sort, through not being able to mind my own business. I can't help chipping in—"

"On the side of right against wrong, always," said Locke, with a nod. "You are a reckless young scamp, Jervis; and I fear that your taste for adventure will land you into

hot water some day. When that time comes, you will remember my address in Baker Street, I hope."

Jervis chuckled.

"I've remembered it now," he said. "The fact is, I want you to take charge of something for me. Where I'm going, it wouldn't be safe—in fact, I don't care to carry it about with me."

"What is it?"

"A document."

Ferrers Locke raised his eyebrows a little.

"But surely your solicitor or your banker—"

"I've thought of both, but I feel that the document will be safer in your keeping, Locke, if you will consent to take charge of it."

"Willingly. It will be secure enough in my safe," said the detective. "I think I can defy the cleverest cracksmen in London to take liberties with my safe."

"Good man! Here it is."

Jervis thrust his hand into an inner pocket of his coat, and produced a long, thick cartridge-envelope.

The envelope was quite blank, with no trace whatever of superscription on it.

The young man tossed it across the table to Locke.

"That's the giddy document," he said.

"Some legal paper, I presume?"

"Legal!" said Jervis thoughtfully. "I suppose it's legal—or rather, illegal. Depends on the way you look at it. One thing I can tell you—keeping that document in safety for me may save a good many lives."

"Really?"

"It's a fact! I won't tell you what it is—besides, you don't want to know."

"Not at all."

"I want you to lock it up in the safest corner of your safe, Locke, and give me your word that you will not touch it again without my consent."

"My dear Jervis, that is a very curious condition to make. You can surely trust the paper in my hands."

"I'd trust my life in your hands, Locke, without a moment's hesitation; but that document is more precious than my life," said Captain Jervis gravely. "I want you to give me the pledge I asked."

"I give it," said Locke.

"Good. Let's see you put the thing in safety, then."

"Come with me," said Locke, with a smile.

He picked up the long, heavy envelope, and led the way into the inner room—Locke's own special den, into which only his intimate friends were admitted. Captain Jervis looked on while the precious envelope was placed in the safe, and locked in, and he seemed greatly relieved as he returned to the consulting-room with the detective.

"That's all right," he said. "No, I won't sit down again—I'm taking up your time, and you've got a Government case waiting." He glanced from the high window that looked on Baker Street. "Hallo, that's an official car, if I'm not mistaken, with Sir Chetwynd Cheyne sitting in it. And he looks rusty. Mahomet has come to the mountain, Locke, as the mountain wouldn't go to the telephone. Ha, ha!" The captain laughed, a deep, hearty laugh that was good to hear. "Well, good-bye, old man, and good luck."

"Good luck to you, and keep out of mischief, if you can," said Ferrers Locke, as he shook hands with his friend.

Captain Jervis tramped out of the consulting-room. As Sing-Sing, the Chinese servant, showed him out he also admitted a fat, puffy-looking, elderly gentleman who had alighted from a car.

Captain Jervis saluted Sir Chetwynd Cheyne politely as he passed him, and smiled as he went out. Sir Chetwynd hardly glanced at him as he followed Sing-Sing to the consulting-room with quick, nervous steps.

Captain Jervis seated himself in the taxi that was waiting, and as he was driven away towards Oxford Street he grinned. "If he only knew," he murmured. "If Locke only knew! Will he know?" The captain shrugged his shoulders. "Well, I've done my best, and in a few hours I shall be far enough away."

And the captain lighted a cigar, and smoked cheerfully as the taxi picked its way along through the traffic.

### The Stolen Treaty.

"SIR CHETWYND CHEYNE!" The baronet entered the consulting-room with quick steps and a fussy manner. It was evident from his looks that he was a gentleman of considerable importance, in his own eyes at least, and that he was accustomed to being treated with respect, if not servility. And it could be seen that he was extremely annoyed at this moment. For so great a man to be kept waiting, because the Baker Street detective was engaged, was evidently something like an outrage in the eyes of Sir Chetwynd.

