



## The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes

### Adventure XII – The Adventure of the Noble Bachelor

It was not the usual high society wedding. Only a very few people were in attendance as Hatty Doran took her vows as the wife of Lord Robert Walsingham de Vere St. Simon. After the nuptials, the happy couple made their way to a wedding repast at the home of the father of the bride. There was a small disturbance as a young woman tried to force her way into the gathering, saying that she had a prior claim on Lord Robert and threatening to do harm to his young bride. But Hatty had already entered the house and did not hear the disturbance as the butler and the footman pushed the intruder out.

The newlyweds and their guests were enjoying their meal when the bride excused herself and left the room. No one thought much about it until...she failed to return. A hurried search by her father and her new husband turned up no trace of her. Hatty Doran, Lady St. Simon, was gone. Later, police would find her wedding gown floating in the water of the Serpentine in a nearby London park.

When Lord Robert Walsingham de Vere St. Simon entered 221B, Holmes rose and bowed to him. Can the Hounds recall any other instance where Holmes bowed to a member of the nobility?

And was Watson's depiction of the nobleman ("foppishness;" "stately little cough") intended to be a caricature of some members of the peerage? Are we supposed to see Lord Robert in a sympathetic light?



Lord Robert remarked that Holmes' earlier clients were not from the same stratum of society. Holmes says, "My last client **of the sort** was a king." St. Simon interpreted this as a situation where the king had lost his wife, or at least a close family member, whereas Holmes may have meant that his last **noble** client had been a king. This ambiguity is never resolved; what do the Hounds think Holmes intended by his remark?

In lieu of a portrait, Lord Robert produced an ivory miniature, colored to show Hatty Doran's lustrous black hair and large dark eyes. Was it common to "colorize" ivory miniatures in Victorian times? Could Hatty's hair and eyes indicate a Latin heritage?

Lestrade says, "In the [wedding] dress is a pocket. In the pocket is a card-case. In the card-case is a note." Did Victorian brides carry card-cases? Did their wedding dresses have pockets? Were the card-cases waterproof? Why did Hatty retain the note, and why did she put it in a card-case?

Mr. Francis Hay Moulton had sworn to Hatty that he wouldn't return to claim her hand until he had as much money as Aloysius Doran. He was captured and imprisoned by the Apaches, escaped, and went to San Francisco, where he learned that Hatty had departed for England. He followed her there, found her through the newspaper society pages, and "staked his claim," apparently without having amassed the promised fortune. Yet he took rooms in one of the most select hotels in London. How did he come to have sufficient funds to travel to London, and to stay in expensive quarters, if he had only just escaped from the Apaches a few months earlier?

Why didn't Moulton sign his name to the note he passed to Hatty, instead of the rather formal "F.H.M."? With respect to the note and its implications to Lestrade, there was no indication that Lestrade verified that Flora Millar's middle initial, if she had one, was "H." Why not? And what ultimately happened to Miss Millar? Was she still languishing in jail under suspicion of murder while Holmes played his violin?

**Steve Clarkson**

**July 24, 1998**