



An Inquiry into: “The Adventure of the Noble Bachelor”

Vol. XIII No. 11 • October 13, 2022

“The Adventure of the Noble Bachelor” was first published in *The Strand Magazine* in April 1892. It is part of *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*.

The chronology for this case varies, depending on the

Canon chronology expert. The estimates are shown on the table. If the case indeed took place in 1888, as the majority states, at the time Sherlock Holmes was 34 years old and Doctor John H. Watson 36.

Main Characters:

Lord Robert St. Simon, a middle-aged bachelor, second son of the Duke of Balmoral, an impoverished aristocrat. Hattie Doran, young American heiress, who agreed to marry St. Simon. Flora Millar, a former dancer at the Allegro music hall, ex-mistress of Lord Robert. Aloysius Doran, Hattie father and former American miner who struck it rich. Francis Hay Moulton, Hattie’s real husband whom she believed dead. Inspector Giles Lestrade, Scotland Yard detective.

Notable Quotes:

“My correspondence certainly has the charm of variety.”

“This looks like one of those unwelcome social summonses which call upon a man either to be bored or to lie.”

“I assure you, Watson, without affectation, that the status of my client is a matter of less moment to me than the interest of his case.”

“It is always a joy to meet an American . . . for I am one of those who believe that the folly of a monarch and the blundering of a minister in far-gone years will not prevent our children from being

The Adventure of the Noble Bachelor

<i>Chronologist</i>	<i>Date of the Adventure</i>
<i>Canon</i>	Early October 1887
<i>Baring-Gould</i>	Friday, October 8, 1886
<i>Bell</i>	Tuesday, October 6, 1887
<i>Blakeney</i>	October 1888
<i>Brend</i>	Early October 1887
<i>Christ</i>	Tuesday, October 9, 1888
<i>Dakin</i>	Friday, October 12, 1888
<i>Folsom</i>	Friday, October 12, 1888
<i>Hall</i>	Early Autumn 1887
<i>Keefauver</i>	Thursday, October 6, 1887
<i>Klinger</i>	1888
<i>Zeisler</i>	Friday, December 7, 1888

Please note that Canon chronologists may differ on pivotal dates and comparative periods between cases, thus a simple majority is not necessarily correct. Most Canon scholars settle on a single chronologist’s results for their research framework.

some day citizens of the same world-wide country under a flag which shall be a quartering of the Union Jack with the Stars and Stripes.”

A Nondescript Memoir

It is open to speculation why Watson would have gone out of his way to tell us, at the beginning of this case, that “no memoir of [Holmes] would be complete without some little sketch of this remarkable episode.” One must wonder, “Remarkable in what way?” Why would the Good Doctor have been so inclined to set down the facts of a somewhat insipid occurrence absent of all criminal intent or action thwarted by Sherlock Holmes? Even Hattie Doran’s unplanned bigamy does not approach the level of a crime.

Why choose this case over, for example, the facts concerning the Giant Rat of Sumatra, the Notorious Canary Trainer, the Aluminium Crutch, Colonel Warburton’s madness, and so many others buried—perhaps forever—in the Good Doctor’s tin box.

The only positive thing that seems to come out of this is the chance to once more visit our two friends at 221B, and make merry over Lestrade’s bungling.

The Untidy Detective



This is one of the very few cases that provide us with a glimpse into the disarray at 221B. When Holmes asks Watson to chronologically arrange the newspapers carrying details of the St. Simon wedding, he immediately complies, beginning with the personal column of the *Morning Post* of “some weeks back.” We know that Holmes had several daily newspapers delivered; if Watson was able to resurrect a weeks old column the piles of newspaper lying about must have produced awesome stacks!

Perhaps it would be fitting to say a kind word about that long-suffering landlady, Mrs. Hudson. The poor woman not only had to

endure this untidiness, but all sorts of peculiar visitors calling at all hours of the day—and night—as well as the occasional target practice on her walls.

