



The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes

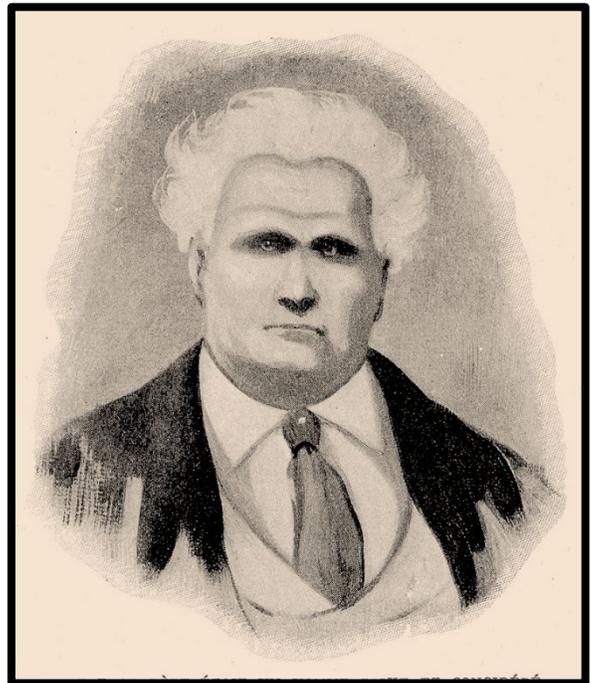
Adventure XIX – The Adventure of the Gloria Scott

The Gloria Scott is one of my favorite tales. Sort of a *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. So much tantalizing — but regrettably incomplete — information about the young Sherlock. And the revolt on board the transport ship is exciting! Some notes as I read this story again:

The implication is that Sherlock Holmes was a real outdoorsman in his youth. It is implied (but not explicit) that he enjoyed the hunting and fishing at Donnithorpe. “There was excellent wild-duck shooting in the fens, remarkably good fishing,” he tells Watson. This squares with the Deerstalker image, yet in most of the canon we see him as a confirmed “city person” and one who spends most of his time indoors. It’s difficult for me to reconcile these opposing views.

Boxing was a sport Holmes enjoyed at college, though he doesn’t say he actually participated in the ring. If he was a student boxer, did he do it enough that his own ears showed signs of “the peculiar flattening and thickening” that marked Trevor Sr.’s? Exactly how much boxing leaves the ears in that condition?

After Holmes “read” Trevor Sr., the old man was understandably jumpy around his son’s young friend. “He’ll never be sure again of what you know and what you don’t know,” Victor told Holmes. Holmes must have had that creepy effect on lots of people — not the “Gosh, that’s amazing!” admiration of a Watson, but characters who were genuinely unsettled by his superior powers. Wasn’t this unintentional? Did he ever set out to unnerve anybody?



I like the way Victor calls his father “the dad” several times. It reminds me of ACD’s “the ma’am.” He seems to have such a warm relationship with his father, exactly the opposite of how I picture SH’s relationship with his own father. Or.....is it even **remotely** possible that Sherlock Holmes was warm and loving with his own dad? Is it possible that Mycroft felt close to Père Holmes?

Though the crew of the *Gloria Scott* was rather unsavory, and some of them helped out in the mutiny, why didn’t the surviving three sailors speak up and tell the *Hotspur* captain what really happened? The fact that they had been put off the ship ought to have been enough to save them from the gallows.

I recently finished reading Captain Bly’s own account of the Bounty mutiny and his experience of being put adrift in a boat by Fletcher Christian. Bly’s purpose in writing was to justify his own actions prior to that mutiny. However one feels about that incident, the fact remains that Prendergast was comparatively generous with the men he put in the little boat. Their situation was most survivable — close enough to land, adequate food and water, etc. Fletcher Christian intended for the men he set adrift to die (and it was a miracle they didn’t), but I don’t get the same sense about Prendergast and the life boat.

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