



Arthur Conan Doyle Encyclopedia

The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes Adventure XXIII -- The Adventure of the Resident Patient

SUMMARY (Diogenes Club)

The gang robbed the Worthingdon bank. Tobin was shot and killed during the robbery. All five were captured. Sutton informed on the rest and got a much shorter sentence. Cartwright (the triggerman) was executed.

After his release from prison, Sutton, wishing to hide from the gang, set Trevelyan up in a nice office for a share of the proceeds and the two lived in separate apartments over the office.

After the gang was released, they traced Sutton. Twice they attempted to get to him. On both occasions one posed as a patient – a Russian nobleman – and the other his caretaker/translator. Naturally Sutton, who knew the gang had been released, was living in absolute terror at this time, so Trevelyan consulted Holmes.

Holmes asked Sutton who it was that was stalking him and Sutton claimed ignorance of everything so Holmes left in disgust.

Early next morning Holmes was summoned by Trevelyan. Sutton had hanged himself.

Holmes visited the crime scene and proved that Sutton had been executed by the gang and that the page had been bribed to assist them.

None of the gang was ever caught. They were presumed lost at sea on the *Norah Creina*. The page was released for lack of evidence.



SUMMARY (Wikipedia)

Doctor Percy Trevelyan brings Holmes an unusual problem. Having been a brilliant student but a poor man, Dr. Trevelyan has found himself a participant in an unusual business arrangement. A man named Blessington, claiming to have some money to invest, has set Trevelyan up in premises with a prestigious address and paid all his expenses. In return, he demands three-fourths of all the money that the doctor's practice earns, which he collects every evening, going over the books thoroughly and leaving the doctor 5/3d of every guinea (21 shillings or £1 1/- in pre-decimalized currency) from the day's takings. Blessington is himself infirm, it turns out, and likes this arrangement because he can always have a doctor nearby.

Everything has gone fairly well for the doctor since the arrangement began. Now, however, something has happened to Blessington. He has become excitable and agitated, this after he said that he had read about a burglary somewhere in the city.

Shortly thereafter, the doctor acquired a new patient, a Russian nobleman with cataleptic fits. His grown son brought him in the evening while Blessington was taking his usual walk. The son insisted on waiting out in the waiting room while the doctor saw his father. During the consultation, the patient had a fit, sitting bolt upright and going quite rigid. The doctor rushed for some nitrite of amyl for his patient to inhale, but upon returning, found that both his patient and his son had left.

Surprisingly, the same two men came back the next evening, the son claiming that he had seen his father walk out into the waiting room and assumed the consultation was over. He then had taken his father home, only later realizing that something was not quite right. The doctor had another consultation with the Russian gentleman, and after they had left, Blessington was utterly beside himself. Someone had been in his room. There were footprints to prove it. It could only have been the Russian nobleman's son, but why did he go in there? Nothing had been disturbed or stolen.

At this point in Trevelyan's story, Holmes thinks that it would be wise to go to the doctor's Brook Street practice right away to see for himself what this odd case is all about. He discovers firsthand just how paranoid Blessington has become: he greets Holmes, Watson, and Trevelyan with a gun, but the doctor convinces him that the visitors mean no harm.

Holmes asks Blessington who these men are, and why they want to molest him. Blessington nervously says that he cannot answer the first question, but by way of answering the second question, he says that he keeps all his money in a box in his bedroom, as he does not trust bankers.

Holmes knows that it must be more than this. He leaves in disgust, advising Blessington that he can expect no advice if he tries to deceive him.

Shortly after leaving, Holmes outlines to Watson his train of thought. He knows that two men, perhaps more, are out to get Blessington. The catalepsy was faked, just to keep Doctor Trevelyan busy so that he would not notice the other man going into Blessington's room. They did not wish to steal anything, as can be seen in their failure to rummage around in the room. They chose an appointment in the evening knowing that there would be no other patients in the waiting room. Holmes also knows just looking at Blessington that he is afraid for his own life, and deduces that he must therefore know who is after him, for no man could have such enemies without knowing about it. Also, it was only by chance that Blessington was not in both times that these two men came; they were obviously not familiar with Blessington's personal habits.

The next morning brings news that Blessington has hanged himself. Trevelyan's brougham is sent to 221B Baker Street to bring Holmes to the scene. When Holmes and Watson arrive, Blessington's body is still hanging from a hook in his bedroom ceiling. Inspector Lanner is there. He believes that it is a suicide, but Holmes soon deduces otherwise. Discarded cigar butts and other clues tell him that three other men were there, and for a while. They were let into the premises by a confederate inside, as the door was still barred in the morning. Suspicion falls on the new page, who has vanished.

It seems obvious to Holmes that the men came to "try" Blessington, and reached a verdict of guilty, and a sentence of death, which they then proceeded to carry out.

A little digging at police headquarters brings up the rest of the truth. All four of the men were once members of a criminal gang that robbed banks. Blessington's real name was Sutton, and the other three, two of whom played the Russians, were Biddle, Hayward, and Moffat. After robbing the Worthington Bank of £7,000 in 1875, Blessington (or Sutton) had turned informer, and as a result, another gang member, Cartwright, had been hanged for murdering the caretaker, and the others had each been given 15 years in prison. Blessington's "paranoia" was indeed a very real fear, caused by news of their early release, not by some burglary, as he claimed. The murderers chose hanging as their form of execution to avenge Cartwright.

Eventually, the page turns up, but the case against him falls apart for lack of evidence. As for the other three, they are never heard from again, and it is believed that they perished in the wreck of the *Norah Creina* off Portugal.