The Notebook of Crime

Watson informs us that Holmes told him that he solved the case as soon as Lord Robert gave him the details, because, “I have notes of several similar cases . . . There was a parallel instance in Aberdeen some years back, and something on very much the same lines at Munich the year after the Franco-Prussian War.”

This indicates that very early on Holmes had embarked upon his invented profession. The existence of these notes clearly demonstrates that well before having met Watson the Great Detective had already made a study both national and international crime. As early as *STUD* he made such references to past crimes that Stamford was prompted to suggest, “You seem to be a walking calendar of crime. You might start a paper on those lines. Call it the ‘Police News of the Past.’”

Clearly, this is a reference source quite separate from “the good old index,” which would lead one to conclude that Holmes’ notebooks must have been voluminous. In them there obviously was information relating to crimes both British and Continental. Doubtless, he must have also tracked crime in

America, because he was well-acquainted not only with criminal activities in the U.S., but with the crime fighters as well—some of the Pinkertons, for example.

The Penurious Lord

Lord Robert St. Simon had the misfortune of living during the second half of the 19th century. This is when the decline of the great houses of England began in earnest. Great estates which in years past had provided considerable revenues from the use of the land were rapidly becoming unaffordable encumbrances. Continued changes in work opportunities resulting from the fast development of the Industrial Revolution, coupled to major changes in the tax structure, made the ownership of land a losing venture.

All this was exacerbated by improved means of transportation and refrigeration. With ships equipped with refrigeration bringing cheaper meats and produce from places like Argentina and New Zealand, crops and cattle no longer guaranteed a good income.



St. Simon's declining financial situation was nearing the level of desperation if it was found necessary to sell some of the estate's paintings.

James Montgomery Flagg's Sketches .

"Baronetcy! Baronetcy! Do I Hear Dukedom?"
With Verses by Joe Tove



Humorous cartoon of the time, mocking the migration of American heiress leaving for Britain in quest of titled husbands.

cratic Lord Robert St. Simon can appear unusual, but such unions were a lifesaver for many a titled name. Aside from their substantial personal fortunes and personal property—wedding an American heiress would bring in an immediate transfusion to empty family coffers of £100,000 (≈\$38,000,000)

One cannot but feel pity for the penurious St. Simon, considering that he fully expected to be the recipient of a dowry in "the six figures" as the newspapers reported with awe; also, besides Hattie's own considerable personal fortune there would be more to be expected in the shape of a large inheritance when her millionaire father died.

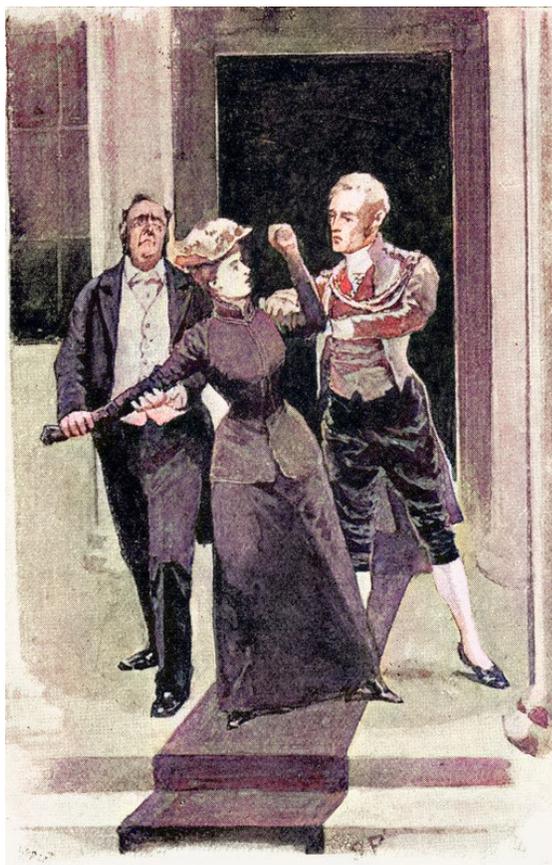
Across the gulf of time, a marriage between the unpolished Hattie Doran and the very aristocratic

to £500,000 (≈\$188,000,000) or more in the form of a dowry. It is not surprising that these well-equipped ladies were in such great demand. The Duke of Marlborough secured Blenheim Palace's future by marrying Consuelo Vanderbilt from New York.

