Presented by
Watson's Tin Box

Irene's Cabinet

Results of the Literary and
Artistic Aspirations of the membership
In the form of essays, poetry, and art with particular regard
for the Victorian era in honor of all things

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Send correspondence to Watson's Tin Box:
Paul Churchill
2118 Carroll Dale Road
Eldersburg, MD 21784-7033

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"And Mademoiselle's address?" he asked.
"Is Briony Lodge, Serpentine Avenue, St. John's Wood."
Holmes took note of it, "One other question," said he.
"Was the photograph a cabinet?"
"It was."
"Then, good night your Majesty."
– *A Scandal in 'Bohemia*

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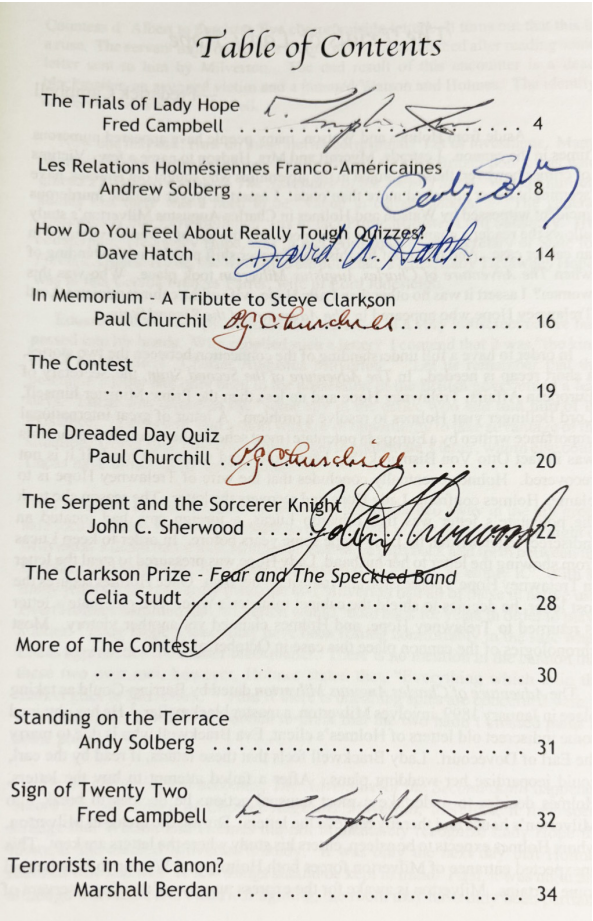
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The Trials of Lady Hope

– Frederick Campbell

Aside from Holmes and Watson, many people have appeared numerous times in the cannon. Lestrade, Mycroft and Mrs. Hudson to name a few. Victims of crimes however, those wronged in the adventures who sought out Holmes, have seemingly never appeared more than once. I assert however that the murderous incident witnessed by Watson and Holmes in Charles Augustus Milverton's study allows the reader a chance to once again peek into the life of a woman wronged in an earlier case. And the proof for this may forever shift popular understanding of when *The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton* took place. Who was this woman? I assert it was no other than Lady Hope, wife of the cabinet minister, Lord Trelawney Hope who appeared in *The Adventure of the Second Stain.*

In order to have a full understanding of the connection between the two stories, a short recap is needed. In *The Adventure of the Second Stain,* the Secretary of European Affairs, Trelawney Hope and no less than the Prime Minister himself, Lord Bellinger visit Holmes to resolve a problem. A letter of great international importance written by a European potentate (most scholars have concluded that this was in fact Otto Von Bismarck) has been stolen and war could result if it is not recovered. Holmes eventually concludes that the wife of Trelawney Hope is to blame. Holmes confronts Lady Hope and recovers the letter. The reason she took the potentate's letter was that Eduardo Lucas, a foreign spy, had located an indiscreet letter written by Lady Hope some years before. In order to keep Lucas from showing the letter to her husband, Lady Hope was pressured to steal the letter in Trelawney Hope's possession and trade it for her own. Once Holmes secures the lost letter, he decides to shield the cabinet minister's wife. The potentate's letter is returned to Trelawney Hope, and Holmes claimed yet another victory. Most chronologies of the cannon place this case in October of 1886.[1]

The *Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton* dated by Barring-Gould as taking place in January 1899, involves Milverton, a master blackmailer.[2] He has obtained some indiscreet old letters of Holmes's client, Eva Brackwell who is due to marry the Earl of Dovecourt.

