



The Hounds of the Internet

"A singular set of people, Watson."

An Inquiry into: "The Gloria Scott"

Vol. XIII No. 18 • December 1, 2022

The *Gloria Scott* was first published in *The Strand Magazine* and in *Harper's Weekly* in April 1893. It is part of *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*.

One of the most respected Canon scholar Martin Dakin once referred to the date in which this adventure supposedly took place as "one of the thorniest problems in Holmesian chronology." The diversity of our learned

chronologists estimates confirms this, as is shown on the table.

If the case indeed took place in 1873, the year upon which most of our chronologists agree, then Sherlock Holmes was 19 and Dr. John H. Watson 21.

Main Characters:

Victor Trevor, son of Victor Trevor Sr. and college friend of Holmes. Mr. Trevor Sr., Justice of the Peace in the Norfolk Broads. Hudson, a sailor on the *Gloria Scott*. Beddoes, Fellow prisoner and friend of Trevor Sr. Evans, Jack Prendergast, blood-thirsty leader of the mutiny on board the *Gloria Scott*.

Notable Quotes:

"I don't know how you manage this, Mr. Holmes, but it seems to me that all the detectives of fact and of fancy would be children in your hands. That's your line of life, sir, and you may take the word of a man who has seen something of the world."

"And that recommendation, with the exaggerated estimate of my ability with which he prefaced it, was, if you will believe me, Watson, the very first thing which ever made me feel that a profession might be made out of what had up to that time been the merest hobby."

In the Beginning...

When Holmes described to Watson the tragic events that took place around the Trevors as being worthy of study Watson asked, "But why did you say just now that there were very particular reasons why I should study this case?" To which our sleuth replied, "Because it was the first in which I was ever engaged."

The Gloria Scott

| Chronologist | Date of the Adventure |
|--------------|------------------------|
| Canon | 1885 |
| Baring-Gould | Sunday, July 12, 1874 |
| Bell | The Summer of 1875 |
| Blakeney | 1873 |
| Brend | August 1873 |
| Christ | Late September 1876 |
| Dakin | July 1874 |
| Folsom | July 1873 |
| Hall | Summer 1875 |
| Keefauver | Saturday, July 3, 1880 |
| Klinger | 1874 |
| Zeisler | The Summer of 1876 |

Please note that Canon chronologists may differ on pivotal dates and comparative periods between cases, thus a simple majority is not necessarily correct. Most Canon scholars settle on a single chronologist's results for their research framework.

Far be it from me to contradict Sherlock Holmes, but if one goes by what we know about the Great Detective, I think that this statement is open to interpretation.



We know that Holmes' talent for deduction and observation were well-known; in fact, Victor Trevor commented about them, so there must have been occasions in which he was observed using them by others, probably at the university. Victor Trevor commented about his talents and described to his father—as Holmes himself put it—“. . . one or two trivial feats which I had performed.” This leads one to believe that there must have been other instances, before this one, in which Holmes solved a problem for someone, hence the display of talent.

Knowing the character of the man it is highly unlikely that Holmes (young or old) would have gratuitously shown off his abilities as parlor tricks to astonish others. There-

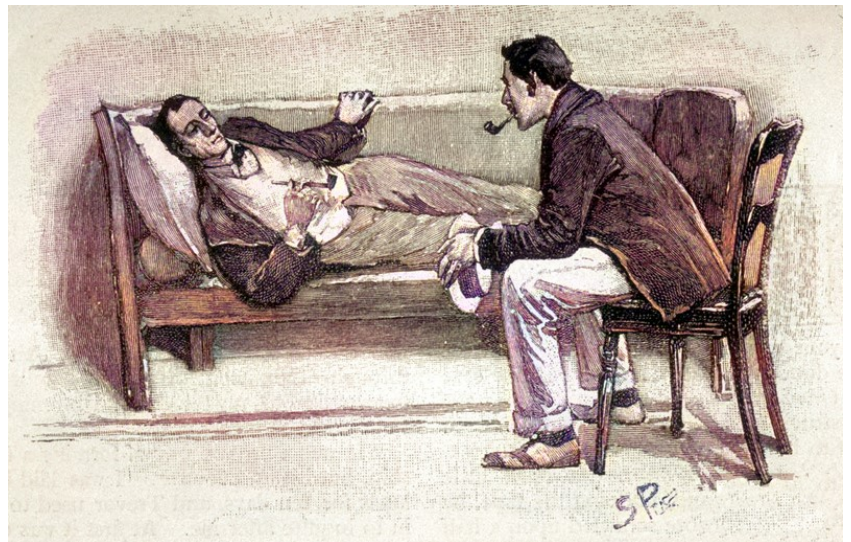
fore, he must have been previously involved in some kind of investigation or—more likely—more than one.

According to Holmes Trevor “. . . was the only friend I made during the two years I was at college. I was never a very sociable fellow, Watson, always rather fond of moping in my rooms and working out my own little methods of thought, so that I never mixed much with the men of my year . . . and then my line of study was quite distinct from that of the other fellows, so that we had no points of contact at all.” Here, Holmes himself is telling us that except for the incident with Trevor's terrier freezing on to his ankle they would not have met at all.