The “charming invaders” were attractive for more than just money. Unlike the domestic product, the families of most of these ladies had provided them with a very good education. The majority of these American debutantes spoke several languages well, played at least one musical instrument, and were sufficiently acquainted with history and current affairs, which made them attractive and interesting conversationalists. Several of them played important roles in Imperial as well as world history. Mary Leiter from Chicago became Vicereine of India; Nancy Witcher Langhorne from Virginia was later Vicountess Astor and the first woman to sit as an MP; and Brooklyn's Jennie Jerome metamorphosed into Lady Randolph Churchill, mother of Winston Churchill, as well as one of Bertie's many “friends.”

The Peculiar Quiet Marriage

According to St. Simon, he had his marriage celebrated quietly because he wanted to avoid a possible scandal caused by his mistress, Flora Miller. This does not ring true. Lord Robert St. Simon was the heir of one of the great noble families of the Realm—for heaven's sake, Richard the Lionheart's blood flowed through his flaccid bluish veins!



If the idea was to avoid scandal, in the case of St. Simon a “quiet” wedding would have led to scandal. For such a socially prominent family to choose a quiet marriage there had to have been a very good reason. The two genuine primary and justifiable reasons were back then, a serious illness or an unexpected death in the family. Otherwise, such privacy might have been interpreted as an indication that the bride was already in “an interesting condition.”

As the scion of one of the great noble families of the Realm, the expectation would have been for Lord St. Simon to be wed on a grand scale (particularly considering that it would have been the bride's father who would have borne the brunt of the expense). The rumors arising from this choice would have been far worse than those arising from an upset discarded mistress making a fuss. This was not an uncommon occurrence and would have resulted in a wink and a shrug. After all, who was Flora Miller? a mere chorus girl at the Allegro, which put her social standing practically at the bottom of the pyramid. She would have been disdained and ridiculed by the elite. The press might have run a few column-inches commiserating about another poor

girl seduced, abused, and abandoned by a heartless nobleman, but with few exceptions most classes considered nearly everyone in the acting professions (particularly dancing girls) social lepers.

It is strange that Hattie's father would have agreed to this. After all, he went through the trouble of buying an illustrious son-in-law for himself and a titled husband for Hattie, One would expect that he would have wanted to get her started on her way to nobility with opulent nuptials that would put vulgarity into shame.

Hattie's Reaction

Holmes seems too readily prepared to condone Hattie's behavior when he remarks, "I fail to see that anyone is to blame. I can hardly see how the lady could have acted otherwise, though her abrupt method of doing it was undoubtedly to be regretted. Having no mother, she had no one to advise her at such a crisis." This is true to a point. Granted she had to have been shaken and startled, as she walked towards the altar, to see the love of her life, the husband she believed dead. To her credit, she displayed unusual *sang froid* and carried on as if nothing had happened, took her vows, and dropped her bridal bouquet on the way out of the church for Moulton to insert his note in it.

Up to that point, her actions could not have been more proper. Had she answered "no" at the altar, when asked if she took St. Simon for her wedded husband, the scandal—especially fueled by the press—would have had biblical proportions. What she should have done afterwards, was confide in her father about what had taken place, and have him handle her putative husband and his family.



Instead, she escapes from the house without any explanation, leaving everyone ignorant and concerned about her whereabouts, and St. Simon to face his guests and family alone, unable to give even a feeble explanation.

