



## The Return of Sherlock Holmes

### Adventure XXXIX -- The Adventure of the Abbey Grange

**First published in:**

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**Time frame of story (known/surmised):**

1897, toward the end of winter, given.

**Holmes & Watson living arrangements:**

Sharing bachelor quarters at 221B

**Opening scene:**

A quick scene. Holmes wakes Watson by tugging at his shoulder early in a winter morning. Watson moved quickly. In ten minutes they were in a cab on their way to Charing Cross station.

**Client:**

Holmes had been summoned by Stanley Hopkins, of the Yard.

**Crime or concern:**

Killing of Sir Eustace Brackenstall, a confirmed drunkard, whose head was knocked in with his own poker.



**Villain:**

Depends on your point of view. The victim may have been the bad guy, although the killer was Captain Crocker, admirer of Lady Brackenstall, the victim's wife (widow). Crocker was a very tall young man, golden-moustached, blue-eyed, with a skin which had been burned by tropical suns, and a springy step.

**Motive:**

Cover up a death that occurred in an honorable fight (see "interestings" below), and pin blame on some known criminals.

**Logic used to solve:**

The gang of robbers, who were supposed to be blamed, was described in the papers, so anyone could use the descriptions. There were several minor oddities that tended to make Lady Brackenstall's story improbable, whose cumulative effect was certainly considerable .

Unlikely the gang would have hung around to drink the wine, and if they had, it is even more unlikely they would have left some.

Holmes also draws Watson's attention to the wineglasses. The presence of beeswing in only one indicated two people used the glasses, and poured the leftover into the third. Holmes deduces from these that Lady Brackenstall and her maid have been lying all along, and began to look at their story from that viewpoint, believing nothing they said.

Rope was frayed on one side of the separation, cut clean on the other. Splatter of blood on chair where wife was supposedly tied up during the violence.

**Policemen:**

Stanley Hopkins, with a youthful figure and alert, eager face. He had called Holmes in seven times, each entirely justified.

**Holmes' fees:**

No mention

**Transport:**

Holmes & Watson took a cab to Charing Cross Station, rattling through the opalescent London reek. Then they took train from Charing Cross to Chiselhurst Station, followed by a drive of a couple of miles through narrow country lanes.

On the return journey, Holmes was puzzled. Then at a suburban station, he sprang on to the platform and pulled Watson out after him, and caught a train going back to Chiselhurst.

**Food:**

The first morning, Holmes & Watson got going too quickly to break their fast. They had some hot tea at Charing Cross and boarded a Kentish train.

Back in London, Holmes and Watson had dinner.

**Drink:**

None mentioned other than the wine supposedly drunk by the burglars.

**Vices:**

Holmes smoked his pipe after the above-mentioned dinner.

**Other cases mentioned:**

The seven cases of Hopkins, mentioned above, all found their way into Watson's collection.

**Notable Quotables:**

"Come, Watson, come! The game is afoot. Not a word! Into your clothes and come!"

"We are moving in high life, Watson"

What were these commonplace rogues that he should soil his hands with them?

"I believe you are a man of your word, and a white man." (Crocker, the killer, confessing to Holmes)

**Other interestings:**

The term "Kentish" sounds unusual, at least to a modern American. It is use twice in the writings. Once here, and once in The Final Problem, referring to a train passing through the "Kentish woods." Evidently means "of or pertaining to Kent".

Once again Holmes criticizes Watson's storytelling, and Watson challenges Holmes to write them himself. Holmes promises that he will, in his declining years.

Was Lady Brackenstall truthful, or were she and Crocker lovers who deliberately plotted to murder Sir Eustace? Had it been they conspired to kill Sir Eustice in cold blood, none of the evidence would have been any different, only their stories. To Captain Crocker's credit, however, he did respond quickly and correctly to Holmes' test.

Beeswing: [BEEZ-wing] Named for its translucent appearance, beeswing is a flaky deposit sometimes found in older, bottle-aged wines, particularly port. Such wines are usually decanted, thereby eliminating the residue.

**When all was said and done:**

Holmes & Watson held court, Holmes the judge, Watson the jury. "Not guilty, my lord," said Watson. The voice of the people is the voice of God. Captain Crocker was acquitted.

**McMurdo's Camp**