

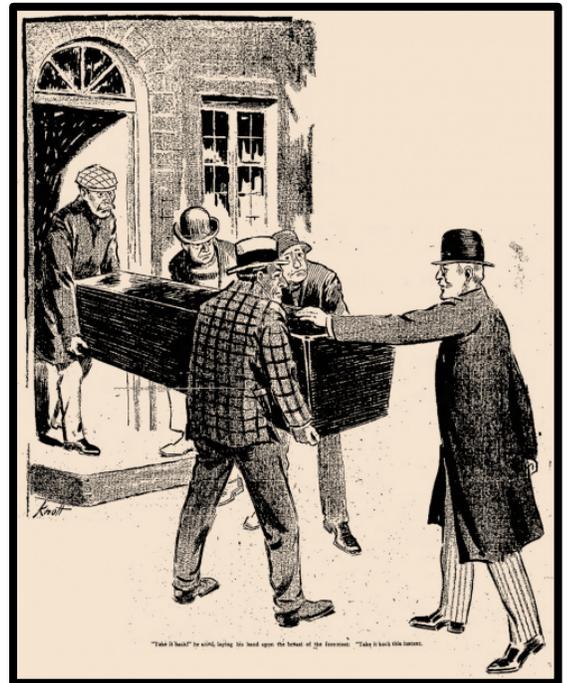


His Last Bow

Adventure XLV -- The Disappearance of Lady Frances Carfax

This story makes me glad that I didn't live in those "good old days." Although the world is far from perfect now, I'm glad that I didn't have to survive in the days when it was apparently considered quite normal and acceptable for a woman to be subjected to a certain amount of unwanted male attention without any legal recourse, and without much sympathy from otherwise decent people. Look at poor Lady Frances! When she was imprisoned and nearly murdered by Holy Peters and his cohort, she could get help, but nobody seemed interested in protecting her from her stalker, Philip Green! All right, I suppose it's possible that Green wasn't so bad, and perhaps Lady Frances had given him some reason to believe that she returned his affection. If you have an opinion either way, perhaps you'd like to join the Hounds as we discuss this week's story: "The Disappearance of Lady Carfax."

The Hon. Philip Green: In my introduction, I referred to Philip Green as a "stalker." By his account, he was nothing more than a very determined suitor, but Lady Frances seems to have been frightened of him, and it seems fairly certain that she went off with the "Shlessingers" at least in part to escape Green's pursuit of her. On the other hand, Sherlock Holmes apparently thought Green was a decent man, and he trusted him with an important part of the search for Lady Frances. But was Holmes qualified to judge a man's character when it came to his relationship with a woman? Holmes described Lady Frances as "a stray chicken in a world of foxes," but was Holmes letting a fox into the chicken coop by trusting Green? Is it significant that Holmes did not allow Green to accompany him on the rescue mission the morning of the funeral? Did this show that Holmes withheld his complete trust from this volatile man? But then, why associate with him at all?



If Lady Frances recovered from her ordeal, do you think she and Green ever got together?

Holmes's temporary eclipse : Trusting Philip Green was only one of many ways in which Holmes's handling of the Carfax case could be considered below standard. First he sent Watson off to do all the legwork, and then he marched in himself with many a snide and completely unjustified remark about the good Doctor's efforts. We complained about Holmes's behavior in "The Dying Detective," but at least he had a good reason for hurting Watson's feelings in that instance. In this case, Holmes's insults make no sense. Why did Holmes come to the Continent when his instincts told him that Lady Frances was in London? Why not just wire Watson to come home? And surely all he had to do to round up Philip Green was to tell him that Lady Frances was in London. Does this case show Holmes losing his grip? Was this one of the cases that made him decide to take early retirement?

Rosemary Michaud