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[1] This has been confirmed in William Baring-Gould's *The Chronological Holmes*. Gavin Brend's *My Dear Holmes* and Evan M. Wilson's *Sherlock Holmes and Diplomacy* (June 1974 BSJ, pp. 94-98.)
NOTE – Of the fifteen dates given for this adventure in "*The Date Being----?*", Peck and Klinger, Magico Magazine, 1996, two (Baring-Gould-2, and Bradley/Serjeant) give October 1886 as the date. The date is listed as "Autumn 1886" in *My Dear Holmes*. – Les

[2] Again one can reference Baring-Gould's *The Chronological Holmes.*

Lady Brackwell feels that these letters, if read by the Earl, could jeopardize her wedding plans. After a failed attempt to buy the letters, Holmes decides to undertake a most unusual action: he decides to break into Milverton's house and thereby retrieve the letters. During the break-in Milverton, whom Holmes expects to be asleep, enters his study where the letters are kept. This unexpected entrance of Milverton forces both Holmes and Watson to hide behind some curtains. Milverton is awake for the express purpose of meeting a servant of Countess d'Albert to purchase five compromising letters. It turns out that this is a ruse. The servant turns out to be a victim whose husband died after reading some letter sent to him by Milverton. The end result of this encounter is a dead blackmailer, an avenged victim and a pursued Watson and Holmes. The identity of the woman is never revealed.

Now one may ask: How do these stories correspond? Let us investigate. Many Sherlockians have pondered the real identity of the two British politicians who graced 221B Baker Street in *The Adventure of the Second Stain.* Watson himself admits that there was a need to be "vague in certain details."[3] The general consensus is that Lord Bellinger was in fact Prime Minister Lord Salisbury. His counterpart, Trelawney Hope, was in fact Lord Iddesleigh Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. If true, she who lifted the potentate's letter, Lady Trelawney Hope, was in fact Cecilia Frances Farrer, wife of Lord Iddesleigh.

Eduardo Lucas, the spy, claimed that the letter of a very indiscreet nature had passed into his hands. Who supplied such a letter? I contend that it was "the king of all blackmailers" Charles Augustus Milverton.[4] Let us remember that the potentate's letter had only been in the possession of the British government a few days. Lucas was informed by, "some spy in the office who had told him of its existence."[5] Lucas only had a short window of opportunity to take advantage of the situation. Under such time constraints to get the potentate's letter, whom else could Lucas have turned to for information?

It is known that Milverton had numerous letters stashed away in the tall green safe located in his study. There were so many letters inside the safe on the night of Milverton's death that it took Holmes at least three trips back and forth between the fireplace and safe with "two arms with bundles of letters" to empty it.[6] With so many letters it seems hardly

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[3] Stade, George, ed. *The Complete Sherlock Holmes Vol. II.* Barnes and Noble Classics. New York, 2003. 208

[4] Ibid. Stade. 113

[5] Ibid. Stade, 224

[6] Ibid. Stade, 112.

plausible that Milverton had all of these in active use. Even Holmes admitted that Milverton would "hold back for years in order to play" a letter.[7] Lady Hope's letter may have been resting comfortably in the safe when Lucas approached the master blackmailer. There is no mention in the cannon that these two ever met; however, Holmes stated that, "Everything which is in the market goes to Milverton."[8] And if there is one thing spies are concerned with, it is information. It would be foolish to think that the two hadn't crossed paths at some point.

By all chronological accounts, *The Adventure of the Second Stain* happened before *The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton,* therefore, it may seem strange that Watson and Holmes did not immediately recognize Lady Hope the moment she entered Milverton's study. It was only the next day that Holmes realized who she was. A few things should be kept in mind. First, it was night and although Milverton had electrical lighting, the room may have only been partially lit. Lady Hope would have made use of this fact when she entered the room in order to avoid Milverton's detection much the same way she placed herself in front of the window in Holmes's study to hide her expressions in *The Adventure of the Second Stain.* Second, both Holmes and Watson were hidden behind a curtain and could only peek out. This would not lend itself well to visually assessing the mysterious stranger's identity. Third, the woman wore a veil and only lifted it right before the murder. Fourth, with the excitement of a burglary, the unexpected entrance of Milverton and a murder all within short work of one another, it would be understandable if Watson had not connected the lady's face with a previous case. Fifth, it would have been easy for Watson to add descriptive details of the lady while writing about the adventure years later (it was published in 1904, at least five years after the events took place). Finally, Watson admits to concealing the facts in order to conceal the actual occurrence. His descriptive details of the mysterious visitor's identity may have been a blind.

