



*An Inquiry into:
"The Adventure of
the Beryl Coronet"*

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“The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet” was first published in *The Strand Magazine* in May 1892. It is part of *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*.

The chronology for this case varies, depending on which Canon expert one consults. The different estimates are shown by the table. If the case took place in 1886, as the majority states, then at the time Sherlock Holmes was 32 years old and Doctor John H. Watson 34.

Main Characters:

Alexander Holder, prominent banker residing in Streatham with his son and niece. Arthur Holder, son of Alexander, a young man worried about his gambling debts. Mary Holder, niece and adopted daughter of Alexander. Sir George Burnwell, cad, friend of Arthur and Mary’s lover.

Notable Quotes:

“It is an old maxim of mine that when you have excluded the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth.”

Holder’s Mysterious Client

There is almost complete agreement by a large majority of Canon scholars that Holder’s statement that his client was “one of the highest, noblest, most exalted names in England” referred to the Prince of Wales, the future King Edward VII.

If, indeed, the coronet was “one of the most precious public possessions of the Empire,” it stands to reason that the only ones who could possibly have had access to it would have had to have been members of the Royal Family. Therefore, the mystery is who took it. Certainly, not Queen Victoria, she had no need to pawn Imperial jewels to get a few quid to tie her over a rough spot.

<i>The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet</i>	
<i>Chronologist</i>	<i>Date of the Adventure</i>
<i>Canon</i>	A Friday in February
<i>Baring-Gould</i>	Friday, December 19, 1890
<i>Bell</i>	A Friday in February 1882
<i>Blakeney</i>	1881-1887
<i>Brend</i>	March 1886
<i>Christ</i>	Friday, February 23, 1883
<i>Dakin</i>	Tuesday, February 23, 1886
<i>Folsom</i>	Friday, January 8, 1886
<i>Hall</i>	January 8, 1886
<i>Keefauver</i>	Friday February 26, 1886
<i>Klinger</i>	1889
<i>Zeisler</i>	Friday, February 19, 1886

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.

The obvious suspects then would be Her Majesty's issue—Edward and his brothers and sisters. Considering how poor Bertie (undeserved or not) had been swimming in Victoria's ocean of disapproval since his father, Prince Albert died (a demise Victoria most unfairly blamed on Bertie's bad behavior worrying her husband into an early grave), it is doubtful that he would have been disposed to take such a risk by hocking a national treasure. His siblings would also have been unlikely to do such a thing, particularly his sisters.



However, he is generally pointed to as being the logical suspect.

Personally, I disagree with this. Instead, I look to Prince Albert Victor (1864-1892), known as "Eddy" by his many disreputable intimates. He was the Duke of Clarence and Avondale and, being Edward's eldest child and Queen Victoria's grandson, he was second in succession to the Throne.

In my opinion Eddy is a more likely suspect. In every respect he was a disappointment to his parents and grandmother. He was a dullard of dubious sexual appetites who may have secretly married a lower-class Catholic woman, something which would later give rise to all sorts of conspiracy related to the Jack the Ripper murders. He was involved in the 1890 Cleveland Street scandal, which involved a homosexual brothel catering to toffs. In short, besides being limited in intelligence, he moved within questionable circles of the

high society of time. This would have made him a prime candidate for blackmail during a time when homosexuality was abhorred as the worse of perversions.

Taking a national treasure and using it to obtain a quick loan seems more like a move of desperation than anything else.

From Whence the Coronet?

Another problem worthy of consideration in all this is that, if the coronet was, as described, a precious and national possession of Great Britain, it would have resided in the Tower of London along with the Crown Jewels. There is a well-established procedure for getting any of these baubles from the Tower.

Only the monarch can request or allow any of these treasures to be brought outside the safety of the Tower. For a recent documentary about her coronation, Queen Elizabeth II was again brought into contact with the crown (which she alone may touch) used in the ceremony. A number of steps—each very well defined—had to be gone through before it was removed from the Tower and brought to her.



During special state occasions, we see the Queen (whether regent or consort) decked out in mouth-opening finery: coronets, necklaces, bracelets, and such. These jewels, in the case of Queen Elizabeth II, are all personal property, a majority of which was inherited, in Elizabeth's case, from her own mother as well as her great-great-grandmother Victoria; they are therefore not a part of those locked up in the Tower.



