



*An Inquiry into:
The Hound of the Baskervilles*

The Hound of the Baskervilles was first published in August 1901 – April 1902 in *The Strand Magazine*.

Willis Frick, of Sherlocktron, suggested that chronologies take the form of a table—an excellent suggestion which I am adopting as of now. As can be seen below, the case chronology varies depending on the Canon expert.

If the case took place in 1889, as the majority of chronologists suggest, then at the time Holmes was 35 years old and Watson 37.



The Hound (Sherlock Holmes Museum)

<i>The Hound of the Baskervilles</i>	
Chronologist	Date of the Adventure
Canon	October 1889
Baring-Gould	Tuesday, September 25, 1888
Bell	Tuesday, September 28, 1886
<u>Blakeney</u>	Early October 1889
<u>Brend</u>	October 1899
Christ	Tuesday, September 28, 1897
Dakin	Tuesday, September 25, 1900
Folsom	Tuesday, September 25, 1900
Hall	Autumn 1889
Kefauver	Tuesday, October 1, 1889
Klinger	Publication date, 1901
<u>Zeisler</u>	Tuesday, September 25, 1900

Notable Quotes:

"I am bound to say that in all the accounts which you have been so good as to give of my own small achievements you have habitually underrated your own abilities. It may be that you are not yourself luminous but you are a conductor of light. Some people without possessing genius have a remarkable power of stimulating it. I confess, my dear fellow, that I am very much in your debt."

"You know my methods. Apply them!"

"Now is the dramatic moment of fate, Watson, when you hear a step upon the stair which is walking into your life, and you know not whether for good or for ill."

"You interest me very much, Mr. Holmes. I had hardly expected so dolichocephalic a

skull or such well-marked supra-orbital development. Would you have any objection to my running my finger along your parietal fissure? A cast of your skull, sir, until the original is available, would be an ornament to any anthropological museum. It is not my intention to be fulsome, but I confess that I covet your skull."

. . . forbear from crossing the moor in those dark hours when the powers of evil are exalted.

"Mr. Holmes, they were the footprints of a gigantic hound!"

"I have hitherto confined my investigations to this world. In a modest way I have combated evil, but to take on the Father of Evil himself would, perhaps, be too ambitious a task."

"A devil with merely local powers like a parish vestry would be too inconceivable a thing."

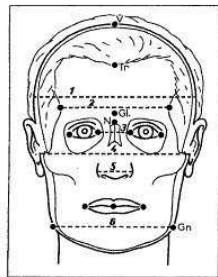
"It is at the hour of action that I turn to you for aid."

Evil indeed is the man who has not one woman to mourn him.

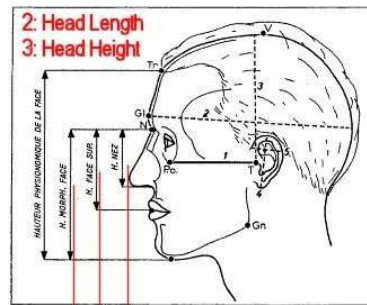
"I have not heard him laugh often, and it has always boded ill to somebody."

Factoid

The cephalic index is the ratio of the maximum width of the head of an organism (human or animal) multiplied by 100 divided by its maximum length (i.e., front to back). Defined by Swedish professor of anatomy Anders Retzius (1796–1860), it was first used in physical anthropology to classify ancient human remains found in Europe. The theory became closely associated with the development of racial anthropology in the 19th and early 20th centuries, when prehistorians attempted to use ancient remains to model population movements in terms of racial categories. Human populations were characterized as either dolichocephalic (long headed), mesaticephalic (moderate headed), or brachycephalic (short headed). The index is also used to categorize animals, especially dogs and



- 1: Head Breadth
- 2: Minimum Frontal
- 4: Bizygomatic
- 5: Nasal Breadth
- 6: Bigonial



- 2: Head Length
- 3: Head Height
- Nasal Height
- Upper Facial Height
- Total Facial Height

cats. While in the early 20th century the index was widely used by anthropologists to categorize human populations, today it is mainly used to describe individuals' appearances and for estimating the age of fetuses for legal and obstetrical reasons.

The Luminous Conductor

There are some aspects of the relationship between Sherlock Holmes and Dr. John H. Watson that are sometimes puzzling. (Which, of course is one the main reasons why the Great Game is the Great Game!) The Great Detective's comment to his Boswell that, "It may be that you are not yourself luminous but you are a conductor of light. Some people without possessing genius have a remarkable power of stimulating it," would, under most circumstances be somewhat offending, a very backhanded compliment. Essentially, what Holmes is saying is that his genius is stimulated by Watson's lack of it. What to make of this, particularly in view of the Good Doctor's apparent pleasure at this remark?