It could be argued that she should have considered a simple and very common ploy of the time and "faint." She would then have been taken somewhere quiet place where she might have told St. Simon what had happened without creating a scandal and humiliating the poor man. Instead, by her actions she created a major wild-goose chase that she had to realize would involve the police. What is even worse, it appears that if Holmes had not found her, she would have vanished just like Windibank's Hosmer Angel did in *IDEN*, leaving poor St. Simon uncertain for years to come as to whether he was free to try to marry another heiress!

A Brilliant Insight

Holmes demonstrated what genius is by locating the missing bride and her husband, solely through the charges on a hotel bill. An examination of the bill shows the foundation of his deduction: "Oct. 4th, rooms 8s., breakfast 2s. 6d., cocktail 1s., lunch 2s. 6d., glass sherry, 8d." Today, these amounts would more or less read, "Oct. 4th, rooms \$200.00, breakfast \$27.00, cocktail \$19.00, lunch \$47.00, glass sherry, \$12.00."

Bravo, Mr. Holmes!

What else happened in 1888:

Empire

Mashonaland and Matabeleland declared British sphere of influence.

Suez Canal Convention signed: Suez Canal declared open to ships of all nations and free from blockade.



Sarawak and Brunei placed under British protection.

◀ A 7.0-7.3-magnitude earthquake strikes North Canterbury, New Zealand.

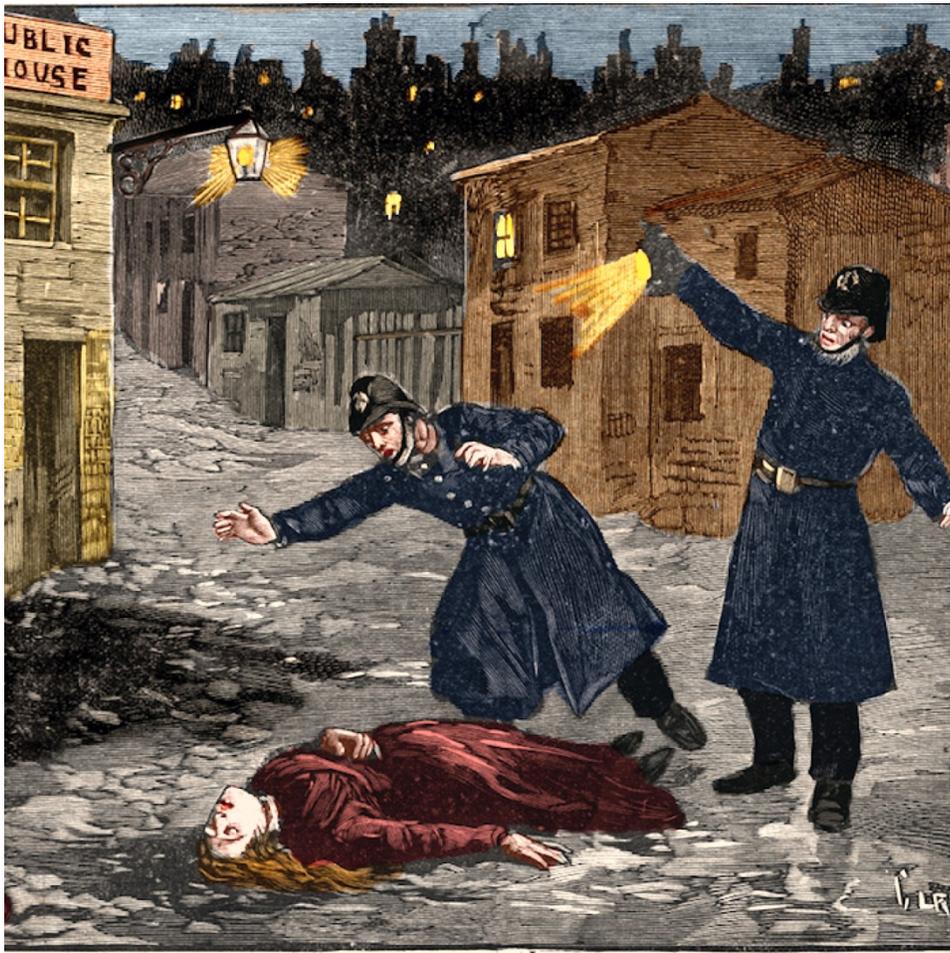
Great Britain annexes Christmas Island.

