



The Return of Sherlock Holmes

Adventure XXXIX – The Adventure of the Missing Abbey Grange

Publishing History

39 of the 60 stories

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

In the US *Collier's Weekly*, December 31, 1904

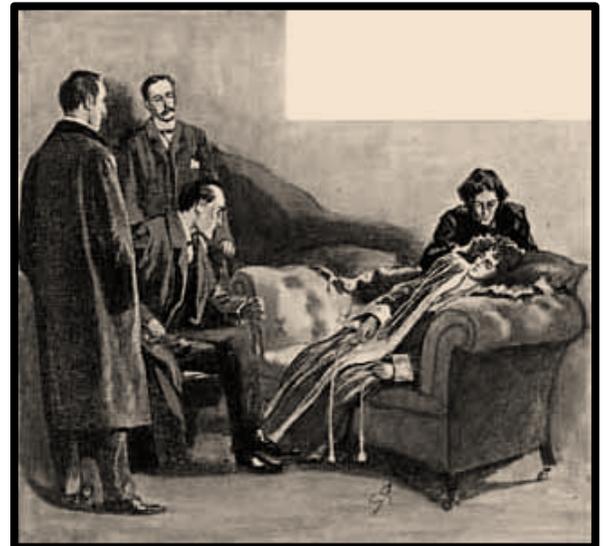
Part of *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* collection by

George Newnes, Ltd., London, 1905

McClure Phillip & Co., New York, 1905

British illustrator – Sidney Paget

American illustrator – Frederick Dorr Steele



Chronology

Baring-Gould placed the date of the story as Saturday, January 23, 1897 making it 42nd of the 60. This means that Holmes is 43 and Watson 45.

Christopher Morley Says

“Come, Watson, come! The game is afoot!” is the lively opening of this adventure, while the doctor is still abed on a cold winter morning. Again young Stanley Hopkins appeals to Holmes for assistance, and they find a tragedy on high life at the picturesque old Abbey Grange. One of the richest men in Kent has been brained with his own poker. Holmes’s knowledge of port wine and sailor’s knots leads to the solution.”

Dummies Short Summary

“A husband is dead and a wife is tied to a chair. It’s a clear case of home invasion. Or is it?”

How Many Words

At 9,233 words ABBE has the 40th most words (#1 is VEIL – 4,499, #56 if NAVL – 12,701)

Classifying This Case

This case is one of 23 classified as a MURDER where the perpetrator was either killed, arrested, or otherwise satisfactorily handled. And one of 4 where Holmes let the perpetrator go free. The others were BOSC, DEVI, and VEIL.

The Best Of Sherlock Holmes

- 1999 – The Baker Street Irregulars voted it 16th the of 60 stories.
- 1999 – The Sherlock Holmes Society of London voted it 22nd of the 60 stories.

What Else Happened That Year (1897)

- Victoria's Diamond Jubilee.
- Uprising on India's Northwest Frontier.
- First Women's Institute in the world; established at Stoney Creek, Canada.
- Sir Henry Tate presents the Tate Gallery to the nation.
- Employers' Liability Act: responsibility for injuries to and compensation of employees injured at work.
- Royal Automobile Club, London.
- Trained nurses only to be employed in hospitals.
- Dreyfus affair.
- Universal suffrage introduced in Austria.
- H.G. Wells publishes *The Invisible Man*.
- Roistand publishes *Cyrano de Bergerac*.
- Paul Dukas debuts *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*.
- Gauguin paints *Girls Bathing in Tahiti*.
- Aspirin marketed.
- J. McCreary patents an air-washer intended to purify air in a building; beginning of air-conditioning.

- Diesel engine invented.
- Sir Ronald Ross, bacteriologist, identifies the causes of malaria and studies the disease.
- Beginning of Monotype system of typesetting.
- S.A. Andre is killed attempting to explore the polar regions in a free-flying balloon.

Holmes And Watson – Personal Information

221B Baker, is again the residence of the doctor and the detective.