What is most compelling in connecting the two cases are the dates mentioned in *The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton.* Milverton stated that, "if money is not paid on the 14th, there most certainly will be no marriage on the 18th."[9] This statement was made a few days before the 14th: it is mentioned that "for some days Holmes came and went" working the case.[10] Holmes's decision to burgle the house fell on the 13th for the next day was the last day of grace. What can be learned from the history books is that Lord Iddesleigh, portrayed as Trelawney Hope in *The Adventure of the Second Stain* died on January 12,

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[7] Ibid. Stade. 113

[8] Ibid. Stade. 113

[9] Ibid. Stade, 117

[10] Ibid. Stade. 117

1887 by a sudden heart attack in the parlor of the Prime Minister.[11] The mysterious stranger in Milverton's study stated, "you sent the letters to my husband and he the noblest gentleman that ever lived – a man whose boots I was never worthy to lace – he broke his gallant heart and died."[12] Also, Lady Hope in *The Adventure of the Second Stain* stated that the contents of other private correspondence "would break his noble heart."[13] These dates and a series of similar statements eerily correspond. It may be possible that Lady Hope wrote more than one indiscreet letter. After Lucas had died, Milverton may have felt that he needed to play the other letters against Lady Hope while the time was ripe. If the case took place as has been explained here then it did indeed occur in January of 1887, and the Baring-Gould date of 1899 is incorrect.

Victims rarely appear multiple times in the canon, but a woman twice blackmailed and pushed to brink of murder may have been worthy of Watson's pen. Lady Hope was twice pushed to her emotional limits. In one case her actions almost brought Europe to war, in the second the war came home at the cost of her husband's life. Knowing that behind both was the cad Milverton, one has even less sympathy for the master blackmailer. Also, knowing the links between the two adventures, one must ask, what did Lady Hope write in those letters? On the night on 13 January 1887, Lady Hope sealed the lips of the only man left who knew. Also, the letters of other indiscreet authors became kindling for the fire in Milverton's study. Even Holmes's talent for analyzation of ashes would never be able to now coax out the words. And Londoners everywhere, reading the death notice of Milverton in the papers, would breath a sigh of relief.

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[11] **http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/Stafford+Henry+Northcote%2c+1st+Earl+of+Iddesleigh**
NOTE – shown incorrectly in the printed copy as http://encyclopedia.the free dictionary.com – Les

[12] Op. cit. Stade, 123

[13] Ibid. Stade, l23.

Les Relations Holmésiennes Franco-Américaines

– Andrew Solberg

It is not surprising that many Sherlockians are inveterate travelers. After all, most of us around the world are in the diaspora with our center being London. Our nature is international. Holmes, himself, was often an itinerant consultant, serving Popes, Coptic Patriarchs, "Houses of Europe," the reigning family of Holland, the Royal Family of Scandinavia, and the French government, to name a few of his international clients. As little as we really know about Holmes's travels during the great hiatus, we do know that, as Sigerson, he may not have gone exactly where he said he did, but he did do a great deal of traveling.

As I mentioned above, one of Holmes's clients was the French government. Holmes seemingly always had close relations with the French. After all, his mother was related to Vernet, the great French artist. I had never been to France, and my family used my daughter's nine years of studying French as an excuse to provide her with an educational trip to Paris in the spring of 2004.

Now, when I travel, I don't typically contact other Sherlockians unless I know them well. It is simply not in my nature, as I feel that I would be imposing on their time. When the great Sherlockian John Bennett Shaw was alive, the word was that he took great joy in welcoming Sherlockians to Santa Fe, New Mexico. I heard stories of Sherlockians who were strangers to him showing up at his door unannounced and being welcomed like old friends. I had only met Shaw once, when he was the centerpiece of a Sherlockian Weekend at the Johns Hopkins University back in 1978. I did not really know him, and I may have been the only Sherlockian to visit Santa Fe and not contact Shaw, despite the fact that we exchanged Holiday Greetings every year. Before and since, many people have told me that I was foolish about not visiting Shaw. As I said, it is simply not my nature to be an inconvenience to anyone.