Locke waved him to a seat.

"Good-morning, Sir Chetwynd! I am quite at your service now."

The fat gentleman set down heavily.

"I telephoned to you, Mr. Locke—"

"Quite so."

"I was told, sir, that you were engaged, although I stated that the matter was one of the first importance," said Sir Chetwynd.

"Exactly; I was engaged," assented Locke.

"In the circumstances, Mr. Locke, I should have expected you to put any other engagement aside," exclaimed the baronet gruffly. "You are not rung up from a Government department every day, I presume."

"Unfortunately, I could not put the other engagement aside," said Ferrers Locke, unmoved. "If there is anything I can do for you now, Sir Chetwynd, I am at your service, and the Government's service. Otherwise"—Locke glanced at his watch—"my time is of value, and I have no doubt that yours is also."

Sir Chetwynd Cheyne breathed hard.

He seemed, for a moment, on the verge of an apoplectic explosion, and Jack Drake turned away his face to hide a smile.

But the baronet controlled his resentment with an effort. "Very well, Mr. Locke," he gasped. "Very well! I certainly should not place the matter in your hands, only—only"—he became a little calmer—"I am aware that you have often succeeded where the official police have failed. I am told so, at least. And—in the present case, it is desirable as little fuss should be made as possible. We desire, above all things, to cause no commotion, no public comment, no scandal—in short, the matter is one of the greatest importance and secrecy. I called you up on the telephone to ask you to come immediately to Whitehall. As you were unfortunately engaged"—the baronet's tone grew sarcastic—"I ordered my car and came to you at once."

"Quite so!" assented Locke.

Sir Chetwynd made a gesture towards Drake.

"What I have to say is for your ear alone, Mr. Locke."

"My assistant is fully in my confidence."

"Mr. Locke, I cannot discuss a matter on which the peace of Europe may depend in the presence of a boy."

Locke made a sign to Jack Drake, who retired at once into the inner room.

Sir Chetwynd looked after him, till the door closed and clicked. Then he glanced round the room cautiously, to ascertain that the other doors were closed.

Locke regarded him with some amusement, though he did not allow his face to betray it.

Sir Chetwynd was a gentleman "very high up" in a certain department, and the keeper of many diplomatic secrets of immense importance in his own eyes, and perhaps of some importance in themselves. He was one of that happy circle of diplomatic gentlemen who played with the destinies of nations, and the lives of men, as a chess-player might with pawns.

Having satisfied himself that his observations were not likely to be overheard, Sir Chetwynd cleared his throat with a little diplomatic cough, and proceeded:

"A document of immense importance is missing, Mr. Locke."

"Of what nature?"

"Although we have, of course, full confidence in you, sir, it is my duty to give you only the barest details that are essential," explained the baronet. "I may say, however, that the missing document is the draft of a treaty."

Locke nodded.

"The treaty is in contemplation between this country and

a certain Power," continued Sir Chetwynd ponderously. "It is not yet ratified—indeed, if the draft is not recovered, it is probable that it never will be ratified. You understand, Mr. Locke, that there are certain matters which are never confided to the public; and if this treaty should be made known, there would be a terrible storm at once. So long as that document is out of our hands we live on thorns, sir."

"I understand."

"The document, which, as I have said, is a draft, bears certain important signatures," continued Sir Chetwynd. "In case of its being published, an official denial would be forthcoming, as a matter of course; but—but—"

He paused.

"I quite understand. I require to know no more of it," said Ferrers Locke. "A certain document is missing, of which you can doubtless give me a description."

"Certainly."

"Was it lost or stolen?"

"Stolen."

"When and where?" asked Ferrers Locke, crisply.

"Last evening, and within a few yards of my official residence," said Sir Chetwynd. "After being sealed in an official envelope, it was placed in charge of a trusted messenger, to be taken to the Embassy of a certain Power." Evidently Sir Chetwynd found solace and satisfaction in the cloudy mysteriousness. "Thence it was to be forwarded to a certain quarter abroad. I need not be more explicit. But neither the messenger nor the document reached the Embassy I refer to."

