

A STUDY GUIDE TO SHERLOCK HOLMES

By William S. Dorn



The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes
Adventure XVIII -- The
Adventure of the Stockbroker's
Clerk

THE STOCK-BROKER'S CLERK DATE OF THE ADVENTURE*

(Arthur Pinner attempted to hang himself)

CLUES:

1. Watson says, "... one morning in June ... I heard a ring at the bell, followed by ... my old companion's voice." (362).
2. Holmes says, "... I trust that Mrs. Watson has ... recovered from ... our adventure of the Sign of Four." (362)
3. Watson was married late in 1888 or early in 1889
4. Hall Pycroft says, "... I hammered away until Friday – that is, yesterday" (368)
5. June 1, 1889 was Saturday
6. Holmes says, "... even in so wet a June as this ... " (363)
7. In June 1889 the only days with heavy rain in London were the 6th, 7th, 10th, 12th, 14th, and 15th.

CONCLUSIONS:

- A. 1, 2, and 3 imply it was June 1889
- B. 4 implies that it was Saturday
- C. A, B and 5 imply that it was one of June 1, June 8, June 15, June 22 or June 29, 1889
- D. 6 implies that it was towards the middle of the month.
- E. B, D and 7 imply that it was June 15, 1889 when Pinner tried to hang himself

**Pinner attempted to hang himself
on Saturday June 15, 1889**

*The story may contain other clues to the date of the adventure. However, use only the clues shown here. Your only goal should be to use logical reasoning to find a date based on the clues shown here.

THE STOCK-BROKER'S CLERK VOCABULARY WORDS

- connection (362) – **business or professional practice**
- St. Vitus's dance (362) – **a nervous disease causing involuntary and irregular movement of the muscles in the body**
- strident (362) – **harsh, grating, or shrill**
- patent leathers (363) – **slippers made of black leather finished to a hard, glossy surface**
- instep (363) – **arched middle part of the foot between the toes and the ankle**
- hieroglyphics (363) – **writings that are difficult to read or decipher**
- City man (364) – **someone who worked in the financial area of London**
- cockneys (364) – **natives of the East End of London**
- ruddy face (364) – **face with a healthy, reddish color**
- first-class carriage (364) – **railway car with the best accommodations**
- outré* (364) – **extravagantly peculiar**
- crib (364) – **slang for job**
- soft Johnny (364) – **foolish person**
- billet (364, 369) – **job**
- let in (364) – **cheated; led astray**
- cropper (364) – **disastrous failure**
- lay (364) – **predicament**
- tether (364) – **limit of one's resources, abilities, or endurance**
- E. C. (364) – **abbreviation for 'Eastern Central', the post office district where most stock brokers' offices were located**
- innings (364) – **chance for accomplishment; derived from the chance at bat in cricket**
- screw (365) – **salary**

- diggings (365) – **lodgings**
the City (365) – **financial district of London**
sheeny (365) – **disparaging term for a Jew (today it is considered offensive)**
berth (365) – **position or job**
flutter (365) – **a small bet**
the swim (366) – **active in the general current of affairs**
lofty stair (367) – **stairs leading to rooms directly under the roof, that is, to a loft**
deal chairs (367) – **wooden chairs**
comet vintage (369) – **wine from a particularly good year for wine 1858 which was the year when Donati's Comet appeared in the sky**
shivers (370) – **terror**
waistcoat (370) – **vest**
braces (371) – **suspenders**
livid (371) – **discolored, as from a bruise**
the Midlands (372) – **inner-central part of England**
paroxysm (372) – **sudden outburst of emotion**
sterling (373) – **British money**
devolved (373) – **passed on or delegated to another**
cracksman (373) – **safe cracker**
carpet-bag (373) – **traveling bag made of carpet fabric**
scrip (373) – **provisional certificate entitling the holder to a fractional share of stock**
booty (373) – **loot; stolen goods**
haggard (373) – **worn and exhausted**

THE STOCK-BROCKER'S CLERK OPEN QUESTIONS

1. On page 365, when asked how good his memory was, Hall Pycroft replied, "Pretty fair." Later on that same page, Pycroft rattles off the price of three stocks with impressive accuracy. How could someone whose memory was only 'pretty fair' know the exact price of apparently every company?

Perhaps Hall Pycroft was being modest when he described his memory as 'pretty fair'. On the other hand, perhaps the figures he quoted were not correct. As far as we know, Arthur Pinner never checked the accuracy of Pycroft's responses.

