



The Return of Sherlock Holmes

Adventure XXXVII – The Adventure of the Golden Pince-Nez

Publishing History

37 of the 60 stories

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Part of *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* collection by

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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 Wednesday,

November 14 to Thursday, Nov 15, 1894 making it 33rd of the 60.

This means that Homes is 40 and Watson 42.



Christopher Morley Says

“It was a drenching November night when Stanley Hopkins came to consult Holmes, bringing a pair of nose glasses that had been found by the body of the victim. Holmes comforted Hopkins with a cigar and a hot toddy, but the mystery was really solved by smoking cigarettes. The case, dealing with political exiles, seems quite contemporary in tone.”

Dummies Short Summary

“When a bedridden scholar’s personal assistant is murdered, Holmes solves the case by smoking cigarettes and looking into the killer’s dropped eyeglasses.”

How Many Words

At 8,989 words GOLD has the 39th most words (#1 is VEIL – 4,499, #56 if NAVL – 12,701)

Classifying This Case

This case is one of 23 classified as a MURDER and one of 14 where the perpetrator was either killed, arrested, or otherwise satisfactorily handled.

The Best Of Sherlock Holmes

- 1999 – The Baker Street Irregulars voted it 48th of the 56 short stories.
- 1999 – The Sherlock Holmes Society of London voted it 52nd of the 56 short stories.

What Else Happened That Year (1894)

- Uganda becomes protectorate.
- Gladstone retires; Rosebery becomes prime minister.
- Tower Bridge opens.
- Turbinia, first steam-turbine ship launched.
- Sino-Japanese War (1894 - 95).
- Tsar Nicholas II.
- French take Madagascar.
- Alfred Dreyfus found guilty of treason.
- President Carnot of France assassinated by Italian anarchist.
- French under Joffre capture Timbuktu.
- Hawaii becomes a republic.
- Italians defeat Dervishes at Kassala.
- Kurds massacre Armenians at Sassoun.
- Alexander III of Russia died; Nicholas II (last Romanov tsar) accedes to the Throne.

- War breaks out between Japan and China. Japanese naval victory at Yalu River; Japanese capture of Port Arthur.
- Baron Pierre de Coubertin initiates congress reviving the Olympic Games.
- Rudyard Kipling's *Jungle Book*.
- Anthony Hope, *The Prisoner of Zenda*.
- Escalators introduced (U.S.).
- Halstead (U.S.) details his operation for breast cancer (mastectomy).
- Oliver and Schaefer discover the nature of insulin.
- J.H. Northrop (U.S.A.) invents automatic loom.
- Berliner modifies earlier work on the gramophone by using a horizontal disk instead of a cylinder. Not fully satisfactory until 1897.
- Guaranty Building, Buffalo erected. Metal-framed building

Holmes And Watson – Personal Information

They are operating, as usual, out of 221B.

Dramatis Personae

- **Professor Sergius Coram**, a reclusive professor of religion.
- **Anna Coram**, his wife.
- **Alexis**, a fellow conspirator who was loved by Anna.
- **Willoby Smith**, secretary to the professor and the murder victim.
- **Stanley Hopkins**, of the Yard.
- **Ionides**, a tobacconist who supplied Coram with Alexandrian cigarettes (1000 every 2 weeks! – that's over 3-1/2 packs per day)
- **Mrs. Marker**, housekeeper for Coram
- **Susan Tarlton**, maid to Coram.
- **Mortimer**, gardener to Coram.
- **Wilson**, constable who was first on the murder scene.

Quotable Sherlock

- “Run down, my dear fellow, for all the virtuous folk have long been in bed.”
- “Now draw up and warm your toes. Here’s a cigar, and the doctor has a prescription containing hot water and a lemon, which is good medicine on a night like this. It must be something important which has brought you out in such a gale.”
- (Willoughby Smith’s dying words to Susan Tarleton) “The professor - - It was she.”
- (Coram’s comment on the maid’s testimony) “Susan is a country girl, and you know the incredible stupidity of that class.”

Holmes’ Fee

There is no mention. This was likely another case where Holmes was consulted (and presumably paid) by the Yard. (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

One of our longest lists of tales where Sherlockians want to know more.

- The repulsive story of the Red Leach.
- The Terrible death of Crosby the banker.
- The Addleton tragedy and the singular contents of the ancient British Barrow.
- The Smith Mortimer succession case.
- Huret, the boulevard assassin. Holmes later won a letter of thanks from the French president and was elected a member of the Legion of Honor.

Sherlock Holmes On The Big And The Little Screen

- 1922 *The Golden Pince Nez* with Eille Norwood in his movie series. The National Film and Television Archive at the BFI has viewing copies of this film but it has not been released
- 1994 *The Golden Pince-Nez* with Jeremy Brett in one of 43 episodes

Annotated Sherlock

- a **“Chubb’s” key** A lock with tumblers, named for its inventor, and believed, at the time to be pick-proof
- **“love-gages”** An item offered as a token of a pledge. More specifically, it is used to refer to the glove thrown down as a challenge to a duel. Here, it is used in its secondary meaning as a sign of the affection one lover pledges to another.
- **“Nihilists”** the term “nihilism” has been around since the Middle Ages – for definitions from “skepticism to rejection of morality. From the Latin “nihil” or “nothing.” At his time, they were people dedicated to the rejection of aestheticism and destruction of the existing social order.
- **Palimpsest** A palimpsest is a manuscript page, whether from scroll or book that has been written on, scraped off, and used again. The word "palimpsest" comes through Latin from Greek παλιν + ψαω = ("again" + "I scrape"), and meant "scraped (clean and used) again." Romans wrote on wax-coated tablets that could be smoothed and reused, and a passing use of the rather bookish term "palimpsest" by Cicero seems to refer to this practice. (Wikipedia)
- **Bath Chair** A bath chair—or Bath chair—is a rolling chaise or light carriage with a folding hood, which can be open or closed, and a glass front. Used especially by invalids, it is mounted on three or four wheels and drawn or pushed by hand. It is so named from its origin in Bath, England. and possibly also after its similarity in appearance to an old-fashioned bathtub. If required, the chair can be mounted on four wheels and drawn by a horse, donkey or small pony with the usual turning arrangement. James Heath, of Bath, who flourished before the middle of the 18th century, was the inventor. Later versions were a type of wheelchair which is pushed by an attendant rather than pulled by an animal. In the 19th century they were often seen at spa resorts such as Buxton and Tunbridge Wells. Some versions incorporated a steering device for use by the invalid. (Wikipedia)
- **Halloa** An interjection. A loud exclamation; a call to invite attention to something or to incite; a shout. Expression used in 13 different stories. (wiktionary.org)

Holmes The Author

In this story Professor Coram is planning to publish, but not Holmes.

Weapons

- **Small Sealing-Wax Knife** - In the study of Prof. Coram’s home, which Anna used to kill Willoughby Smith, the professor’s young secretary.

- **Small Vial of Poison** - Used by Anna to poison herself, when Holmes discovered her hiding place in Prof. Coram's bedroom.
- **Information** - Dealing with a group of Nihilists in Russia, which Sergius (Prof. Coram) turned over to the authorities in exchange for his own freedom, as he was a member of that group.
- **Weapon** - Used by a group of Nihilists in Russia to kill a police official.
- **Gallows** - Where many of the Nihilists in the above-mentioned group met their deaths, owing to the information given to the police officials by Sergius, erstwhile Nihilist.

Frank Mentzel