



## The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes

### Adventure LV – The Adventure of the Three Gables

A black male comes crashing through the door.....and blackmail turns out to be a crashing bore. It must be time for our next story: *The Adventure of the Three Gables*. My questions and comments:

Douglas Maberley: obsessive weirdo, or hopeless romantic?

Isadora Klein: heartless Jezebel, or innocent bystander?

At various times in his career Holmes joked about trying his hand at crime. When he negotiated the hush-money deal in 3GAB, which (if any) laws were broken?



It appears likely that Mrs. Maberley will accept money to forget about the little unpleasantness. Is she reasonable or greedy?

By story's end, Isadora Klein is free to marry the Duke of Lomond — a fictitious name used to shield the identity of a nobleman presumably of Scots descent. “Lomond” comes from Loch Lomond, the lake with the “bonnie, bonnie banks” northwest of Glasgow. One family in particular is associated with Loch Lomond's history, and it's possible that Isadora's duke was a clansman of theirs. They are the tumultuous MacGregors. After 1603 Clan MacGregor was forcibly crushed, “altogidder abolisheed” as James VI put it, and for years surviving clan members were ordered to change their name or die. Some were executed, some fled to avoid persecution, but most surviving MacGregors simply adopted the last names of their “septs” – branches of the clan acquired through marriage and other means. All of the enactments against the MacGregors were finally

repealed by 1775, but a few of the descendants of those proscribed MacGregors still go by the adopted surnames chosen nearly 400 years ago. So, though they are truly “MacGregors,” today some of them bear the surname “Campbell,” others go by “Murray,” a few are called “Grant,” and some even use a last name familiar to us. . . .”Leckie.”

There was a beautiful house in Biddenham, Bedford called “Three Gables.” It was built by Charles Edward Mallows (1864-1915), the architect, landscape designer and artist, on commission for his father-in-law. Constructed between 1900-01, Mallows used an Arts and Crafts approach to the design of Three Gables, placing vernacular building materials inside a fabulous natural garden. Photos I’ve seen of the house show a central block with the three gables across the second story (British). Two wings extend at slight angles from the block. Mallows was not a towering figure in British architecture, however, and it’s the incredible garden at Three Gables which established him. Look for references to him in gardening history books if you’re interested in pursuing his life and works.

Mrs. Maberley jokes that she owns nothing “rarer than a Crown Derby tea-set,” a reference to the English porcelain manufacturer. I collect a different type of porcelain, but I’ll share the little I know about Crown Derby. Derbyware has been around since the mid-1750’s. Many of the pieces are nice, and a few are found in Museums such as the Victoria and Albert in London, and the Cincinnati Art Museum in the USA. Their work is not particularly rare or astonishing. Derby was known for table as well as ornamental pieces. Following the death of the founder and his heirs, former Derby workers went on to become the creative force behind Crown Derby (1877), and then Royal Crown Derby (so-called under separate trademark following appointment in 1890 as manufacturers of porcelain to Queen Victoria). Crown Derby pioneered brilliant colors using an enameling technique similar to the modern Limoges process. The most recent Crown Derby tea set transaction I’ve been able to find was an 1887 “Kings” pattern set (pot, jug, covered sugar bowl, six cups, saucers) that sold for \$210 in 1994 — a very reasonable price, depending on the condition of the pieces. Edwardian Royal Crown Derby sets sell for two/three times that amount because they’re finer quality. What the collectors go ape over is miniature Royal Crown Derby pieces, which were only briefly manufactured as children’s toys around 1904.

3GAB is the Sherlock Holmes story I most want to see in 3-D. Steve Dixie and Susan Stockdale tumbling through doorways.....Dr. Watson with the poker (do they still use the bent one in Baker Street?).....the chloroforming of Mrs. M, and the looting of her room.....the speeding cab.....Isadora rushing after Holmes.....Isadora throwing down her own poker.....hand me the popcorn and the funny glasses, Mycroft!

**Sonia Fetherston, BSI**

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