"What happened?"

"A most extraordinary thing," said Sir Chetwynd. "It is clear that the messenger must have been watched in leaving. His story is that he was suddenly seized in the street by a man of great stature and immense strength, and simply tossed into a motor-car, which was crawling along by the kerb. The man jumped in after him, and the car was driven away at a reckless speed. Three or four people saw the outrage, and in a few moments half a dozen policemen were warned of what had happened, but the car, driven recklessly, had vanished."

"A very daring outrage," said Ferrers Locke, his eyes glistening now with interest. "Such a plan was carried out by no ordinary man. But the messenger, I presume, has returned, or you would not know all these circumstances?"

Sir Chetwynd nodded.

"He was held in the closed car, with a revolver at his head," the baronet went on. "The car was driven a great distance—how far, he does not know. His story is that the man with him in the car was so powerful that a struggle was impossible. The man blindfolded him, after a time, and when the car stopped he was taken out and into a building of some sort. There he was asked to give up the official envelope."

"And he obeyed?"

"He declares that a revolver was held to his head, and that the chauffeur who had driven the car was grasping him by the shoulders. Resistance being impossible, he handed over the document. He was then replaced in the car, and driven away again, and finally turned out, still blindfolded, and the car had disappeared before he could uncover his eyes."

"And then?"

"As soon as he could see, he ascertained that he had been landed in a lonely portion of Wandsworth Common. It was some time before he could obtain a vehicle to bring him back to Whitehall; and as I had gone home, he came at once to my private residence to inform me what had occurred. That is all we know, Mr. Locke."

"The messenger's name?"

"Hankin."

"A trustworthy man?"

"Absolutely. I believe every word of his statement; and he is too much shaken and distressed by his adventure."

"Was he able to give you any description of the big man who seized him?"

"Only that he was a man of great stature, immense strength, and with a thick, black beard, and dressed in a long ulster."

"The treaty is now, then, in the hands of some person or persons quite unknown?" said Ferrers Locke.

"Absolutely unknown."

"Nothing has been heard from them so far?"

"Nothing. We hardly expect to hear from them," said Sir Chetwynd, raising his eyebrows.

"It is a question of their motive," said Ferrers Locke.

"Someone, evidently, knew of the existence of the secret treaty, and was determined to obtain possession of it. If the person is a criminal, his only object can be to obtain money for the document. He might try either blackmail, demanding money from your department for the return of the document, or he might try selling it to some foreign Power that may be interested in the matter. Is the latter possible?"

"It is possible, at least," said Sir Chetwynd, with a troubled look. "There is at least one Power that would be keenly interested—the Power against whom the provisions of the treaty would be directed in certain eventualities."

"If that is the object, Sir Chetwynd, it is too late for prevention," said Ferrers Locke. "The thief has had ample time to visit the Embassy of that Power, and offer his stolen goods for sale."

"That has certainly not happened so far," said Sir Chetwynd. "There would be a certain difference in the manner on the part of the ambassador in such a case; but I made it a point to call on him already this morning, and I am satisfied that nothing has transpired so far in that quarter."

"Then the thief's object is probably blackmail," said Ferrers Locke; "and your department should hear from him, stating his price for the return of the treaty."

"You think so, Mr. Locke?"  
 "I can see no other motive at present, at least," said Ferrers Locke, his brows wrinkling in thought. "The thief must have had some object. If you should receive any communication from him, or them, you will, of course, acquaint me with it at once."

"Undoubtedly. In the meanwhile—"  
 "In the meanwhile," said Ferrers Locke, "I shall take up the case, and do what I can. I will see Hankin; I may be able to learn more from him than you, Sir Chetwynd."