All this adds to the mystery of how Prince Eddy could have managed to get his hands on the Beryl Coronet. It does not appear very likely that it resided in the Tower; it could not have been part of the actual Crown Jewels. Still, even if that were the case, and it was "one of the most precious possessions of the Empire," how did he come to possess it? It is a certainty that he did not pinch it from his grandmother's jewel case while that certain gracious lady's attention was occupied elsewhere.

Anyhow, regardless of how one dices and slices it, Eddy had absolutely no right or privilege to dispose of the coronet as a pledge to obtain a loan to meet his secret debts.

It is amusing to ponder what may have happened when that prized Imperial possession was returned in pieces. It may be assumed that Eddy did not have unlimited time to keep it. There had to have been a deadline by which he had to return it to wherever it was safely kept as a national possession, and—unlike we so often see it being a case in the Canon—it could not have been to a drawer in his grandmother's night table.

Considering the scabrous life which his father, Wales, led as well as his half-hidden own personal life, it may be safely surmised that no scandal arose from the return of the shattered coronet. News of such a desecration would have reached Victoria in short time (as well as Fleet Street) with disastrous results for this Royal and his family.

The most likely explanation is that Eddy went to his father for help, and Edward was able to keep the coronet long enough to have it expertly repaired, making the whole affair somewhat reminiscent of D'Artagnan's frenzied recovery of Queen Anne's diamond studs and the Duke of Buckingham's replacement practically overnight, of the ones stolen by Lady de Winter.

For this same reason, one may assume that Holder emerged unscathed from this whole sorry incident. For all his stupidity in not keeping the coronet safe in the largest, most massive safe that he had access to, instead of a rickety bedroom bureau in his own house, he could not have been touched. The fear that the sorry affair might be made public would have been too great, although Holder was not exactly discreet in his offer of a large reward and having his son arrested for theft.



This case is also of great interest not only because it reveals what respectable sums Holmes was able to command at the zenith of his fame, but because it also shows that, after a very few years of moving to Baker Street—initially having to share the rent he could not afford for himself for the picturesque pile—he was unhesitatingly able to come up with £3,000 (≈\$1,130,000) of his own resources to buy back the gems from their receiver.

A Query

Is it possible that King Edward VII resorted to Holmes in the case we know as “The Adventure of the Illustrious Client,” because years before he had been instrumental in solving the matter of the Beryl Coronet with great efficiency and discretion, avoiding what could have otherwise become a major scandal?

Something to think about.



Murray's Bivouac

My Blushes!

I am very happy (and proud) to share with you an honor bestowed upon me by the Crew of the Barque Lone Star, an Australian Scion Society to which I have had the pleasure to belong to for some years.

Steve Mason, who bears the title of “3rd Mate” in our group informed me that I had been chosen to become a “Crew Member.”

I do not exactly know why they were nice enough grant me the title, but the fact is that having a fragile ego, I am always grateful for any little Canonical pat on the back.

Thank you very much, mates!



What else happened in 1889:

Empire

Royal Niger Company Chartered.

Fire destroys nearly 1,000 buildings in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

Colonial and Indian Exhibition.

City of Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada is incorporated.

Eruption of Tarawera volcano destroys famous pink and white calcium carbonate hot-spring terraces of North Island, New Zealand.

First scheduled transcontinental passenger train reaches Port Moody, British Columbia, Canada.

British annex upper Burma. Presented to Queen Victoria as a birthday gift.

Weekly Herald, first Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada newspaper, publishes first issue.

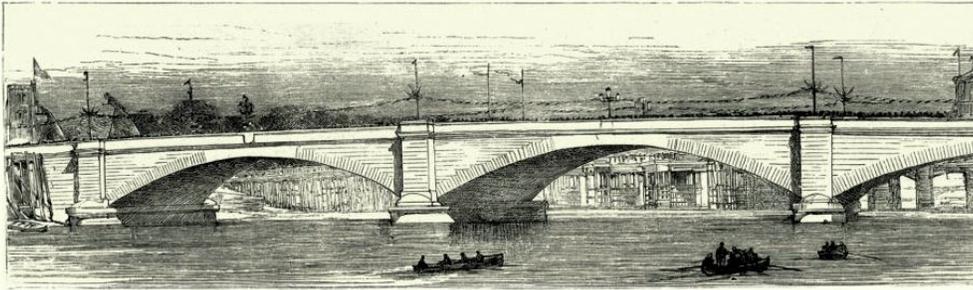
Britain

Conservative-Liberal-Unionist government.

