



The Return of Sherlock Holmes

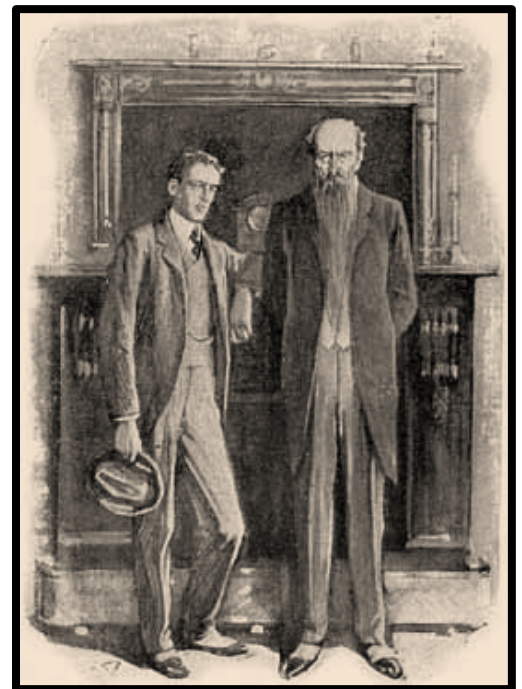
Adventure XXXII – The Adventure of the Priory School

The first indication Holmes and Watson had that the game was afoot was when Thorneycroft Huxtable, M.A., Ph.D., etc. visited their rooms at 211B Baker Street and suddenly collapsed on their bearskin hearthrug. After reviving the exhausted Dr. Huxtable and learning about the kidnapping of the only son of the eminent (and wealthy) Duke of Holderness, Holmes — upon learning about the £6,000 reward the Duke was offering — agreed to leave two pressing London cases behind and journey to the Peak country of Northern England to investigate.

What started out as the mystifying disappearance of the young Lord Saltire was complicated by the murder of Heidegger, the German master at Dr. Huxtable's Priory School. Heidegger apparently had seen the young lad leaving the School late at night and had followed...to his death. But at the scene of the brutal murder, there were no incriminating footprints in the soft ground, only the tracks of cows.

Apropos of earlier posts to the List about Holmes' familiarity with horses or lack thereof, please note that in PRIO he raised the hind leg of a strange horse to examine its shoe. Wasn't he at risk of getting kicked? On another tack (sorry, I couldn't resist), I hypothesize that a few years must have elapsed between Wilder's birth and his mother's death in order for him to be able to recall her "pretty ways" to the Duke.

Was Holmes showing unwonted avarice when he put two ongoing cases "on hold" in short order to accompany Dr. Huxtable back to Mackleton, just as soon as he learned that there were rewards totaling £6,000 to be had?



And was he evincing cupidity when he rubbed his hands together as he bade the Duke to write out a cheque for the reward, and subsequently patted the cheque fondly as he thrust it deep into his innermost pocket? Such behaviour coming from a man who said, "I play the game for the game's own sake" seems uncharacteristic.

I have always wondered why a constable would be on duty all night on a road traversing such sparsely settled countryside? I note from Holmes' map that the constable was apparently stationed at the intersection of a side road with the High Road, but how much traffic would there be in the small hours of the morning?

And would someone please explain how Holmes could know that the bicycle with the patched Dunlop tire was heading away from the Priory School? It seems to me that the rear tire would have passed over the track of the front tire regardless of which way the cyclist was headed.

For the horse fanciers among us, does ::::: equate even roughly with the prints left by a walking horse? Does ::::: resemble the tracks of a cantering horse and .*.*. those of a galloping horse? And how, if at all, would the special shoes have affected the gait of a horse shod with them?

What kind of ivy would be sturdy enough to sustain the weight of a ten-year-old boy? Obviously, the ivy at Heidegger's end of the School was not made of such stern stuff.

Once Hayes had been warned by Wilder that the game was up, why did it take so long for him to decide to flee? And Watson noted that the side-lamps of a trap were lit, but Holmes remarked that a lone person made off in a dog-cart. Are traps and dog-carts roughly the same type of vehicle, and do either or both of them have side-lamps?

Lastly, I'd like to hear from the rising young barrister, Holy Peters, the Assizes, or some others of the List's many legal experts as to whether it would have been possible for the Duke of Holderness to break the entail which barred his illegitimate son from inheriting his property.

Steve Clarkson

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