"You understand, Mr. Locke, the importance of secrecy. We simply dare not allow the terms of the treaty to be widely known," said the baronet. "It would cause friction, at least, with a certain Power—it might cause war. The country is in no mood for another war yet."

"If the treaty were published, whatever trouble it might cause, it would lose its value for the thief," said Locke.

"That is true."  
 "Then if his object is to raise money on it, he will be careful to keep it as secret as if he were a diplomat himself."

"True, quite true," said Sir Chetwynd, with a look of relief. "That is certainly correct, Mr. Locke. But you comprehend that we are on thorns until that unfortunate document is safe in our keeping again." Sir Chetwynd rose. "If you wish to see Hankin will you step into my car, and I will take you back with me? There is no time to be lost."

"Certainly," said Locke.  
 Jack Drake came back into the consulting-room when the Baker Street detective and the diplomatist were gone. There was a smile on the boy detective's face. He had understood the sign Locke had made to him, and in the inner room he had made it a point to hear every word that was uttered.

Ferrers Locke did not do things by halves; and his trust in Jack Drake was complete; and more than once, too, he had received help by some suggestion from his boy assistant.

Drake knew what Ferrers Locke would wish him to do now, and he sat at his desk, and made notes of what he had heard, putting in every detail of the baronet's strange story, and turning the matter over in his mind, studying it under every aspect. And suddenly as he sat with his boyish brow corrugated with thought he gave a violent start.

A thought had flashed into his mind—a thought so startling, so strange, that it drove the colour from his face.

He jumped up from his seat, and paced the room uneasily for some minutes.

"It's impossible!" he muttered. "Impossible—quite impossible—and yet—"

With a troubled brow, Drake stationed himself at the window, watching the endless traffic in Baker Street for his chief's return.

Light in the Darkness.

**FERRERS LOCKE** was puzzled. It was not often that the famous Baker Street detective found himself at an impasse. But he had to admit to himself that he was puzzled now.

In the first place, he had interviewed Hankin, the messenger, in Sir Chetwynd's official apartment, but without the baronet's presence. Hankin was a quiet, rather sturdy man, an old soldier, and Ferrers Locke decided at once that the baronet's confidence in him was not misplaced. Besides, Hankin told his story clearly, and with evident frankness.

"I was taken by surprise, sir," he said. "But even if I hadn't been, the man was so powerful that he could have downed me. I'm no infant, sir—I'm a good hand in a tussle, but that fellow was a giant in strength. He tossed me into the car as if I had been a baby."

Locke looked at the man's sturdy figure thoughtfully. It was no ordinary man who had tossed Hankin into the car like a baby, that was certain.

"And you saw nothing of him excepting that he had a black beard?"

"That's all I could notice, sir," said Hankin, "and I dare say the beard was a false one."

"Very probable indeed," said Ferrers Locke. "Did you see anything of the man who drove the car?"

"Only a glimpse of him, sir—he had a coat turned up about his ears, I think, but I'm not sure even of that."

"And the car—what make was it?"

"Ah, there I'm on more certain ground, sir," said Hankin. "I couldn't swear to it, but I believe it was a Rolls-Royce. I'm almost certain of that, in fact."

"You did not, of course, see the number?"  
 Hankin shook his head.

Ferrers Locke asked a few more questions, to which the man replied freshly enough, and then he left Whitehall in a thoughtful mood.

He was satisfied that Hankin was honest, and that he had been the victim, and not the accomplice, of the outrage.

Ferrers Locke's task was to find the man with a giant's strength, who had worn a black beard—probably false!

It was no easy task, even for the Baker Street detective. His first step was to call in at New Scotland Yard, where he asked for Detective-inspector Riley, his old acquaintance.

Riley greeted him with a smile.

"You are on the case, of course, Locke?" he remarked.

"The case?" repeated Locke.

"The missing document—which they're very mysterious about," said Inspector Riley. "I knew you were to be called in. Not complimentary to us at the Yard, what?"

But good luck, old fellow—go in and win, if you can. What do you think of Hankin?"