Queen Victoria grants a charter to the Imperial British East Africa Company, and it is incorporated in London, England.

Canadian Pacific Railway opens Hotel Vancouver, Vancouver, British Columbia.

Hailstones kill about 250 in Moradabad district of Delhi, India.

Britain



County Councils' Act establishes representative county-based authorities.

Annie Besant leads the London match factory girls on strike.

Commission to examine charges against Parnell.

◀ Jack the Ripper has murder spree in Whitechapel, kills his last victim.

General Buller founds RASC (Royal Army Service Corps).

County Councils Act: elects councils to take over administrative duties of JPs.

Foundation of London General Omnibus Company.

Miners Federation of Great Britain formed;

demands minimum wage.

Foundation of Scottish Labour Party.

Final report on Commission on Elementary Education Acts in England.

English Priory of Knights Hospitalers authorized by Royal Charter.

World

French Indochina formed.

Princess Isabel of Brazil signs *Lei Auréa* abolishing slavery.

Emperor Wilhelm I of Germany dies; Frederick III becomes Emperor from March to June, dies, and is succeeded by Wilhelm II.

Benjamin Harrison elected President of United States. Even though Cleveland received more popular votes, the Electoral College gives Harrison the election.

Unemployment demonstration in Rome suppressed by the military.

Louisville, Kentucky, becomes first government in U.S. to adopt Australian ballot.

Marshal Bazaine, officer in charge of the French Foreign Legion in Mexico during Emperor Maximilian's rule, dies.



Agricultural depression causes Sweden to abandon free trade.

British Honduras adopts decimal currency.

◀ Great Blizzard of 1888 strikes northeast U.S., 400 die.

Phil Sheridan, who fought as a Union General against the South during the American Civil War dies.

Clashes in Paris between Radicals and Monarchists.

Anarchists riot in favor of weavers of Lille and glass blowers of Lion. Paris stone masons and waiters strike for higher wages and shorter work schedules.

More liberal constitution granted to Serbia by Milan.

Pennsylvania's Monongehela River rises 32 feet after 24-hour rainfall.

Bandai volcano in Japan erupts for first time in 1,000 years.

Use of Danish language forbidden in schools in German N. Schleswig.

Founding of the Dutch shipping line Koninklijke Paketvaart-Maatschappij (KPM). It supports the unification and development of the colonial economy.

Reconstructed free port of Hamburg opens.

The Washington Monument officially opens to the general public.

Italy and Spain sign military treaty.

King Leopold II of Belgium introduces the Order of the African Star.

Revolution in Haiti culminates in the destruction of public buildings and the flight of President Salomon.

Ferdinand de Lesseps attempts to issue a fresh series of 1,000,000 bonds “to finish the Panama Canal.” Proposal is withdrawn, de Lesseps resigns his directorship, and the project collapses.

Italians near Alite relieved by the withdrawal of the Abyssinians.

The first beauty contest is held, the Concours de Beauté, at Spa in Belgium. Winner is 18-year-old Bertha Soucayet of Guadeloupe.

First organized rodeo competition held, Prescott, Arizona.

New York State establishes electric chair for method of death penalty.

Boulangier supported by Monarchists in France; his popularity threatens Third Republic.

Main portion of Bremen incorporated into German Customs Union; parts of Wesser estuary remain free port.

Art

Van Gogh in Arles, Holland, paints *Sunflowers*, *Portrait of Armand Roulin*, *La Mousme*, and *Drawbridge at Arles*. Cuts off his left earlobe and gives it to a prostitute in Arles.

Oscar Wilde publishes *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*.

Casey at the Bat is published in *The San Francisco Examiner*, and recited publicly for the first time.

John Phillip Sousa composes the military march *Semper Fidelis* for the U.S. Marine Corp.

