

The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes

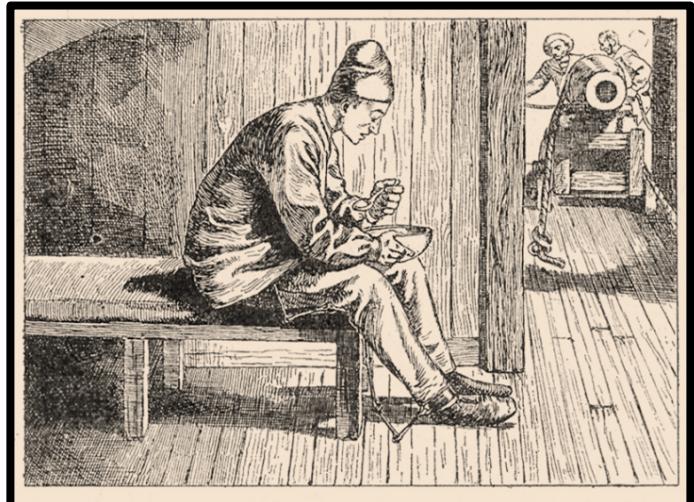
Adventure XIX -- The Adventure of Gloria Scott

This story is of importance because it documents Holmes' first case, of sorts, writes Charlotte Anne Walters.

In The Gloria Scott we hear about how a young Holmes went to stay with a college friend, his only friend at the time, and made some astute observations to his father causing the old man to faint.

There then comes a strange old drunkard to visit, a rude man of nautical persuasion who obviously knows a secret which the father wishes to hide and blackmails him into offering employment. Interestingly, it is the father who suggests to Holmes a career as a detective and sets him on the path which we all know so well. It is also interesting that even in his early life, Holmes was antisocial. Victor Trevor was, by his own admission, Holmes' only friend at college and we are treated to an interesting insight into Holmes' early personality – 'I was never a very sociable fellow, Watson, always rather fond of moping in my rooms and working out my own little methods of thought, so that I never mixed much with the men of my year'.

Victor was also friendless; Holmes is clearly drawn to loners and those on the outside of society. Watson too was friendless when they first met having just arrived in the capital fresh from a military campaign. This is why, in my own novel, when looking at the issue of what kind of woman could capture Holmes' heart, I concluded that he would only feel drawn to someone who was also on the outside of



normal society, an eccentric outcast. There has always been something a bit too normal about Irene Adler for me.

There is another Birmingham reference in this story but only a passing mention and not a very positive one. Old Mr Trevor's daughter had visited the city, caught diphtheria and died. Not one to shout about for us Brummies.

It turns out that Mr Trevor senior was once a convict on board a ship bound for Australia and, along with fellow prisoners, took control of the vessel and escaped. The old sailor who turns up at the house whilst Holmes is staying there was one of the crew and threatens to reveal his secret. Holmes doesn't actually do anything to help matters as Mr Trevor dies of a weak heart and leaves his son a letter revealing all. Not really a first case then, more of a being-in-the-right-place-at-the-right-time sort of thing.

I do always feel a little short changed when Holmes doesn't save the day and did find this story a bit too far-fetched. I also missed having Watson's usual involvement.

Just 5 out of 10 I'm afraid. Husband has just looked over my shoulder and feels this mark was a bit harsh, but that's because he had confused the story with the naval treaty so not a valid opinion really. Sorry Tim.

My blog, my marks – especially if you can't even get the stories right!

Charlotte Anne Walters

October 05, 2011