However, on hearing that I was going to visit Paris, several Sherlockians argued with me that I should let the French Sherlockians know of my plans. Easy for them to say, for that they are not slaves to my nature. However, after weeks of putting up with their harangues, I finally emailed a French member of the BSI (Thierry Saint-Joanis, whom I did not know) and asked if there was anything of Sherlockian interest that I would want to see when I was in Paris.

His response: "I am going to inform the Parisian team to see what it is possible to do."

"Oh, oh," my nature was saying, as it meant that I was going to inconvenience someone.

When we arrived at our Paris hotel, there was already a message waiting for me stating that dinner had been arranged for the following evening with about five members of the "Parisian team" of the *Societé Sherlock Holmes de France* or the "SSHF."

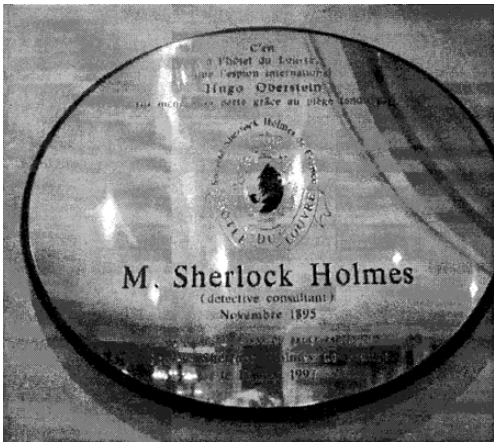
I should here explain that the SSHF is one of the more active Sherlockian Societies in the world. It has been functioning since 1993 and has, by the count on its website (**www.sshf.com**) 64 publications, including books, magazines, newspapers, and other items of much interest (some of which are in English). The SSHF publications are of very high quality. There are some very talented artists (among them Jean-Pierre Cagnat, the eminent French illustrator and political cartoonist, whose work appears in Le Monde, and who has illustrated several absolutely beautiful Sherlockian books) as well as some very funny writers. This has led to some very clever pieces. As usual among Sherlockian Societies, the members of the SSHF are an interesting lot, including academics, lawyers, journalists, researchers, writers, police officers, students, tailors, violinists, photographers, cooks, etc. They are also very welcoming and display reports about visitors on their website. As they like to say, the SSHF takes great joy in sharing their passion in the company of French, but also with foreign Holmésiens.

The hotel at which we stayed, the Timhotel Palais Louvre, was not fancy by American standards and, probably, not by French standards, either. However, it was perfectly located for us, on Rue de la Banque, just three blocks from the Louvre and amid several metro stations. It was a pleasant walk to the Opera and the Garden Palais. Very importantly, it was just around the corner from the Café Vivienne with the best coffee I had ever tasted and a short walk to a source of Cuban cigars at a reasonable price. I walked the Paris streets (after spending an hour in the café reading Sherlock Holmes and drinking wonderful Parisian "café crème") smoking a Cuban cigar and thinking about the fact that there are still pleasant surprises in life. One of them would occur the following evening.

When we took the lift down to the lobby of our hotel, we were greeted by Roland Nicolas and his family, Alexis Barquin, Anne-Sophie Mailliez, and Bernard Oudin, BSI. Bernard and Alexis were among the founders of SSHF, and Roland was responsible for their website. All of them are accomplished Sherlockian authors. Bernard Oudin had just arrived home the previous night from Shanghai, which he had visited for business. Despite the fact that Bernard was BSI, he and I had never met. In fact, I had not known any of them, and (ego be damned) they had not heard of me. Once introductions were made and international greetings were conveyed, we walked from our hotel to the Hotel du Louvre.

I am sure that you, dear reader, recall that in the *Adventure of the Bruce Partington Plans,* Holmes discovered that the plans were stolen by the spy Hugo von Oberstein.