I think that the key to this is to be found earlier in Holmes' statement: "I am bound to say that in all the accounts which you have been so good as to give of my own small achievements you have habitually underrated your own abilities." This may very well be an understatement; however, even putting aside Nigel Bruce's *Boobus britannicus* interpretation, although no fool Watson always comes out second-best in the reasoning department.

But, lest we forget: this is Watson writing about Watson, and Holmes is absolutely right in saying that he has habitually underrated his own abilities, making him appear superior. Back then as today, readers loved superheroes (of which Holmes is an early version), but one can also be a bit put out by

them. Watson (or the Watson character, as our biographer framed it) is well-designed to make up for this, by being—like all of us—astonished by our sleuth’s deductions, allowing us to identify with him if not with Holmes.

He was, indeed, a very good writer...

The Doctor on the Doctor

While it is true that Watson did not do very well with his deductions about Dr. Mortimer’s walking stick, it seems to me that Holmes’ crossed the field of deduction into that of guesswork. His deduc-



tion that Mortimer was without ambition because he abandoned his position in the hospital to move to the country was without foundation—Mortimer himself stated that “I married, and so left the hospital, and with it all hopes of a consulting practice. It was necessary to make a home of my own,” clearly derails that conclusion; even Holmes had to admit it.

According to the Medical Directory, Mortimer had striven hard enough to win a prestigious price with a learned essay, contributed to the general medical literature of the time, was a corresponding member of the Swedish Pathological Society, and the Medical Officer for three parishes. And, he was involved in research of his own—not ambitious indeed!

Incidentally, isn’t it curious how frequently Holmes’ clients are careless with their property? But, of course, how else would he be able to reconstruct the person from the article itself.

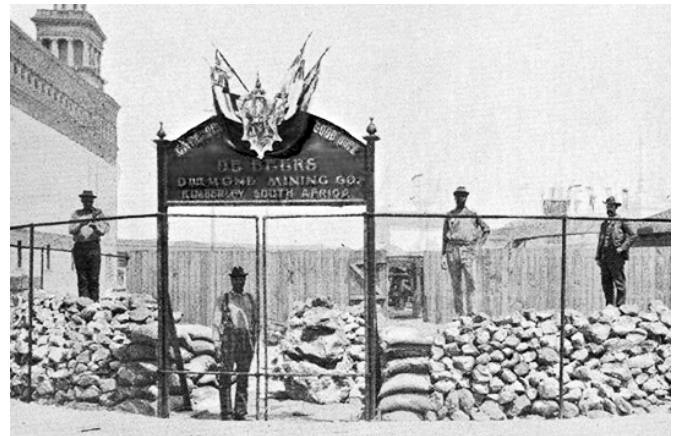
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The Baskerville Fortune

According to the newspaper account of Sir Charles Baskerville’s death, he made large sums of money in South African speculation.

In his book, *The Great Boer War*, ACD makes mention of British investment and speculation in the profits of South African natural resources, which he referred to as one of the "great treasure chests in the world." Huge fortunes were generated towards the end of the 19th century by investments in prominent examples such as Cecil Rhodes' De Beers Mining Company (1880), the De Beers Consolidated Mines (1888), and the British South Africa Company, organized in 1889. It can be deduced, with little chance for error, that Sir Charles presumably must have had money in these or others like them.

According to Mortimer, "Sir Charles had the reputation of being rich, but we did not know how very rich he was until we came to examine his securities." "Rich" is a profound understatement, considering that by the terms of Sir Charles’ will, Mortimer received £1,000, (≈\$380,000), the Barrymores £500 (≈\$188,000) each, with the cash remainder of £740,000 (≈\$280M) going to Sir Henry as part of an estate worth about £1,000,000 (≈\$380M). Holmes was quite right in remarking, "Dear me! It is a stake for which a man might well play a desperate game."



De Beers Mining Company, South Africa, 1889

The Crude Detective

Watson tells us that Holmes and he spent two hours "entirely absorbed in the pictures of the modern Belgian masters," and that Holmes talked "of nothing but art, of which he had the crudest ideas." It would appear unlikely that there was even one subject about which the Great Detective could not speak learnedly. This does not fit very well with his accurate identification of the Baskerville portraits' painters. Then later we learn from the man himself that he and Watson had quite different tastes in art, and frequently disagreed on the subject. I tend to think that, unlike Watson, Holmes with his penchant for precision may not have had a high tolerance for impressionism, which at the time appeared to be the rage, and probably had a preference for the Renaissance masters, such as da Vinci and Rafael.