Chamberlain forms Liberal Unions.

Gladstone's third Liberal government fails to pass its first Irish Home Rule Bill through the House of Commons. Gladstone resigns as Prime Minister. Split in the Liberal Party causes first Salisbury government to resign. Salisbury establishes his second

The London Times newspaper publishes world's first classified ads.



◀ Putney Bridge opens.

English Lawn Tennis

Association is established.

National Agricultural Hall in Hammersmith Road becomes "Olympia."

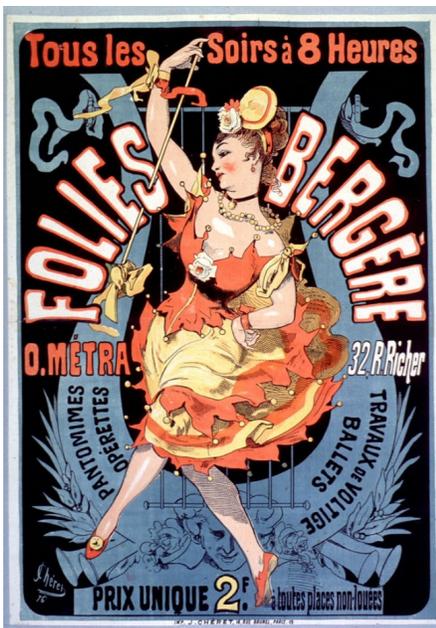
City of London buys Highgate Wood for public use.

Woolwich Arsenal football team established.

First cremation in England.

Shaftesbury Avenue opens.

World



Spain abolishes slavery in Cuba.

First major earthquake (7.3) recorded in eastern US, at Charleston, South Carolina.

Tunisia becomes French protectorate.

King Ludwig II of Bavaria supposedly drowns.

First Tournament of Roses is held in Pasadena.

Geronimo surrenders, effectively ending the Indian Wars of the Southwest.

◀ The *Folies Bergère* hall in Paris, France, stages its first revue, the *Place aux Jeunes*.

Haymarket riot in Chicago, Illinois; bomb kills seven policemen.

Birth of Alfonso XIII Borbón; proclaimed King of Spain (rules 1902-31), with mother Queen Maria Christina appointed regent.

Carrollton Massacre in Mississippi; 20 blacks are killed.

The Novo-Ureiureilite meteorite falls in Russia.

Hurricane and sea surge kill 250 at Indianola, Texas.

Russian-Circassian War ends with the defeat and the exile of many Circassians. Imam Shamil defeated.

The Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World is dedicated by President Grover Cleveland in New York Harbor. It is celebrated by the first confetti (ticker) tape parade in New York City.

Witwatersrand district in Transvaal is declared a public goldfield.

The North, Central, and South American Exposition closes in New Orleans, Louisiana.

The Westinghouse Electric Company is established.

First dinner jacket (the tuxedo) worn to autumn ball at Tuxedo Park, New York.

In Atlanta, Georgia, pharmacist Dr. John Styth Pemberton invents a carbonated beverage he calls "Coca-Cola," which contains cocaine.

Bonaparte family is banished from France.

Declaration of Berlin neutralizes Tonga.

President Grover Cleveland declares a state of emergency in Seattle, Washington because of anti-Chinese violence.

Art

Robert Louis Stevenson publishes *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* as well as *Kidnapped*.

Henry James publishes *The Bostonians*.

Rodin exhibits his statue, *The Kiss*.

Franz Listz, Hungarian composer dies.

Science and Technology



James E. Keeler discovers Saturn's rings are made of space debris.

Nobel invents nitroglycerine.

The element Germanium is discovered.

◀ Karl Benz in Karlsruhe officially unveils the Benz Patent *Motorwagen*, for the first successful gasoline-driven automobile.

The element Fluorine is isolated.

First U.S. alternating current power plant starts, in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. First commercially-successful AC electric power plant opens, Buffalo, New York, USA.

The New York Tribune becomes the first

newspaper to use a linotype machine, eliminating hand typesetting.

First public Dutch electric plant opens.

Aluminum manufacturing process is developed.

George K Anderson of Memphis, Tennessee, U.S.A., patents typewriter ribbon.

Next week's case: COPP

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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