



## The Return of Sherlock Holmes

### Adventure XXXV – The Adventure of the Six Napoleons

#### Publishing History

# 35 of the 60 stories

First published in *The Strand Magazine*, May, 1904

In the US *Collier's Weekly*, April 30, 1904

Part of *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* collection by

George Newnes, Ltd., London, 1905

McClure Phillip & Co., New York, 1905

British illustrator – Sidney Paget

American illustrator – Frederick Dorr Steele

#### Chronology

Baring-Gould places the dating of the story at Friday, June 8 to Sunday, June 10, 1900 making it 47<sup>th</sup> of the 60. This means that Holmes was 46 and Watson 48.

#### Christopher Morley Says

“Even Lestrade pays handsome tribute to Holmes’s masterly work in this case, and the cold reasoning temperament of the detective is moved for a moment to a human relish for applause. One reason for this success was knowing how to make use of the newspapers. And now we learn that Mrs. Hudson reserves a “lumber-room” at the top of the house for Holmes’s files of old papers.”



## **Dummies Short Summary**

“Why is someone smashing statues of Napoleon all around London? It looks like madness, but the Great Detective sees something else.”

## **How Many Words**

At 8,392 words SIXN has the 35<sup>th</sup> most words (#1 is VEIL – 4,499, #56 if NAVL – 12,701)

## **Classifying This Case**

This case is one of 4 classified as a theft of gems. The others were BERY, BLUE, and MAZA.

## **The Best Of Sherlock Holmes**

- 1927 – Arthur Conan Doyle did not put on list of his 12 favorites.
- 1954 – The Baker Street Irregulars voted it as #11 on their top 12 favorites.
- 1959 - The Baker Street Irregulars voted it #8 on their list of 10 favorites.
- 1999 – The Baker Street Irregulars voted it #7 of the 56 short stories.
- 1999 – The Sherlock Holmes Society of London voted it 11<sup>th</sup> of the 56 short stories.

## **What Else Happened That Year (1900)**

- Roberts replaces Buller in South Africa; relief of Ladysmith, Mafeking, Kimberly; Boer leader Kronje surrenders at Paardeberg; Transvaal and Orange Free State annexed by Britain.
- Royal Niger Company's territories are taken over by the British government.
- Central London Railway (Central Line) opens; London's tubes electrified.
- Labour Representation Committee, beginning of the Labour Party.
- School made obligatory until age 14.
- Birmingham University founded.
- Davis Cup presented for men's international lawn tennis.
- Boxer Rebellion ended by military relief of besieged foreign legations.
- Franco-Italian Treaty concerning North African colonies.
- Tirpitz induces German Reichstag to pass Navy Act, to double the navy by 1920.
- Assassination of King Humberto of Italy, accessions of Victor Emmanuel III.
- Socialist Revolutionary Party formed in Russia, advocates terrorism.
- Russia occupies Manchuria, massacres 45,000 Chinese.

- Working day in France is limited to 10 hours.
- Conrad publishes *Lord Jim*.
- Theodore Dreiser publishes *Sister Carrie*.
- Puccini debuts *La Tosca*.
- Max Planck proposed Quantum theory.
- J.E. Brandenburger invents cellophane.
- First Zeppelin is built.
- Escalator, invented in the U.S.A., exhibited in Paris Exhibition.
- Hugo de Vries publishes The Mutation Theory, leading to the modern evolution theory.
- Benjamin Holt invents the caterpillar tractor.

### **Holmes And Watson – Personal Information**

- No wives, or whatever, it is just the two guys living at 221B

### **Dramatis Personae**

- **Prince Of Colonna**, who owned the Black Pearl of the Borgias
- **Lucretia Venucci**, maid to the count and sister of ...
- **Pietro Venucci**
- **Beppo**, the thief of the pearl and murderer of Pietro..
- **Gelder & Co.**, manufacturers of the busts
- **Morse Hudson**, retailer of statuary. \*
- **Dr. Barnicot** \*\*
- **Devine**, French sculptor who did the original bust from which the statues were copied.
- **Horace Harker**, \*
- **Harding Brothers**, statuary retailers. Sold bust to Harker.
- **Josiah Brown\***, his house was burgled and Beppo was arrested.
- **Mr. Sandeford\***, his statue contained the pearl and he sold it to Holmes.
- **Lestrade**

\* = Where the six Napoleons were located

## Quotable Sherlock

- "The Press, Watson, is a most valuable institution, if you only know how to use it. "
- "The affair seems absurdly trifling, and yet I dare call nothing trivial when I reflect on some of my most classic cases have had the least promising commencement. You will remember, Watson, how the dreadful business of the Abernathy family was first brought to my attention by the depth which the parsley had sunk into the butter upon a hot day."
- (from Lestrade) "We're not jealous of you down at Scotland Yard. No, sir, we are proud of you, and if you come down to-morrow there's not a man, from the oldest inspector to the youngest constable, who wouldn't be glad to shake you by the hand."

## Holmes' Fee

There is no mention of a fee. (Of the fully recorded cases there are at least nine, REIG, BLAC, SIXN, GOLD, ABBE, CARD, DYIN, STUD, VALL, in which Holmes participated solely in order to assist the police...For Holmes there can have been little reward save the experience, and the privilege of paying his own expenses in following up on clues.)

## Unrecorded Cases

- The dreadful business of the Abernathy family. Holmes deduced the amount of time which had passed by the depth to which the parsley had sunk into the melted butter.
- The Conk-Singleton forgery case.

## Sherlock Holmes On The Big And The Little Screen

- 1922 *The Six Napoleons* with Eille Norwood as one of 47 movies. It is LOST.
- 1944 *The Pearl of Death* with Basil Rathbone (w/SIXN as a significant plot device) theater movie
- 1965 *The Six Napoleons* with Douglas Wilmer as an episode in his *Sherlock Holmes* TV series
- 1967 *Sechsmal Napoleon* with Eric Schellow as an episode of a short 6 episode series in Germany
- 2001 *The Adventures of the Six Napoleons* as an episode of the *Sherlock Holmes in the 22<sup>nd</sup> Century* (Animated TV series)

## Fainting In The Canon

In this tale Horace Harker faints.

## Newspapers

No mention of the press by name in this tale. Horace Harker worked for the Central Press Syndicate – they supply stories to newspapers and would not publish themselves.

The title of “Harker” is often used by Sherlockian societies for whoever handles their correspondence.

## Annotated Sherlock

Just one term that we think you may not know

- **“iconoclast”** originals were destroyers of art. Destroyers of idolatry in Byzantine times

## Weapons

- **Service Revolver** - Dr. Watson’s and is mentioned in 13 cases.
- **Horn-Handled Clasp Knife** - Of Pietro Venucci, found lying beside its owner’s body after he had been murdered in Horace Harker’s home.
- **Long Sheath Knife** - Which Beppo used to kill Venucci.
- **Heavy Hunting Crop** - Of Sherlock Holmes.
- **Poker** - Which Horace Harker armed himself with before he discovered the body of Pietro Venucci in his home.

Frank Mentzel