Dramatis Personae

- **Sir Eustace Brackenstall**, the murder victim, "One of the richest men in Kent."
- **Lady Brackenstall**, his wife of a year. Formerly **Mary Fraser** of Adelaide, South Australia
- **Theresa Wright**, life-long maid and companion of Lady B.
- **Captain Jack Crocker**, admirer of Lady B. and the murderer.
- **The Randall Gang**, a father and two sons, who committed the crime (?)
- **Stanley Hopkins** – a Scotland Yard Inspector

Quotable Sherlock

- "Come, Watson, come!" The game is afoot. Not a word! Into your clothes and come!"
- "Hopkins has called me in seven times, and on each occasion his summons has been entirely justified. I fancy that every one of his cases has found its way into your collection, and I must admit, Watson, that you have some power of selection which atones for much which I deplore in your narratives. Your fatal habit of looking at everything from the point of view of a story instead of as a scientific exercise has ruined what might have been an instructive and even classical series of demonstrations. You slur over work of the utmost finesse and delicacy in order to dwell upon sensational details which may excite but cannot possibly instruct the reader."
- "We are moving in high life, Watson"
- Watson's thought. "What were these commonplace rogues that he should soil his hands with them?"
- "Perhaps when a man has special knowledge and special powers like my own, it rather encourages him to seen complex explanation when a simpler one is at hand."
- "The lady's charming personality must not be permitted to warp our judgment."
- "Once or twice in my career I feel that I have done more real harm by my discovery of the criminal than

ever he had done by his crime. I have learned caution now, and I had rather play tricks with the law of England than with my own conscience."

- "What I know is unofficial; What he knows is official. I have the right to private judgment, but he has none. He must disclose all, or he is a traitor to his service."
- Captain Crocker to Holmes. "I believe you are a man of your word, and a white man."
- "Watson, you are the British jury, and I have never met a man who was more eminently fitted to represent one."
- "Vox populei, vox Dei."

Holmes' Fee

No mention (Of the fully recorded cases there are at least nine, REIG, BLAC, SIXN, GOLD, ABBE, CARD, DYIN, STUD, VALL, in which Holmes participated solely in order to assist the police...For Holmes there can have been little reward save the experience, and the privilege of paying his own expenses in following up on clues)

Sherlock Holmes On The Big And The Little Screen

- 1922 *The Abbey Grange* with Eille Norwood was one of 47 short theater movies of *Sherlock Holmes* stories. The National Film and Television Archive at the BFI has viewing copies of this film but it has not been released
- 1965 *The Abbey Grange* with Douglas Wilmer was an episode in his *Sherlock Holmes series*. It is lost.
- 1986 *The Abbey Grange* with Jeremy Brett was one of 43 episode in his *Sherlock Holmes series*

Fainting In The Canon

In this story, Lady Brackenstall claims to have been knocked unconscious by a burglar and then to have fainted when the burglar killed her husband. Good story, but it turns out that she is lying.

Annotated Sherlock

- "**Hopkins has called me in seven times**" Holmes helped Hopkins in **GOLD, BLAC,** and **MISS** prior to this. What were the other four?
- "**beeswing**" Scant, fine settlement in a wine bottle.
- "**we approached the case *de novo***" anew; fresh
- "**to foment the bruise**" apply hot, moist cloths to the body; to treat with a poultice or warm medicinal

compress

Holmes The Author

Holmes is projecting the publication of *The Art of Detection*

Weapons

- **Hat Pin** - Used by Sir Eustice Brackenstall to torture his wife.
- **Stick** - Which Sir Eustice Brackenstall used to attack both his wife Mary and John Croker, her lover, or at least erstwhile lover.
- **Poker** - From the dining room at Abbey Grange which Croker used to kill Brackenstall in self-defense.
- **Fist** - Which, according to the story told to Holmes by Lady Brackenstall, a member of the gang of burglars hit her with.
- **Petrol** - Used by Sir Eustice Brackenstall to burn up his wife's pet dog.
- **Decanter** - Which Brackenstall, in one of his drunken fits, hurled at Theresa Wright, his wife's maid.

Frank Mentzel