



## The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes

### Adventure XXV -- The Adventure of the Naval Treaty

#### First published in:

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

July (known), 1887/1889 (surmised).

#### Holmes & Watson living arrangements:

Watson married and living apart from Holmes.

#### Opening scene:

Watson received letter from childhood friend, requesting him to bring Holmes to consult on a case. Mrs. Watson recognized importance of the summons, so within an hour of breakfast-time Watson found himself back once more in the old rooms in Baker Street. Holmes was doing a chemical investigation, but his interest was immediately awakened in the case. Holmes & Watson then caught an early train at Waterloo, and soon were among the fir-woods and the heather of Woking, at the client's home, Briarbrae. They were greeted by Joseph Harrison, the brother of the client's fiancée, Annie, who was a striking-looking woman, a little short and thick for symmetry, but with a beautiful olive complexion, large, dark, Italian eyes, and a wealth of deep black hair.



**Client:**

Percy (Tadpole) Phelps, an old school-fellow of Watson's. At the time, Phelps was an invalid, barely recovered from nine weeks of brain-fever resulting from a horrible misfortune which blasted his career, and was still exceedingly weak.

**Crime or concern:**

Theft of an extremely sensitive and important treaty from Tadpole's office, where he was copying it for his uncle, Lord Holdhurst, the Foreign Minister, a nobleman who was in truth noble.

**Villain:**

Joseph Harrison, a plump young man and brother of Annie, the fiancée.

**Motive:**

Harrison came to see Phelps, found the treaty in the empty office, and stole it. He had lost heavily in the markets. Hoped to sell the copy to interested foreign governments.

**Logic used to solve:**

Holmes first suspected Joseph when he heard Joseph and Tadpole had intended to travel home together that night, so it was likely that Joseph stopped in. When the ailing Tadpole arrived home, Joseph was turned out of his room. The room was always occupied by at least two people after that. A burglary attempt was made the first night the nurse was absent, showing that the intruder was well acquainted with the ways of the house. No diplomatic crisis occurred, so there must have been a reason the treaty was not passed along.

**Policemen:**

Mr. Forbes, the Scotland Yard detective, a small, foxy man with a sharp expression.

**Holmes' fees:**

No mention. (The Foreign Minister may not have been as wealthy as thought, given his re-soled boots.)

**Transport:**

Holmes & Watson took train from Waterloo to Woking. Tadpole and Insp. Forbes took a hansom to the commissioner's home at 16 Ivy Lane, Brixton, to check on his wife, who could have taken the treaty. They took her to the Yard in a four-wheeler to be searched, to no avail. After the failed attempt to recover the treaty, Tadpole was sent home by train, and by that time he was practically a maniac, raving with brain-fever.

Holmes & Watson whirled back up from Woking, in a Portsmouth train. The next morning they travelled down again to Woking by the same train, before returning to London separately the next day.

**Food:**

After returning from Woking, at 3:20 p.m., Holmes & Watson had a hasty luncheon at the buffet. The next day, Holmes & Watson and client lunched in the dining-room at Brierbrae before setting off to London again. At the conclusion, Holmes & Watson and Tadpole break fast at 221B, and Mrs. Hudson serves ham and eggs, curried chicken, and purloined treaty. Holmes noted that Mrs. Hudson had as good an idea of breakfast as a Scotchwoman.

**Drink:**

After Tadpole recited his story to Holmes, his nurse poured him out a glass of some stimulating medicine. At the end, after regaining possession of the treaty, Tadpole was so excited Holmes & Watson had to pour brandy down his throat to keep him from fainting.

**Vices:**

Tadpole was not a smoker. After the ham and eggs at the wrap-up breakfast, Holmes rose, and lit his pipe.

**Other cases mentioned:**

SECO. The Adventure of the Tired Captain. The little problem of the Speckled Band.

**Notable Quotables:**

"You are the stormy petrel of crime, Watson." – Holmes

"What a lovely thing a rose is! There is nothing in which deduction is so necessary as in religion. It can be built up as an exact science by the reasoner. Our highest assurance of the goodness of Providence seems to me to rest in the flowers. All other things, our powers, our desires, our food, are all really

necessary for our existence in the first instance. But this rose is an extra. Its smell and its colour are an embellishment of life, not a condition of it. It is only goodness which gives extras, and so I say again that we have much to hope from the flowers.” – Holmes

“The most difficult crime to track is the one which is purposeless.” – Holmes

“(Holmes) had, when he so willed it, the utter immobility of countenance of a red Indian” – Watson.

“I cudgelled my brains until I fell asleep. . .” – Watson Note: Watson also cudgelled his brains in The Boscombe Valley Mystery (BOSC)

### **Other interestings:**

Tadpole recognized Watson, and mentioned Watson’s moustache.

The Naval Treaty is the longest of the 56 Sherlock Holmes short stories, at 12701 words. The shortest, with 4499 words, is The Adventure of the Veiled Lodger.

### **When all was said and done:**

Holmes recovered the treaty and presented it to Watson and Tadpole in a covered breakfast dish, as Holmes could not resist a touch of the dramatic.

This is sort of a “dog in the night-time” case. A significant clue was that the treaty had value only to the Russian or French governments, and for a limited time. Major diplomatic problems would have resulted if either of them saw the treaty prematurely. But nothing happened.

**McMurdo’s Camp**