



An Inquiry into:  
*“The Adventure of the  
 Priory School”*

“The Adventure of the Priory School” was first published in January 30, 1904 in *Collier’s Weekly Magazine*. It appeared in *The Strand Magazine*, on February 1904. This story is a part of *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*.

The chronology for this case varies, depending on which Canon expert one consults. The various estimates are shown on the table below.

<i>The Priory School</i>	
<i>Chronologist</i>	<i>Date of the Adventure</i>
Canon	1901 (or later) Thursday, May 16
Baring-Gould	Thursday, May 16, 1901
Bell	Thursday, May 16, 1901
<u>Blakeney</u>	May 1901
<u>Brend</u>	May 1901
Christ	Thursday, May 16, 1901
Dakin	Monday, May 14, 1900
Folsom	Thursday, May 16, 1901
Hall	May 16, 1901
Keefauver	Thursday, May 16, 1901
Klinger	[1901
<u>Zeisler</u>	Thursday, May 17, 1900

The majority of these Canon scholars agree that the case took place in 1901. Therefore, at the time Holmes was 47 years old and Watson 49.

*Notable Quotes:*

"Perhaps the scent is not so cold but that two old hounds like Watson and myself may get a sniff of it."

"His Grace is not in the habit of posting letters himself."

"A criminal who was capable of such a thought is a man whom I should be proud to do business with."

*The Princely Sum*

According to Huxtable, the Duke of Holderness was prepared to pay a total of £5,000 for the resolution of his son's kidnapping, plus an additional £1,000 for identifying the kidnapper. Considering that at the time you could buy a rather

nice little manor for about £10,000 (Queen Victoria paid £30,000 for her Balmoral estate), it does amount to a truly princely sum.

In terms of today's devalued currency, £6,000 1901 pounds would be worth approximately \$2,250,000. Quite sufficient for an early—and rather comfortable—retirement!

*Heidegger’s Improbably Tracks*

While in the matter of tracks Holmes would have beaten a Navajo at his own game, I must ponder just how clear Heidegger’s tracks could have been. One must assume that since the Duke sent his

heir to the Priory School, it had to be one of the Empire's very best institutions, which among other things would have meant there were well-cared for lawns. Even so, I just cannot believe that there would be much left of Heidegger's tracks the following morning.



I principally base this on Holmes' remark that the weather was dry, and on the fact that back then there were no such things as sprinkler systems. For such tracks to have been left, the man would have had to let himself down hard enough to compact the ground, thus breaking both ankles.

Another factor to consider is that this is a boys' schools, and tracks of every size and description would have been everywhere.

#### *Wilders's Culpability*

When the duke attempts to bribe him to keep Wilder out of the affair, Holmes refuses, stating that "when a man embarks upon a crime he is morally guilty of any other crime which may spring from it." It seems to me that in this case, Holmes' knowledge of the law fails him.

Morality has nothing to do with any of this—

among many other things, Wilder was unquestionably guilty of conspiracy and, if I recall correctly, English Common Law judges *all* members of a conspiracy equally guilty of whatever crimes are committed as a result of the conspiracy. By this standard, even the Duke himself could have found himself in a precarious situation because, unwittingly or not, he became a part of that conspiracy.

Then there is the implied bribing of Hayes by the Duke, to keep him quiet even as he stood on the gibbet.

What say you, Legal Beagles?

#### *The Pot and the Kettle*

"I am bound to tell you that you have placed yourself in a most serious position in the eyes of the law. You have condoned a felony," states our detective in his most virtuous manner. However, the question arises as to how often have we seen him do the same thing? To my recollection, he confesses to it in HOUN, BLUE, 3GAB, and MAZA.

#### *Of Visages and Holderness's Secret Son*

Holmes *really* stepped on the banana peel on this one! After all, is he not capable of tracing a man's ancestors by merely glancing at an ancient painting (HOUN)? How could he not observe a family resemblance between the Duke and Wilder? For shame, sir!

#### *The Fabulous Fee*

Finally, there is the question of the Great Detective's fee—was it £6,000 or £12,000? Watson appears somewhat nebulous about the amount. My own suspicion—unfounded, perhaps—is that it was the latter.

## *The World of Sherlock Holmes*

### *Death of the Queen*

Historically, January 22, 1901 truly marks the end of an era when Queen Victoria, whose reign began in 1837, died, aged 82. She reigned longer than any other British monarch until the coming of her direct descendant, Queen Elizabeth II.

