



An Inquiry into: "The Adventure of the Noble Bachelor"

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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, and the various estimates are shown in the table.

If the case indeed took place in 1888, as the majority affirms, 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.”

The “Remarkable” Episode

Watson is very careful to point out to us, at the beginning of this case that “no memoir of [Holmes] would be complete without some little sketch of this remarkable episode.” This is not the first time that our biographer has taken the trouble to set down for posterity what could justifiably be described as a bland episode. Instead, for whatever reason he chose to leave us ignorant of the details of what must have been far more interesting and important cases, such as that of the Giant Rat of Sumatra, the Notorious Canary Trainer, the Aluminium Crutch, and so many others.

Except for the possibility that Hattie Doran might have been technically guilty of bigamy, there had been no crime committed, unless uselessly distracting the police’s time is considered as such.

Granted, Sherlock Holmes’ reasoning and deductive ability shine as brightly as they do in any other story.

No small consolation, that!

The Penniless Lord

Lord Robert St. Simon’s indigence was not at all unheard of among the peerage during the latter half of the 19th century. What made the situation even more painful was that, for the most part, this was not a result of mismanagement, but rather of changing times. Financial dislocations, often propelled by a shift in various markets caused the decline of the fortunes of many noble families and great houses.

Advances in refrigeration made it not only possible but desirable, price-wise, to import meat and cereals from New Zealand, Australia, and the United States. This was a mortal blow to those who raised livestock in the British Isles. Landowners began to lose money; their vast estates no longer capable of providing the needed revenue to meet increasing tax burdens on top of which factories drained their traditional sources of cheap labor.



Lady Randolph Churchill

In Oscar Wilde’s *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Lady Bracknell inquires from Jack Worthing, who aspires to her daughter’s hand, what his source of income is. When he tells her that it is chiefly in investments and not land, she quips, “That is satisfactory. What between the duties expected of one during one’s lifetime, and the duties exacted from one after one’s death, land has ceased to be either a profit or a pleasure. It gives one position, and prevents one from keeping it up. That’s all that can be said about land.”

Of course, in St. Simon’s case, the financial situation seems to have gone well beyond this, into the realm of desperation, shown by the fact that it had become necessary to sell some of the estate’s paintings. Marrying Hattie clearly was his only feasible escape route. Interestingly, Winston Churchill was the result of such a union of convenience between his father, Lord Randolph and his American debutante mother, Jennie Jerome. The Spencer-Churchills were initially opposed to the union, but were convinced by the powerful argument of her \$6 million dowry, which was quickly put to use to restore Blenheim Palace, which was beginning to fall apart.

It is difficult to fathom the extraordinary dowries that the “charming invaders” dangled before the eyes of dazzled, penurious nobility. It was not unusual for the American heiresses to be fortified with dowries of £100,000 to £500,000 (≈\$38,000,000 to ≈\$188,000,000 today). The newspapers revealed that in Hattie’s case, her dowry was in “the six figures” to which were added even more golden possibilities to come through her personal fortune.

Considering all this, Lord St. Simon’s reaction before Hattie and her husband was understated and controlled. Considering the situation, inviting him to share salt with them fell a little beyond the pale, bearing in mind the melancholy fate that awaited him after losing his American heiress.



The Quiet Marriage

St. Simon intention to have quiet nuptials to avoid the possibility of a scandal caused by Flora Millar is very puzzling. It would imply the impossibility that Flora would have been incapable of finding out from the society pages of the time when and where the marriage was to be held. In any case, there would have been no surprised gasps over an aristocrat having had what was now a disgruntled mistress.



In those days, the reasons for someone important having a “quiet” marriage were few. A primary reason might have been a serious illness or death in the family of either the bride or groom. Unlike today’s casual shrug when an eight-months-pregnant bride marries in a ceremony attended by relatives and friends, back then when a bride found herself in what was delicately termed as “an interesting condition,” or there had been obvious cohabitation, marriages were conducted in haste and in as much privacy as possible. Lydia Bennet’s wedding in Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* is a good example.

Outside of this, such a wedding would make no sense. Lord Robert St. Simon being the scion of one of the great noble families of the Realm would have been expected to wed with considerable pomp and circumstance (especially considering that it would be the bride’s father who would pay for it). The rumors this would have caused would have been socially worse than the loud grumblings emanating from an upset mistress.

What is even more unusual is that Hattie’s father did not seem to have a problem with this. He obviously was a multimillionaire and as such—after going through the trouble of buying an aristocratic husband for his daughter—one would expect that he would have insisted in buying the best and most ostentatious wedding possible.

A Brilliant Deduction

The fact that Holmes not only recognized the value and significance of the hotel receipt, but also used it to track the missing couple goes beyond genius.

His conclusion that they had to be in one of London's best hotels, based on the amounts listed on the bill is classic reasoning. Considering the amounts listed in the bill, Holmes was quite justified in his conclusion. It read, "Oct. 4th, rooms 8s., breakfast 2s. 6d., cocktail 1s., lunch 2s. 6d., glass sherry, 8d." Today, that would roughly amount to rooms \$200.00, breakfast \$27.00, cocktail \$19.00, lunch \$47.00, glass sherry, \$12.00.

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 Soucaret 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*.

Guilbert 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).

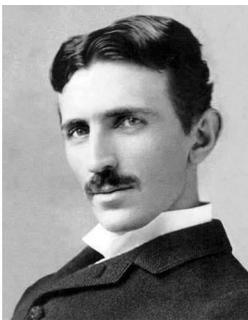
Bertha Benz, wife of inventor Karl Benz, drives from Mannheim to Pforzheim, Germany in the first long distance automobile trip.

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...”

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

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