The (Mal)Practice

I can see why Holmes bought up Watson's practice through *interpósita persona*—the thing was a positive bother and obstacle! Holmes does not think it a good idea for Sir Henry to be alone at Baskerville Hall. He realizes that Dr. Mortimer not only lives miles away, but also has "his practice to attend to," so he volunteers Watson, who immediately replies, "I do not know how I could employ my time better," and proceeds to stay at Baskerville Hall for weeks! Those poor patients...

The Clever(?) Stapleton



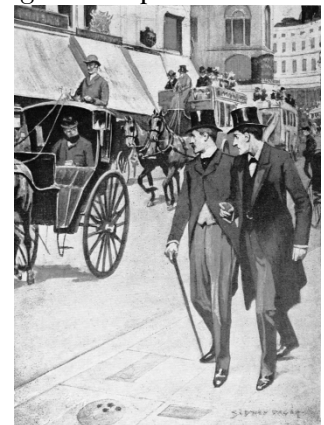
The matter of Stapleton's cleverness in his stalking of Sir Henry is open to discussion, I think. While it made perfect sense to steal one of the heir's boots in order to have something with his scent for the hound to identify, why would he have traveled to return said boot once he realized it had never been worn? And then he steals a second one, again stirring up the beehive in the matter of footwear. Surely there could have been other items that he could have taken that would have served just as well or better—a hairbrush or a hat, a pair of gloves. Considering what happened to poor unhappy Selden, just about any item of clothing would have fulfilled the need.

A Strand Conundrum

It's funny how one can be acquainted (or believe that he is) with something that has been part of a lifelong avocation, only to suddenly view it in an entirely new light. Looking at this picture on *The*



Strand it suddenly struck me—after heaven knows how many years!—that it is a mirror-image of Paget's original. Why? Because then as now, traffic in England contrarily flowed in the opposite direction than it did in the rest of the world. The question then arises, why would *The Strand* have purposely reversed the image of Holmes and Watson walking down the street



while being followed by Stapleton? It could not have been an error because those were the times of

hot type and lithography plates, not just simple computer routines that would make such a mistake easier. The only thing I can think of is that the person in charge of the magazine's layout decided that Holmes and Watson ought not to be looking away from the page where the text begins, because the reader's line of sight would naturally flow in the direction in which that our two friends are looking. Although it cannot be seen here, on the magazine Paget's signature is also reversed.

What else happened in 1889:

Empire

British South Africa Company Charter awarded.

Transvaal claimed to be "encircled" by Rhodes' concessions in East Africa. Rhodesia established.

Colonel Woodehouse defeats Dervish horde in Sudan. General Grenfell, commanding British troops on the Nile attacks and defeats Dervish troops.

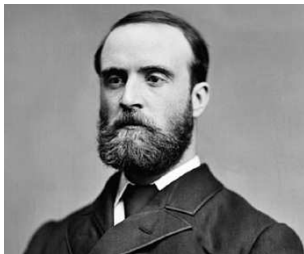
At Cairo, Henry Stanley ends his three-year African expedition. He is knighted upon his return to England. Writes *In Darkest Africa*.

Britain

Great London Dockers' Strike, arbitrated in the workers' favor by the popular Cardinal Henry Manning.

The "Dockers' Tanner"; growth of unskilled workers' unions; New Unionism; Gasworkers' Union formed.

Woolwich Ferry starts.



Metropolitan Board of Works replaced by London County Council.

Clissold Park, Stoke Newington, opens.

◀ Parnell vindicated as all charges are revealed as false. *London Times* apologizes.

March 30, early use of photographs in newspaper: *Illustrated London News* runs Cambridge and Oxford boat crews.

White Hart Inn, Borough High Street, one of the last coaching inns, demolished.

Act to prevent cruelty to children.

Technical Education Act: County Councils to levy 1d for technical and manual education.

Establishment of telephone company.

Board of Agriculture becomes government department with minister.

General Booth publishes Survey of London Life and Labour.

World

Japan's Meiji constitution. Arinori Mori, minister of education assassinated by Shinto fanatic.

Italy takes Somalia and Ethiopia.

North and South Dakota, Montana and Washington admitted as U.S. states.

U.S. Senate, in secret session, passes resolution declaring against European control of the Panama Canal.