"Quite straight, I think."  
 The inspector nodded.

"I agree with you. But it makes the case a very mysterious one. Somebody knew what was going on, and bagged the document. Somebody who has a foot in the department, I reckon."

"Or a relation there, who may have told him something," remarked Ferrers Locke thoughtfully.

"Yes; but what can I do for you?"

"Has anything been discovered with regard to the closed car in which the kidnapped messenger was driven away?"

"Nothing—but two or three witnesses agree that it was a Rolls-Royce."

"The number—"

"That was taken by a constable. We've traced the number—it's that of a respectable banker in Bayswater. The car had a false number-plate, of course."

"No clue there, then," said Ferrers Locke, and he took his leave of the inspector.

The famous detective walked back to Baker Street, thinking hard all the way. In the bustle and roar of busy streets Ferrers Locke did his thinking best. He had to admit that he was at a loss.

If the secret treaty was in the hands of a blackmailer, sooner or later Sir Chetwynd Cheyne's department would have news of him; there would be a demand for money.

Until that happened, Ferrers Locke was powerless.

He reached his house in Baker Street, and let himself in, and went with a knitted brow into his consulting-room.



"You may put your weapon down, Doyle," said Ferrers Locke, calmly. "It will not come to that between old friends like Captain Jervis and myself." The captain burst into a roar of laughter. "Do you think Locke has come here to put the handcuffs on me?"

Jack Drake was waiting for him there.

Drake looked quickly and eagerly at his chief.

Locke smiled rather faintly.

"You understood me, my boy?" he asked. "You heard what Sir Chetwynd Cheyne had to say to me?"

"Yes, sir," said Drake, smiling too. "I am well posted. Is there any further news, sir?"

"Only that it appears fairly clear that the kidnapper of the messenger used a Rolls-Royce car, with a false number-plate."

"You've asked me sometimes, sir, to form my own theory on a case," Drake said, "and—and—"

He hesitated.

"Quite so, Drake, and I have sometimes found your suggestions useful," said Ferrers Locke, quietly. "Have you formed any opinion on this matter, my boy?"

"Not exactly an opinion, sir. But—but—something has struck me—"

"What is it?"

"A coincidence, sir."

"Go on, my boy," said Ferrers Locke, with interest. "If you can let in any light in this very dark place, I shall be very glad."

"May I ask you one question first, sir?"

"Certainly."

"Your friend, Captain the Honourable Algernon Jervis, is a rather reckless sort of man, isn't he?"

Locke looked at him.

"Very," he answered.

"Rather quixotic, in fact?"

"Extremely so."

"Likely to chip in in a matter that didn't really concern him, if he thought it for the good of the country, or the benefit of others, without counting the risk to himself?"

"You have hit his character exactly, Drake. But I fail to see—"

"One more question, sir," said Drake. "Captain Jervis is a rather wealthy man, isn't he?"

"Considerably so."

"He keeps a car?"

"Yes."

"Is his car a Rolls-Royce?"

Ferrers Locke started.

"Yes," he answered.

"Then I will tell you the coincidence that struck me," said Jack Drake.

Locke held up his hand.

"You need not," he said. "It has struck me now, Drake—and, by heavens, I believe that you are right."

#### Peace or War.

FERRERS LOCKE flung himself into his deep arm-chair, and crammed his pipe with tobacco. He lighted it, and blew out a thick cloud of smoke. Drake watching him in silence.

Evidently, what had occurred to Drake had now occurred to the Baker Street detective.

For five minutes the detective sat, smoking hard, and with a deep wrinkle in his brow.

Then he looked up.

"Tell Wootton to bring the car round, Drake," he said.

"Yes, sir."

Drake hurried from the room, and Ferrers Locke consulted his watch.

"Time to catch him yet," he murmured. "I was not mistaken in that boy—he has the gift I discerned in him. Though I should have struck upon this, certainly, if I had not been blinded by the fact that Jervis is my best friend—that disarmed me. The quixotic fool! But there is time to put a spoke in his wheel—he does not leave before the evening boat train goes out at Charing Cross."