Tchaikovsky performs *Symphony No. 5 in E Minor* at St. Petersburg.

George Moore publishes *Confessions of a Young Man*.

Cézanne paints *Peasant in a Blue Smock*.



Gilbert and Sullivan debut *The Yeomen of the Guard*.

Iannis Psichari, one of the creators of modern Greek literary language, publishes *My Journey* in demotic Greek.

Morris publishes *Dream of John Bull*, on a socialist commonwealth.

◀ Matthew Arnold, critic, essayist, and poet dies.

Fontane publishes *Irrungen, Wirrungen*.

Monet paints *Cap d'Antibes*.

Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch publishes *Troy Town*, a novel about Cornwall.

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec paints *Trace Horse of the Bus Line, Place Clichy*.

Stevenson publishes *The Black Arrow*, a novel about the War of the Roses.

Rimsky-Korsakov composes *Scheherazade*.

Charles Doughty publishes *Travels in Arabia Deserta*.

Seurat paints *Fishing Fleet at Port-en-Bessin*.

Thomas Hardy publishes *Wessex Tales*.

Kipling publishes *Soldiers Three*, and *Plain Tales from the Hills*; short stories of India.

Science and Technology

Dunlop's pneumatic tire developed, principle still unproven.

First wax drinking straw patented, by Marvin C Stone in Washington DC.

George Eastman registers the trademark "Kodak" and receives a patent for his box camera, which uses photographic paper roll-film.

Emile Berliner improves the gramophone.

Dr. Fitz, Boston surgeon, advocates the removal of the vermiform appendix in certain intestinal disorders, after several post-mortem operations. His advice is followed.

William Bundy patents the timecard clock.



First ballpoint pen patented.

The first known recording of classical music, Handel's *Israel in Egypt*, is made on wax cylinder.

Fridtjof Nansen, Norwegian explorer, crosses the Greenland icefield.

◀ Clinton Merriam founds the National Geographical Society in Washington, D.C., for "the increase and diffusion of geographical knowledge," and the first issue of its magazine is published.

Thomas Edison files a patent for the Optical Phonograph (the first movie).

Bertha Benz, wife of inventor Karl Benz, drives from Mannheim to Pforzheim, Germany in the first long distance automobile trip.

Lick Observatory, Mount Hamilton, California, formally inaugurates the Ewing duplex-pendulum seismometer, Ewing horizontal-pendulum seismometers, and Gray-Ewing vertical seismometers.

Hudson and Sclater publish *Argentine Ornithology*.

Mercerizing process introduced into cotton manufacture; facilitates later development of the artificial silk industry.



Spanish navy launches first submarine, designed by Isaac Peral. It features accumulator batteries, three dynamos, two 30-hp engines, electric propulsion, a torpedo tube, and periscope. Displacement is 80 tonnes, length 48 feet, and 6 feet beam.

Nikola Tesla makes first AC motor.

◀ In the U.S., Leroy Buffington patents a system to build skyscrapers.

Incubators are first used for premature infants.

Pasteur Institute for the treatment of hydrophobia founded.

Theophilus Van Kannel of Philadelphia patents revolving door.

Sir J. Dewar and Sir F. Abel invent cordite.

William Seward Burroughs patents the first successful adding machine.

Louis Le Prince films the Roundhay Garden Scene, the earliest surviving film.

Heinrich Hertz produces electromagnetic waves, proves light and heat are both forms of electromagnetic radiation. Sir Oliver Lodge makes same discovery independently. Hertz used an induction coil; Lodge Leyden jars.

Next week's case: BERY.

Respectfully submitted,

Murray, the Courageous Orderly

(a.k.a. Alexander E. Braun)

"I should have fallen into the hands of the murderous Ghazis had it not been for the devotion and courage shown by Murray, my orderly..."

All Sherlock Holmes photos have been published by courtesy of ITV Granada.

If you would like to join the Hounds of the Internet, email us at CourageousMurray@aol.com.

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