



The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes

Adventure IX -- The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle

There seems to be a consensus that we lock the door to Wisteria Lodge, climb into our four-wheeler and move along to the next story — this being *The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle* (BLUE), taken out of order so that we may exchange the compliments of the season with one another. Therefore, one day early, here are my questions and comments to get us going:

Catherine Cusack is thought to be Ryder's "confederate." But is anybody out there willing to be a Devil's advocate and make a case for her innocence?

The carbuncle would appear to be a loose stone. How is it that the Countess kept it loose rather than set and worn?

I'd like to hear from Hounds who believe the Petersons may have been fellow lodgers at Mrs. Hudson's house. What reasoning inclines you to accept the 221 address for the commissioner and his family?

Why did Holmes let Ryder go?



When Henry Baker appeared at Sherlock Holmes' door he was wearing a Scotch bunnet, Anglicized by Watson (and most English-speakers) to the word "bonnet." There are only two sorts of hats which could correctly be called by this term, and Lord knows the Scots are correct about their attire! The first is the Glengarry, a military-style hat worn tilted to the right, most often seen on overseas duty. Glengarries are creased from front to back, with a small red toorie (pom-pom) at the crown and two jaunty ribbons dangling down the neck. They're normally "diced," or banded with a checkerboard pattern. Glengarries are often seen on bandsmen and others required to wear fancy-dress. The other kind of bonnet is the Balmoral. It's a beret-style hat worn forward on the head, with the top pulled gently to the right. Balmorals are both diced and undiced. The ribbons at the back must be tied in a neat bow. Picture Ronald Coleman c. 1931: that's the dashing Balmoral he's got on his head! Alas, neither Glengarries nor Balmorals are quite right for this story. The Oxford edition's choice of a Tam O'Shanter for Henry Baker's bonnet, though not technically correct, is the ideal alternative. Tams are round, flat, soft woolen caps, sometimes knit in one's tartan colors, often with a large toorie on top. One source likens a Tam to wearing a tea cosy on one's head, and that's not a bad comparison. Tam O'Shanter is named for the hero of a Bobby Burns poem, a fellow who coped with the "ills 'o life" just as our Henry did, by frequenting taverns.

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