Locke stepped to the telephone, and rang up Sir Chetwynd Cheyne. The baronet himself answered the telephone.

"Locke speaking! Nothing heard yet?" asked the Baker Street detective.

"Nothing," answered Sir Chetwynd. "If the papers are in the hands of a blackmailer, Mr. Locke, he has not communicated with us yet."

Locke smiled slightly over the transmitter.

"Possibly there is no blackmailer in the case, after all, Sir Chetwynd," he said. "But we shall see."

"What other motive could the thief have had, Mr. Locke?"

Locke did not answer that question.

"I have hopes of getting on the track of the man who handed your messenger," he said. "I will speak again later."

And he rang off.

"Not a blackmailer," murmured Locke. "A blackmailer would have sent word by now—he would have nothing to gain by waiting. No—it was not a criminal—not a thief—it was a reckless modern Don Quixote, who could not keep his attention for his own affairs. But we shall see."

Jack Drake re-entered the consulting-room.

"The car's waiting, sir."

"Good! You will come with me, Drake."

Jack Drake followed his chief into the car. Ferrers Locke sat very silent as Wootton drove to Mount Street, where Captain Jervis had his rooms.

Arriving there, Locke was admitted by the captain's man, who recognised him at once, and saluted him respectfully.

"Your master has not yet started, Doyle?"

"No, sir," answered Doyle. "He's got an hour yet."

"I'm glad of that."

Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake were shown into a room where Captain Jervis, in his shirt-sleeves, was packing a kit-bag.

The captain glanced at them with some surprise.

"You, Locke!" he exclaimed. "I'm glad to see you, old fellow! You've come to say a final good-bye, what?"

Locke smiled.

"That is not all," he answered. "I have something very serious to say to you, Jervis."

The captain made a grimace.

"Go ahead," he answered, "I've an hour yet, old bean. Don't forget to put in my revolver, Doyle."

"Oh, no, sir."

"Do you want Doyle to clear?" asked Captain Jervis.

"Not at all. I am aware that Doyle is in your confidence, and that he acts as your chauffeur on occasion," answered Ferrers Locke.

Jervis started a little.

"What has that to do with it?" he asked.

"Much," said Ferrers Locke quietly. "Last night, Jervis, a messenger leaving Whitehall with an important document in his charge was collared in the street, and tossed into a car and carried off."

"By Jove!"

"The car was a Rolls-Royce."

"Gad! The kidnapper gentleman did himself well in cars, then," remarked the captain coolly.

"The kidnapper was a giant of a man, of immense strength, who handled the messenger—no weakling himself—like a baby."

"You don't say so!"

"The thief—"

"Thief?" repeated the captain.

"Yes—the thief deprived the messenger of a certain document of great importance—international importance."

"He did?"

"He did," said Ferrers Locke. "I may add that he wore a black beard—doubtless false—in all probability similar to the one I now see on your dressing-table, Jervis."

"Oh, gad!" ejaculated the captain.

"The thief—"

"That's a dashed unpleasant word, Locke."

"It is the only one I can use, Jervis. The thief was a man of such muscular strength as few men possess—and of a stature that is not common—I know only one man in London who answers the description," said Ferrers Locke quietly. "My first supposition was that the game was blackmail. But nothing has been heard from the thief. And—this morning a man of unusual stature, and very unusual personal strength, called on me, and asked me to lock up an important document in my safe. This man owns a Rolls-Royce car, and has a faithful servant who sometimes acts as his chauffeur, and who can be relied upon to assist him in any harebrained adventure."

"By gad!"

"In short, my dear Jervis," said Ferrers Locke calmly, "the game is up, and the stolen treaty must be returned to Sir Chetwynd Cheyne. And—and I shall want a very explicit explanation before I can consent to allow the matter to end there."