Congress of French Revolutionary Labor Party at Bordeaux.

President Harrison, of the U.S., issues proclamation prohibiting the killing of fur animals within Alaska without a special government permit.



Mayerling tragedy: alleged suicide of Crown Prince Rudolph of Austria and Baroness Maria Vetsera.

Treaty of Acciali: Ethiopia made Italian protectorate.

◀ Moulin Rouge opens in Paris.

End of Portuguese Empire in Brazil; republic proclaimed and Dom Pedro, the emperor, exiled.

Part of Oklahoma Indian lands open to homesteading.

Abdication of King Milan of Serbia; accession of Alexander.

Portuguese under Pinto try to extend influence in Zambesi Valley; Anglo-Portuguese dispute.

Uprising in the island of Crete. Turkish authorities expelled and public archives destroyed. Turkey calls up 80,000 reservists, but promises to inquire into legitimate grievances.

Russian jurors to be nominated by government.

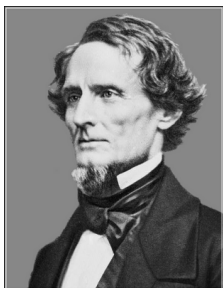
Aristocratic "Land Captains" replace elected JPs in Russia.

Father Damien, worker among lepers in Molokai, Hawaii, dies of the disease.

Influenza reaches Europe and America from Siberia.

General Boulanger, former French War Minister leaves country, addresses manifesto to his party that he left the country to avoid arrest, French Chambers authorize the Senate to try Boulanger and others in absentia, for high treason. The general and his staff are found guilty and condemned to life imprisonment.

Paris Exhibition: proof of industrial development in France. Continental monarchies abstain from all official representation. English and American ambassadors attend. Eiffel Tower built for the event.



Lectures at Dorpat University to be in Russian; German forbidden in schools.

◀ Jefferson Davis dies in Mississippi.

Brunner-Mond Salt Union formed; combine of 64 firms.

Private tolls abolished on French Canals.

Work on Panama Canal stopped; French company bankrupt.

Johnstown flood kills more than 6,000, losses climb to \$40,000,000.

Civil war in Haiti ends. General Légitime defeated by General Hippolyte, who becomes president.

Bismarck introduces Old Age Insurance in Germany.

Erection of Tacoma Building in Chicago. First skyscraper, 13 storeys high.

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad establishes the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, a reform sect of Islam.

Conference at Berlin guarantees an autonomous government to the Samoan Islands under the joint control of the United States, Great Britain, and Germany.

Art

Sir James Barrie's *A Window in Thrums*, sketches of Scottish village life.

Robert Browning publishes *Asolando*, poem. Dies later in the year.

Conan Doyle publishes *A Sign of Four*.

Jerome K. Jerome publishes stories, *Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow*, *Three Men in a Boat*.

Mark Twain publishes *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*.

Robert Louis Stevenson publishes *Master of Ballantrae*.

William Butler Yeats publishes *The Wanderings of Oisín*.

Paul Bourget publishes *Le Disciple*, a psychological novel.

Gerhart J. Hauptmann publishes *Vor Sonnenaufgang*, German realistic play.

Sudermann publishes *Die Ehre*, a German play.

Dvorak presents *Symphony No. 4 in G major*.



Gilbert and Sullivan present *The Gondoliers*.

Seurat paints *The Side Show*.

◀ Renoir paints *Girls Picking Flowers*.

Van Gogh paints *Man with a Pipe* (self-portrait), *The Olive Grove*, and *Starry Night*.

Cézanne paints *Harlequin*.

Tchaikovsky introduces *The Sleeping Princess* ballet.

Richard Strauss introduces *Tod und Verklärung*, tone poem.

Science and Technology

Eastman's Kodak camera comes into production, using photographic film.



Mering and Minkowski show that the pancreas prevents diabetes. Eiffel Tower completed, 985 feet high, taller than the Great Pyramid, becomes highest structure on Earth.

◀ Hollerith's punched-card system widely used in industry.

International meter length of platinum and iridium adopted.

First linotype machine in use.

Aspirin patented in Germany by Bayer Laboratories.

Panhard and Levassor begin using Daimler's engines in French cars, using modern layout.

Next week's case: EMPT.

Respectfully submitted,

Murray, the Courageous Orderly
(a.k.a. Alexander E. Braun)

"I should have fallen into the hands
of the murderous Ghazis had it not
been for the devotion and courage
shown by Murray, my orderly..."

Email: CourageousMurray@aol.com