



# The Return of Sherlock Holmes

## Adventure XXXII – The Adventure of the Priory School

### Publishing History

# 32 of the 60 stories

First published in *The Strand Magazine*, February, 1904

In the US *Collier's Weekly*, January 30, 1904

Part of *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* collection by George Newnes, Ltd.,  
London, 1905

McClure Phillip & Co., New York, 1905

British Illustrator – Sidney Paget

### Chronology

Baring-Gould places the dating of the story at Thursday, May 16 to Sat, May 18, 1901 making it 49<sup>th</sup> of the 60. This means that Holmes is 47 and Watson 49.



### Christopher Morley Says

“Dr. Watson always thought the startling arrival of Dr. Thorneycroft Huxtable, M.A., Pd. D., one of Baker Street’s most dramatic moments. What had happened to cause such despair and fatigue in this burly schoolmaster, principal of the famous Prior School and author of Huxtable’s *Sidelights on Horace*? Holmes was able to give interesting sidelights on cloven feet. Experts have observed some differences between the English and American printing of Watson’s sketch map of the Derbyshire moor.”

### Dummies Short Summary

“Kidnapping, Murder, And High Society Result In A Case With Holmes Becoming A Very Rich Man.”

## How Many Words

At 11,507 words PRIO has the 54<sup>th</sup> most words (#1 is VEIL – 4,499, #56 if NAVL – 12,701)

## Classifying This Case

This case is one of 3 classified as a disappearance by abduction. The other 2 were LADY & SOLI

## The Best Of Sherlock Holmes

- 1927 – Arthur Conan Doyle names it 10<sup>th</sup> on his list of 12 favorites.
- 1954 – The Baker Street Irregulars voted it as #9 on their top 12 favorites.
- 1959 – The Baker Street Irregulars did not it on the list of 10 favorites.
- 1999 – The Baker Street Irregulars voted it 13<sup>th</sup> of 56 short stories.
- 1999 – The Sherlock Holmes Society of London voted it 15<sup>th</sup> of the 56 short stories.

## What Else Happened That Year (1901)

- Queen Victoria dies, January 22nd, accession of Edward VII as King-Emperor.
- Northern Nigeria becomes British protectorate.
- Robert Falcon Scott commands the Discovery on Antarctic expedition.
- Boxing is recognized as a legal sport in England.
- Scotland Yard creates a fingerprint archive
- U.S. President McKinley assassinated; succeeded by Theodore Roosevelt.
- New constitution in Serbia issued by Alexander.
- U.S. Steel Corporation organized under J.P. Morgan and Company, bankers.
- Opening of Trans-Siberian railway.
- Hay-Pauncefot Treaty gives U.S. power to build and police the Panama Canal if it remains open to shipping in peace or war.
- Cuba becomes a U.S. protectorate - 6/12
- First Nobel prize awarded in Stockholm on 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Alfred Nobel's death - 12/10
- Guglielmo Marconi received signals transmitted from England to Newfoundland
- Kipling writes Kim.
- Marconi transmits Morse wireless signals from Poldhu, Cornwall to St. John's, Newfoundland.
- First isolation of the hormone adrenalin.

- Peter Cooper-Hewitt produces mercury vapor lamp; invented by Arons in 1892.
- First Texas oil gusher at Spindletop, Beaumont - 1/7
- New York state first to require automobile license plates - 4/25
- U.S. Stock market crash - 5/17

### **Holmes And Watson – Personal Information**

Holmes and Watson are at Baker Street as usual

### **Dramatis Personae**

- **James Wilder**, secretary to the duke and his illegitimate son.
- **Thornycroft Huxtable, M.A., Ph.D., etc.**, proprietor and owner of the Priory School.
- **Duke Of Holderness** – Father of the kidnapped. More interested in no scandal rather than getting his son back.
- **Lord Saltire** – Arthur. The kidnap victim
- **Cauter**, Roommate of Arthur
- **Professor Heidegger**, German master at the Priory School.
- **Reuben Hayes**, proprietor of the Game Cock Inn and accomplice of James
- **Mrs. Hayes**, wife of Reuben – a good woman but completely under her husband’s control
- **Edith, (The Duchess Of Holderness)**, Mother of the kidnapped Lord Arthur Saltire living abroad

### **Quotable Sherlock**

- "A bicycle, certainly, but not the bicycle," said he. "I am familiar with forty-two different impressions left by tyres."
- "Let us try to realize what we do know, so as to make the most of it, and to separate the essential from the accidental."
- "I must take the view, your Grace, that when a man embarks upon a crime, he is morally guilty of any other crime which may spring from it."
- "This is the second most interesting object that I have seen in the North."
- "His Grace is not in the habit of posting letters himself."
- "A criminal who was capable of such a thought is a man whom I should be proud to do business with."

## Holmes' Fee

£12,000. For this sum, the Duke not only got his son back and the mystery solved, but he benefited from Holmes' silence about the matter. This would be enough money for Holmes to retire to beekeeping the day the check clears.

## Unrecorded Cases

- The Case of the Ferrers Documents
- The Abergavenny murder

## Sherlock Holmes On The Big And The Little Screen

Another case where the story includes many items that would be good theater, but only 2 attempts have been done

- 1921 *The Priory School* with Eille Norwood is 14<sup>th</sup> of the 47 theater movies The National Film and Television Archive at the BFI has viewing copies of this film but it has not been released
- 1986 *The Priory School* with Jeremy Brett as one of 43 episodes in *Sherlock Holmes*

## Fainting In The Canon

All these near-faints and faked faints aside, however, twenty-five characters in the Canon actually do faint (2). The gold medal for Best Faint goes to Thorneycroft Huxtable with his over-the-top-and-under-the-table entrance to 221B in PRIO. As Doctor Watson relates:

*"We have had some dramatic entrances and exits upon our small stage at Baker Street, but I cannot recollect anything more sudden and startling than the first appearance of Dr. Thorneycroft Huxtable, M.A., Ph.D., etc. [. . .] his first action, when the door had closed upon him, was to stagger against the table, whence he slipped down upon the floor, and there was that majestic figure prostrate and insensible upon our bearskin hearthrug."*

## Newspapers

- **Globe** - The oldest evening London paper. Became Conservative after a long-time supporter of Whigs.

## Annotated Sherlock

- **“Lord Lieutenant”** the principal officer of an English county (appointed by the crown) controls the appointment of justices of the peace and issues commissions in the local military organizations
- **“corn-chandler”** a dealer in corn and other grains
- **“break the entail”** a restricted course of inheritance – for example, a restriction that property could only be left to the eldest child
- **“gorse”** a spiny shrub with fragrant yellow flowers and black pods, also called furze
- **“sovereign”** a gold coin worth one pound
- **“publican”** a keeper of a public house or pub
- **“dolorously”** exhibiting sorrow, grief, or pain

## Weapons

- **Service Revolver** - Dr. Watson’s and is mentioned in 13 cases.
- **Heavy Walking Stick** - Which Reuben Hayes, proprietor of the Fighting Cock Inn and partner of James Wilder in the kidnapping of Lord Saltaire, used to bludgeon to death Heidegger, the German master at the Priory School, where Saltaire was enrolled.
- **Kidnapping** - Of Lord Saltaire, the rightful son and heir of the Duke of Holderness, by James Wilder, the Duke’s bastard son, to gain his inheritance.
- **Gallows** - Which awaited Reuben Hayes.

Frank Mentzel