Captain Jervis did not reply for a minute or two. He extracted a cigar from his case, snipped off the end, and lighted it calmly. He blew out a little cloud of aromatic smoke. Doyle, his man, had closed the door, and stood with his back to it, a grim look on his bulldog face. Perhaps by accident he retained in his hand the heavy revolver he had been packing for his master.

Locke glanced at him.

"You may put down your weapon, Doyle," he said calmly. "It will not come to that between old friends like Captain Jervis and myself."

The captain burst into a roar of laughter.

"Chuck it down, Ulick, you fool," he exclaimed. "Do you think Locke has come here to put the handcuffs on me? Ha, ha, ha!"

"Faith, if he has—"

began Doyle surlily.

"Hold your tongue, you donkey," said the captain good-humouredly. "Put that pepper-box down, and go on with your packin'. I'm not goin' to lose the train."

Ulick Doyle obeyed, but with a very suspicious eye on the Baker Street detective.

Captain Jervis replaced his cigar in his mouth. There was a whimsical smile on his handsome face as he looked at Ferrers Locke.

"You want my answer, Locke?" he asked.  
 "I am waiting for it."  
 The captain shrugged his shoulders.  
 "Nothing doing!" he said.

#### A Surprise for Sir Chetwynd Cheyne.

**FERRERS LOCKE** drew a deep breath.  
 "You have no explanation to offer?" he asked.  
 "Lots!" answered the captain. "I'll explain with pleasure. I've got friends who keep me posted, and I knew all about the secret treaty with—ahem—a certain Power that shall be nameless, to adopt Sir Chetwynd's style." He grinned. "That treaty was likely to land the country into a war with another Power that shall be nameless. I had four years in Flanders, Locke—and I've seen enough of war—enough of old fools playing games with the lives of young men as the pawns. I determined to bag that treaty, and give the authors of it the worse scare in their lives. I've done it!"

Locke nodded.

"You've certainly done that!" he said.

"I knew that you would be called on the case," continued Captain Jervis, "and I thought it barely possible that you might trail out the truth, Locke, though certainly I left no clue. The happy idea came into my head of placing the treaty in your hands to be kept in safety." He chuckled. "No one was likely to look for it in Ferrers Locke's safe in Baker Street, what?"

"No."

"And Ferrers Locke, hunting for the lost document, was not likely to hunt for it in his own safe," chuckled Jervis. "But, as it turns out, I was a little too clever. I suppose you saw the coincidence, and jumped to a conclusion."

"My assistant did, at all events. I was blinded by the fact that I should never have dreamed of suspecting you, Jervis. It was a mistake on my part."

"Yes, I was careless," said the captain. "But it seemed no end of a capital joke to place the treaty for safety in the hands of the man who was to be called upon to find it. That is why I exacted your pledge, Locke—in case you should trail out the facts. You are pledged not to touch the document without my consent."

"I know."

"I do not give my consent—and Ferrers Locke cannot break his word," said Captain Jervis with a grin. "What have you to say now, Mr. Detective?"

Locke paused.

"It is one of your wild, quixotic schemes," he said. "Doubtless you are right, from a certain point of view. But you must remember the old adage, Jervis—that fools rush in where angels fear to tread. In this case, you are the fool. My own opinion of Sir Chetwynd Cheyne is precisely the same as your own. Nevertheless, he must have his treaty, and it is my duty to place it in his hands."

"You cannot, without breaking your word."

"I shall not touch it," said Locke calmly. "But I shall borrow your telephone, Jervis, and call Inspector Riley, of Scotland Yard, here to your flat. He will arrest you on the charge of kidnapping the messenger and purloining a State paper."

The captain's jaw set grimly.

"Let him!" he said. "In that case, what if the precious treaty is published, Locke? I warn you that it will make a sensation that will cost Sir Chetwynd his official job."

"The treaty will not be published," said Locke coolly. "It is in my safe, and will remain there. I shall not return it to you, Jervis, as it is not your property. My pledge does not bind me to that, you know. And when Inspector Riley knows the facts, he will presumably search my safe for it and find it."