In passing, it should also be observed that when he says of this case that “. . . it was the first in which I was ever engaged,” the statement might be open to two meanings: is it “engaged,” meaning he simply participated? Or “engaged” meaning he was actually hired as an investigator? If the latter is true, then this would have been the first case in which Holmes was involved *professionally*.

On the Other Hand. . .

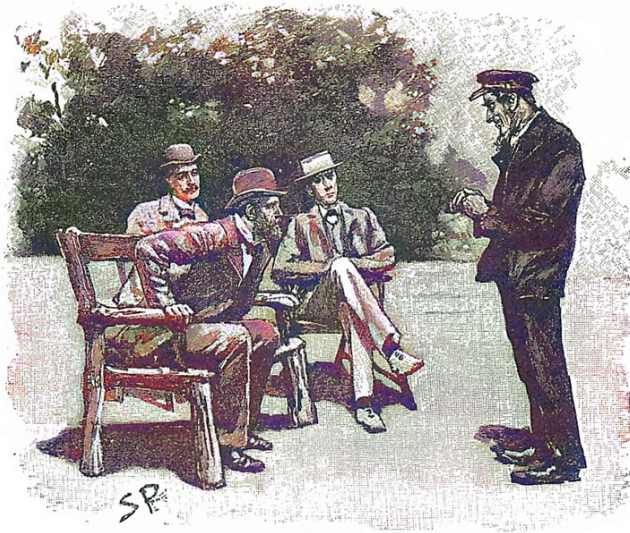
Regardless of Holmes' description of this as his first case, the fact is that his participation (other than as a witness) was minimal. All he really did was decipher the code used by Beddoes in his warning



note to Trevor Sr.—this hardly makes him an investigator. We know what led to the tragedy of the Trevors not through Holmes uncovering any fact, but rather to Trevor Sr. who revealed the origin of his dark relationship with Hudson and Beddoes, and the crimes that united them in his long letter to his son.

When young Trevor had him read it, the events described in it were as much of an eye-opener as it had to have been for his friend.

Of all the earlier Canonical cases written by Watson, the one connected with the Musgrave Ritual



marked his debut as the premier investigator of his—or any other—time. It is here that we witness Holmes the sleuth, unerringly closing upon a solution using his splendid—and by then fully developed—investigative powers.

The Trevor affair presents us with a young Holmes apparently still searching for his purpose in life and who, although able to deduce some facts about Trevor Sr.'s past life, does not connect them or derives any conclusions from them.

While he realized that the older man had a past life with unrevealed secrets, leading him to lose his senses over a passing remark concerning a faded tattoo, Holmes was

more concerned about his own discomfort when, from that moment on, the senior Trevor became wary of anything further that he might casually conclude about his past.

Holmes' observations of Trevor Sr.'s reaction when Hudson shows up do not lead him to any conclusion regarding any problem or danger that his friend's father might experience. There is no reason to believe, as well, that he gave young Trevor any warning regarding a possible menace, very likely because he did not think that there was any.

Holmes must be held completely blameless of this seeming negligent lack of action. After all it appears that at that point in time it had not even occurred to him that his calling might be that of the world's sole consulting detective. Perhaps it was Trevor Sr.'s nervous comment about how a formidable detective he could become by using his methods that pointed him in the right direction.

A Path without Direction?

Most Canon scholars agree that although Holmes was not destitute when he first met Watson, he was just staring off on his invented career and prosperity was not yet within reach, hence the need for shared digs at 221B.

If, indeed, Holmes revelation to Watson that it wasn't until Victor's father suggested a career in detection that he thought of making that his profession is true, then what was his goal at university? Was he undecided about what he wanted to pursue? It would appear that in this indecision he had not yet charted for himself that intriguing course of studies that led to no degree but took him to the zenith of his profession.

Holmes speaks to Watson about moping in his rooms and working out his own little methods of thought. So what did young Mr. Holmes intended to do with his life? He puts one in mind of those students today who drift for years in universities, undecided about a career.

During Queen Victoria's time tuition, whether in Oxford or Cambridge, for someone not reading for honors averaged £60 or about \$25,000, making attending university back then almost as expensive as it is today. Unlike the time of STUD, he did not appear to be working during the time of GLOR. This makes it unlikely that Holmes was paying for his own studies; perhaps Mycroft was helping him out. It could not have been a scholarship, because he did not follow any definite course of study, and scholarships are not given to the undecided.

He could not have been working even part time because it is obvious that he had plenty of leisure time because he planned to spend the Long Vacation (a three-month summer break) with Victor. When he cut short his visit, he went "up to my London rooms, where I spent seven weeks working



out a few experiments in organic chemistry." These "London rooms" (plural!) could not have been cheap, considering that they afforded him room and privacy enough to conduct chemical experiments.

By the time of the Great Meeting, Stamford observed that, "I have no idea what he intends to go in for. . . [h]is studies are very desultory and eccentric, but he

has amassed a lot of out-of-the way knowledge which would astonish his professors," Holmes was just rounding off the knowledge that he required for the career he was already engaged in. Although he was no longer undirected, it would seem that shillings were not as abundant as they seemed to be in earlier days.

