



## The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes

### Adventure XIV -- The Adventure of the Copper Beeches

#### First published in:

The Strand Magazine, June 1892

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

A cold morning in early Spring (given). Occurred after other 4 cases mentioned (SCAN, TWIS, IDEN, NOBL). Month & year not stated.

#### Holmes & Watson living arrangements:

Holmes & Watson sharing bachelor quarters at 221B.

#### Opening scene:

Holmes & Watson discussion after breakfast regarding Watson's literary treatment of Holmes' cases. Letter received requesting appointment from potential client, who had been a governess and needed a new position. Wanted Holmes' advice on whether she should or should not accept a situation which had been offered. Holmes initially unhappy with the trivial nature of request, laments that the days of the great cases may be past.



#### Client:

Violet Hunter, a young lady with a bright, quick face, freckled like a plover's egg, and a brisk manner. Holmes perked up.

**Crime or concern:**

Client was concerned about governess position offered her because of the unusually high salary, the curious conditions (including cutting her luxurious chestnut hair), and the light duties, all of which seemed to be most unusual.

After two weeks on the job as governess for little Edward , client was “not easy in her mind about her employers.”

It turned out Rucastle had imprisoned his daughter to prevent her marrying her suitor which would keep him from her income, and hired Holmes’ client to impersonate the imprisoned daughter and drive away the suitor.

**Villain:**

Jephro Rucastle, of The Copper Beeches, a prodigiously stout man with a very smiling face and a great heavy chin which rolled down in fold upon fold over his throat.

**Motive:**

The daughter, Miss Alice, had rights of her own by will, and Rucastle needed to use her money.

Alice’s suitor hung around despite her brain-fever, which had kept her for six weeks at death’s door. Violet Hunter’s dress, disguise, and postures of disdain were meant to discourage the suitor, the disagreeably persistent Mr. Fowler.

**Logic used to solve:**

Overall arrangement looked like Miss Hunter was hired to impersonate someone. Many obvious reasons to believe the job offered was not on the up-and-up.

**Policemen:**

None

**Holmes’ fees:**

No mention

**Transport:**

Holmes & Watson took a train at half-past nine, arriving Winchester at 11:30.

Mr. Rucastle drove client in his dog-cart to his country house, known as The Copper Beeches.

**Food:**

Holmes & Watson took lunch with client at the Black Swan, an inn of repute in the High Street in Winchester, at no distance from the station. The client had engaged a sitting-room, and lunch awaited them upon the table.

**Drink:**

No mention

**Vices:**

Holmes smoked his long cherry-wood pipe which was wont to replace his clay when he was in a disputatious rather than a meditative mood

**Other cases mentioned:**

SCAN, TWIS, IDEN, & NOBL. All published cases.

**Notable Quotables:**

“ . . . there was an exhilarating nip in the air, which set an edge to a man’s energy.”

“I was repelled by the egotism which I had more than once observed to be a strong factor in my friend’s singular character.” -Watson

“Data! data! data!” he cried impatiently. “I can’t make bricks without clay.” -Holmes

“The lowest and vilest alleys in London do not present a more dreadful record of sin than does the smiling and beautiful countryside . . . Think of the deeds of hellish cruelty, the hidden wickedness which may go on, year in, year out, in such places, and none the wiser.”

“Oh, tut, tut! sweating — rank sweating!” “Tut, tut” — Rucastle

**Other interesting:**

Violet Hunter had been previously employed by Colonel Spence Munro.

Another Munro in the Canon is the hop merchant Grant Munro, in YELL. There was also the Stark Munro letters, a non-Holmes work by Doyle. Lots of Munros.

Rucastle's daughter by first wife had moved to Philadelphia. This connection inspired the naming of the prestigious Scion Society, The Sons of the Copper Beeches, in Philadelphia.

Holmes' hypothetical sister: "It is not the situation which I should like to see a sister of mine apply for."

**When all was said and done:**

Rucastle, attacked by his own mistreated dog, survived as a broken man, cared for by his wife. The suitor, Fowler, and the daughter, were married and took a government position in Mauritius, an island in the Indian Ocean east of Madagascar. Violet Hunter became the head of a private school at Walsall, where she met with considerable success. To Watson's disappointment, Holmes manifested no further interest in her when once she had ceased to be the centre of one of his problems.

**McMurdo's Camp**