"Oh, gad!" said the captain.

He was silent for some moments. He threw away the stump of the cigar at last, and frowned.

"It will cause no end of trouble for you, Locke. All London will know that a State paper was purloined, and was placed in your keeping. Have you thought of the effect on your reputation?"

"I have thought of that."

"And you are prepared to face that?"

"That, and anything else in order to do my duty to my client," said Ferrers Locke calmly.

"They will say that you were an accomplice of the thief."

"Let them."

The Honourable Algernon Jervis bit his lip.

"You are a fool, Locke," he said abruptly.

"That is as it may be. I have my duty to do," said Ferrers Locke. "Now, is it peace or war?"

There was a long silence. Finally the captain rose to his feet, shaking his long limbs impatiently.

"You have me by the short hairs, as our Yankee cousins say," he exclaimed. "I more than half-expected you to agree with my views, Locke."

Ferrers Locke smiled.

"Perhaps I do agree with them," he answered. "But that does not alter the plain fact of my duty, which is to recover the lost treaty for my client."

"At the cost of your own reputation?"

"If necessary."

"You've beaten me," growled the captain. "If you weren't my best friend, Locke, I'm not sure that you would leave this room alive. As the matter stands, I can't allow you to damage yourself. I give you back your pledge—do with the dashed document as you please. And now—are you goin' to telephone for Inspector Riley, or am I free to pack my bag for my travels?"

Ferrers Locke laughed.

"Pack your bag, by all means," he said. "I advise Africa or Asia for your travels—your motives are good, my dear Jervis, but your methods are not suitable to a well-ordered little island like ours. I wish you a good voyage, old fellow."

Ulick Doyle opened the door. Ferrers Locke shook hands with the captain cordially enough, and returned to his car with Drake.

Half an hour later, a registered packet was posted in Baker Street Post Office, and the name on it was, "Sir Chetwynd Cheyne."

Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake were at breakfast on the following morning, when the telephone bell rang.

Locke stepped to the instrument at once.

"Hallo! Yes—Ferrers Locke speaking," he said. "Is that Sir Chetwynd Cheyne?"

"Yes. Good news, Locke." The baronet's fat voice was bubbling with satisfaction over the wires. "A most extraordinary occurrence—most amazing, in fact."

Locke smiled.

"News of the treaty?" he asked.

"Yes. It has been recovered."

"I am very glad to hear that," said Ferrers Locke gravely. "Then you will have no further need of my services."

"None, Mr. Locke. Your—er—fee will be paid, of course—I have no doubt you would have been most—most useful, if—if we had had occasion to utilise your services," said the baronet. "As the matter stands, there is no further occasion for you to trouble yourself. I am letting you know at the earliest possible moment; of course, you understand that in such an affair, the least said, the soonest mended."

"Oh, quite," said Ferrers Locke. "May I ask how the treaty was recovered, Sir Chetwynd?"

The baronet coughed.

"Hem! The—fact is, Mr. Locke, we—we have our own methods. It is not necessary for me to go into details. Except that the treaty has been—been recovered, and is now safe in our hands. Good-morning, Mr. Locke."

Ferrers Locke put up the receiver, and returned smiling to the breakfast-table. Sir Chetwynd Cheyne was keeping up his dignified mysteriousness to the end. And Locke could not help wondering what the baronet would have thought if he had known that the missing treaty had been posted to him by Ferrers Locke himself! What the baronet thought or imagined with regard to the amazing return of the purloined document, Locke did not know; but, certainly, Sir Chetwynd was not likely to guess anything like the facts. Apart from Ferrers Locke and his boy assistant, no one was likely to guess the connection of Captain the Honourable Algernon Jervis, V.C., with the Missing Treaty.

THE END.

Another of these magnificent yarns dealing with Ferrers Locke, the world-famous detective, will appear in next Tuesday's "Boys' Herald."

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