THE STOCK-BROKER'S CLERK SIMPLE QUIZ*

1. How were Arthur and Harry Pinner related?
 - a. they were brothers
 - b. they were father and son
 - c. they were the same person
 - d. none of the above

2. Near the end of the story, what did Harry Pinner try to do?
 - a. shoot Hall Pycroft
 - b. hang himself
 - c. jump out of a window
 - d. none of the above

3. What did Harry Pinner ask Hall Pycroft to do?
 - a. copy the Encyclopedia Britannica
 - b. keep a record of the changes in stock prices on the London stock exchange
 - c. mark the hardware sellers in the Paris directory
 - d. none of the above

* The Simple Quiz is designed to determine if the student has read the story. Anyone who has read the story through should have no trouble in completing this quiz. The Intermediate and Advanced Quizzes are more challenging.

THE STOCK-BROKER'S CLERK INTERMEDIATE QUIZ[#]

1. What did Arthur Pinner question Hall Pycroft about?
 - a. names of his colleagues at Mawson and Williams
 - b. interest rates at London banks
 - c. prices on the stock exchange
 - d. none of the above

2. What did Arthur Pinner ask Hall Pycroft not to do?
 - a. tell his former colleagues at Mawson and Williams about his new position
 - b. tell his landlady that he would be in Birmingham the next day
 - c. write to Mawson and Williams and resign
 - d. none of the above

3. With what was Henry Pinner's second tooth on the left-hand side stuffed?
 - a. gold
 - b. platinum
 - c. silver
 - d. none of the above

4. When Henry Pinner left Hall Pycroft, Sherlock Holmes, and Dr. Watson and went into another room, why was Hall Pycroft so sure that Henry Pinner was not going to escape?
 - a. the room Pinner entered was an inner room
 - b. there were iron bars on all of the windows in the building
 - c. they were on the fifth floor and there were no fire escapes
 - d. none of the above

[#] The Intermediate Quiz is designed to test whether the student has read the story with reasonable attention to detail. The Simple Quiz is an easier test while the Advanced Quiz is much more challenging.

THE STOCK-BROKER'S CLERK & ADVANCED QUIZ

1. From who did Watson purchase his practice?
 - a. Farquhar
 - b. Jackson
 - c. Pollock
 - d. none of the above

2. For what firm did Hall Pycroft previously work?
 - a. Coxon and Woodhouse
 - b. Harris and Price
 - c. Mawson and Williams
 - d. none of the above

3. How long had Hall Pycroft worked for his most recent employer?
 - a. 2 years
 - b. 5 years
 - c. 7 ½ years
 - d. none of the above

4. How many branches did Arthur Pinner say the Franco-Midland Hardware Company had in France?
 - a. 111
 - b. 134
 - c. more than 150
 - d. none of the above

& The Advanced Quiz is designed for aficionados of the Canon. The questions are quite challenging. The Intermediate and Simple Quizzes are designed for the more casual reader of the stories.

ANSWERS TO QUIZZES

QUESTION	1	2	3	4
Silver Blaze				
Simple	c	b	d	xx
Intermediate	c	a	a	b
Advanced	c	c	b	a
The Yellow Face				
Simple	b	c	c	xx
Intermediate	b	b	c	a
Advanced	c	b	b	c
Stock-Broker's Clerk				
Simple	a	b	c	xx
Intermediate	c	c	a	a
Advanced	a	a	b	b
'Gloria Scott'				
Simple	b	b	a	xx
Intermediate	b	a	b	c
Advanced	c	c	a	c
Musgrave Ritual				
Simple	b	d	a	xx
Intermediate	b	a	a	c
Advanced	a	b	c	a
Reigate Puzzle				
Simple	c	b	b	xx
Intermediate	a	c	b	c
Advanced	b	a	c	b
Crooked Man				
Simple	b	b	a	c
Intermediate	b	a	c	c
Advanced	c	d	a	b
Resident Patient				
Simple	c	b	c	xx
Intermediate	c	a	b	d
Advanced	b	c	c	a

Answers to Quizzes

QUESTION	1	2	3	4
Greek Interpreter				
Simple	b	c	c	xx
Intermediate	b	c	b	a
Advanced	c	a	b	b
Naval Treaty				
Simple	c	a	b	xx
Intermediate	b	a	c	a
Advanced	c	b	c	b
Final Problem				
Simple	c	b	c	xx
Intermediate	b	c	c	a
Advanced	a	a	b	b