And the rest is history...

What else happened in 1873:

Empire

The Canadian Parliament establishes the North-West Mounted Police (renamed the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in 1920).

British Naval Officer John Moresby discovers the site of Port Moresby, and claims the land for Britain. ►

The end of the war between the United Kingdom and Ghana's King Kofi KariKari, who was involved in the trading of slaves, leads to the establishment of the Gold Coast Colony.

Prince Edward Island joins the Canadian Confederation.



Sir Benjamin Pine becomes Lieutenant-governor of the Colony of Natal.

Alexander Mackenzie becomes the second Prime Minister of Canada.

Irish Home Rule movement: The Home Government Association reconstitutes itself as the Home Rule League.

Britain

British ocean liner RMS *Atlantic* sinks off Nova Scotia, killing 547.

The Kennel Club, the world's first kennel club, is founded in the United Kingdom.

In Chipping Norton, England, rioters attempt to free the Ascott Martyrs—16 women sentenced to imprisonment, for attempting to dissuade strikebreakers.

Alexandra Palace in London is destroyed by fire, only a fortnight after its opening.

New Rush in Griqualand West, South Africa is renamed Kimberley.

World

Japan adopts the Gregorian calendar.



The California Penal Code goes into effect.

American Indian Wars—Modoc War—First Battle of the Stronghold: Modoc Indians defeat the United States Army.

◀ The Spanish Cortes deposes King Amadeus I, and proclaims the First Spanish Republic. Emilio Castelar, the former foreign minister, becomes prime minister of the new Spanish Republic.

Ulysses S. Grant is sworn in for a second term, as President of the United States, signs the Coinage Act of 1873, which ends bimetallism in the U.S., and places the country on the gold standard.

The University of California opens its first medical school in San Francisco.

Censorship: The United States Congress enacts the Comstock Law, making it illegal to send any "obscene, lewd, or lascivious" books through the mail.

Emancipation Day for Puerto Rico: Slaves are freed.

First Aceh Expedition: A Dutch military expedition is launched to bombard Banda Aceh, capital of the Aceh Sultanate (in modern-day Indonesia), beginning the Aceh War.

Der Gründerkrach: The Wiener Börse (Vienna stock exchange) crash in Austria-Hungary ends the Gründerzeit, and heralds the global Panic of 1873 and Long Depression.

Levi Strauss and Jacob Davis receive United States patent No. 139121, for using copper rivets to strengthen the pockets of denim work pants. Levi Strauss & Co. begin manufacturing the famous Levi's brand of jeans, using fabric from the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company in Manchester, New Hampshire.

Henry Rose exhibits barbed wire at an Illinois county fair, which is taken up by Joseph Glidden and Jacob Haish, who invent a machine to mass-produce it.

Classical archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann discovers Priam's Treasure.

The city of Khiva falls to Imperial Russian forces, under the command of General Konstantin von Kaufman.

Ochanomizu Women's University founded in Japan (then the Tokyo Women's Normal School).



American Indian Wars: While protecting a railroad survey party in Montana, the Seventh Cavalry, under Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer, clashes for the first time with the Sioux, near the Tongue River (only 1 man on each side is killed).

A peace treaty is signed between Imperial Russia and the Khanate of Khiva, making the khanate a Russian protectorate.

The Austro-Hungarian North Pole Expedition discovers Franz Josef Land.

◀ At Adair, Iowa, Jesse James and the James-Younger Gang pull off the first successful train robbery in the American Old West (\$3,000 from the Rock Island Express).

The International Meteorological Organization (IMO) is established.

German troops leave France, upon completion of payment of indemnity for the Franco-Prussian War.

The New York stock market crash triggers the Panic of 1873, part of the Long Depression.

Establishment of the Home Ministry in Japan, introducing police services of the Empire of Japan on the European model.

Budapest, Hungary's capital is formed from Pest, Buda and Óbuda.

The Heineken Brewery is founded in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

The League of the Three Emperors is created. It links the conservative monarchs of Austria-Hungary, the German Empire, and the Russian Empire in an alliance against radical movements.

The Swedish arms company Aktiebolaget (AB) Bofors-Gullspång, better known as Bofors, is founded.

The Married Woman's Property Rights Association is founded in Sweden.

Napoleon III, last Emperor of the French dies.

Art

Enrico Caruso born.

Sergei Rachmaninoff born.

Science and Technology

Alberto Santos-Dumont, Brazilian aviation pioneer is born.

Captain Bertram Dickson, Scottish soldier, explorer and pioneer aviator; involved in the world's first mid-air collision is born.

Next week's case: MUSG.

Respectfully submitted,

Murray, the Courageous Orderly

(a.k.a. Alexander E. Braun)

"I should have fallen into the hands of the murderous Ghazis had it not been for the devotion and courage shown by Murray, my orderly..."

If you would like to join the Hounds of the Internet, email us at CourageousMurray@aol.com.

Copyright © 2022 Alexander E. Braun