



His Last Bow

Adventure XLIII – The Adventure of the Devil’s Foot

Sibling rivalry? Kissing cousins? The Tregennis clan has a lot more in common with some Roman imperial families than they do with the Brady Bunch, that’s for sure. We’ll read all about them in the story we turn to this weekend, *The Adventure of the Devil’s Foot*. Questions and comments to consider:

News and gossip mills were full of alleged presidential indiscretions this past week. But what do you suppose are the “occasional indiscretions” that weakened Holmes during the spring of 1897?

Exactly what type of doctor was Leon Sterndale?

Another Hound recently suggested something to the effect that Roundhay was spared the ravages of intelligence. Can anyone play, uh, the Devil’s Advocate and say a kind word for the vicar’s mental faculties?

Did Holmes and Watson really need to view Brenda’s corpse?

I’m unaware of any real plant that goes by the name “The Devil’s Foot.” Watson could have invented the name to prevent his readers from finding, and experimenting with, the horrible plant described in this tale. A number of real plants, however, do incorporate the word “devil” in their common names including Devil’s Bit, Devil’s Guts, Devil’s Fuge, Devil’s Eye, Devil’s Turnip, and the Devil Tree. Some of these are poisonous, while others have medicinal uses. Devil’s Eye, more often known as Henbane, is a dangerous narcotic we musn’t toy with. The plant called Devil’s Bit, on the other hand, can be useful (in skilled hands only, don’t try it yourself) for easing fever — this according to my Potter’s New Cyclopaedia of



Medicinal Herbs. The Devil's Foot disabled Owen and George Tregennis, and it's possible that another "devil" plant may have awaited them after they were removed to Helston. It goes by the improbable name of "Devil's Dung," and it was administered by European and Middle Eastern physicians of yore to help calm mania and relax the body. It wasn't burned, though. Devil's Dung has such a revolting smell and taste it could only be given in pill form.

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