Victoria's reign was memorable in English history by the advances in science, technology, and the arts, and, since her, no sovereign in history has actually reigned over anything like so extensive an area as she. In her time vast areas were added to the British Empire in Africa, India, and the Pacific, so that it was never quite true that the British Empire was one on which the sun never set.



To us, removed by the chronological space of over a century it is difficult to understand the meaning of Empire, and the consternation and sorrow that the Queen's death had upon her subjects. A vast majority of them had never known any other sovereign; it was as if one of the basic forces of nature, such as gravity, had ceased to exist. Government officials were at a loss as to how to conduct the necessary funeral ceremonies, because the last time a monarch had died, they were either as yet unborn or toddlers.

During a long reign that was not free of controversy and political attack, over the years Queen Victoria not only won over the hearts of her subjects, but came to represent the British Empire itself. Her personal life was impeccable and her sense of duty towards her people, wherever they might reside, was exemplary.

Few realize today that had it not been for a decision taken by her, acting on the advice of Albert the Prince

Consort, and against the urging of her ministers, the history of the United States would have been markedly different.

At the start of the Civil War, sympathy in Great Britain was decidedly with the South. As the first few months of hostilities resulted in one Union military disaster after another, British sympathizers were only awaiting an opportunity to show something more effective than sympathy.

The flame was touched to the fuse when Mason and Slidell, two Confederate envoys, were forcibly removed from the British ship *Trent* on the high seas by a Union ship and held prisoners. Abraham Lincoln's Secretary of the Navy Welles declared that the action had the "emphatic approval of the Navy Department."

This was viewed as a deliberate violation of neutrality and expression of hostility. The papers demanded war, and the British public held public meetings demanding revenge. Preparations for war began, while Earl Russell, the Foreign Secretary, prepared an ultimatum. Its language was so insulting that it was impossible to accept it without losing all national self-respect; the United States would have found itself fighting two wars impossible to win.

The demand had to be submitted to Victoria who, since she became queen had insisted on all her rights as sovereign, particularly in questions of international importance. Prince Albert, already terminally ill toned down the demand to the United States, which called for the return of the Confeder-

ates within seven days or else. He smoothed out the language, enabling it to be complied with without sacrifice of dignity. The Queen immediately decided to have the government frame the demand in Prince Albert's terms. A friendly reply was returned by the United States, and the two envoys were given up without any further friction between the two nations.

In 1897, at the end of the festivities celebrating her Diamond Jubilee, with great satisfaction the Queen wrote in her journal that evening that as her carriage was taking her to the cathedral, "a very rough man," began running alongside shouting, "Yer done good, Vicky old girl! Yer done good!"

And indeed she had.

## *What else happened in 1901:*

### *Empire*

Queen Victoria dies at 6.30 a.m. on January 22, aged 82. She lived through many changes and died much loved by her people. By the end of her reign London's population had reached 6.6 million.



Edward VII succeeds her as King-Emperor.

◀ Robert Falcon Scott commands the *Discovery* on Antarctic expedition.

Northern Nigeria becomes British protectorate.

Creation of North Western Frontier Province in India.

Uganda railway reaches Lake Victoria.

### *Britain*

Wigmore Hall opens.

First electric trams from Shepherds Bush to Acton and Kew Bridge.

First British submarine launched at Barrow-in-Furness.

Boxing is recognized as a legal sport in England.

Taff Vale case: Trade unions in Britain liable for actions of tort, stimulates Trade Union Congress to create the Labour Party.

### *World*

Peace Protocol with China after Boxer Rebellion.



◀ U.S. President McKinley assassinated; succeeded by Theodore Roosevelt.

Law of Associations: gives French Roman Catholics the right to form associations, if neither secret nor illegal.

Labor Councils in France to settle disputes between masters and men.

Franco-Italian agreement defines spheres of interest in the Mediterranean.

Compulsory military service established in Sweden and Norway.

New constitution in Serbia issued by Alexander.

U.S. Steel Corporation organized under J.P. Morgan and Company, bankers.

Opening of Trans-Siberian railway.

Hay-Pauncefort Treaty gives U.S. power to build and police the Panama Canal if it remains open to shipping in peace or war.

### *Art*

Kipling writes *Kim*.

Frank Norris, U.S., writes *The Octopus*.

### *Science and Technology*



Becquerel discovers dangerous effects of radioactivity on humans.

◀ Marconi transmits Morse wireless signals from Poldhu, Cornwall to St. John's, Newfoundland.

First isolation of the hormone adrenalin.

Peter Cooper-Hewitt produces mercury vapor lamp; invented by Arons in 1892.

*Next week's case: BLAC.*

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..."

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