When Mycroft asked his brother where Oberstein was hiding, Holmes responded that "letters to the Hotel du Louvre, Paris, would eventually reach him." Of course, through a letter dictated by Holmes and sent to the Hotel du Louvre, Oberstein was captured and "was engulfed for fifteen years in a British prison."



In 1997, the SSHF convinced the very real Hotel du Louvre to allow a plaque to be placed on the wall of the lobby commemorating the arrest of Oberstein. The SSHF raised the money and commissioned the plaque.

One must appreciate the taste (and sense of humor) of both the SSHF and the Hotel du Louvre for commissioning and placing the plaque. It is a delight to see contemporary public recognition of the important achievements of Sherlock Holmes.

The following is a picture of the assembled in the lobby of the Hotel du Louvre.

From the left to the right are yours truly, Bernard Oudin, BSI, Alexis Barquin, Anne-Sophie Mailliez, and Roland Nicolas and his family.

We then proceeded to the Restaurant Lincroyable, a small restaurant that dates back to the end of the Reign of Terror that followed the French Revolution. The Lincroyable was always known for its outrageous clientele, even back in the late 18th century. How appropriate!

On the way, Bernard Oudin related a story to me about *The Final Problem.* When alighting the train at Victoria Station to escape the clutches of Professor Moriarty, Holmes (in disguise as a "venerable Italian priest") had booked Watson's and his luggage

through to Paris. Knowing that Moriarty would follow the luggage, Holmes and Watson got off at Canterbury and took a different route. The luggage, however, went on to Paris. Several years ago, the SSHF sent a letter to the French railway system seeking to obtain custody of the unclaimed luggage. In its letter, the SSHF explained the situation and sought to have the railway system search through the unclaimed luggage to recover those belonging to Holmes and Watson. Not missing a beat, the railway system responded in a formal letter that it would love to comply with finding Sherlock Holmes's luggage, but unclaimed luggage is retained for only a limited time. Since the event in question took place in 1891, the unclaimed luggage were disposed of long ago. Had they only known!

Again, one has to appreciate the sense of humor of both the SSHF and the railway system for playing the Great Game to its fullest extent.

We proceeded to dinner where toasts were made and attestations of international friendship were exchanged. As with any Sherlockian gathering, we discussed literature, politics, history, family, Sherlockian gossip, and even a little Sherlock Holmes. We exchanged gifts (some of their publications and some of mine). A photo of the assembled follows:

It was a delightful evening, which ended with a short walk back to our hotel. I have kept in touch with my new friends. By coincidence, I was delighted to find my assigned seat at the 2005 BSI dinner next to Thierry Saint-Joanis, who had contacted the Parisian team in the first place. I was able to convey my personal thanks and regards to the delegation back in France. As it says on their website which reported on our visit: "Les relations holmésiennes franco-américaines sont toujours aussi fratemelles et vivaces." The Holmesian Franco-American relations are always both fraternal and long-lived.

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How do you feel about really tough quizzes?

– Dave Hatch

Some newspaper reviews of theater movies shown on television compress plot, character, and/or critique into an economic line or two – sometimes with an ironic twist. Sometimes for particularly well-known films, the reviews only use a familiar quote. The following are descriptions of some of the Holmes stories in this terse format. It's up to you to supply the titles. Good Luck!

1. Young Sherlock Holmes, and a mutiny.

2. Holmes confronts a father-and-son murder team.

3. Bummer.

4. Another case solved by that talented amateur who shows promise and under the tutelage of Scotland Yard might yet develop into a real detective.

5. One of the occasions when the great detective was beaten, this time by the K^3.

6. A date with an angel.

7. Good-night, Mr. Sherlock Holmes.

8. To our very great surprise, Holmes begins to talk about his brother.

9. Holmes's case comes a-cropper.

10. Holmes considers why Victor Hathaway doesn't hitchhike to work anymore.

11. Holmes has investigated many a lyin' murderer, but this time, murder by lion?

12. Holmes encounters arguably the most unusual perp he ever met. He really had to watch his step.

13. Holmes saves a client, but Watson loses a shoe in the process.

14. A made man escapes to London but, despite clever codes, and "switch and bait" at a boardinghouse, his past catches up with him.

15. Crime travels from the new world to the old, but, fortunately, Holmes learns its language.

ANSWERS TO QUIZ:
1. The Gloria Scott 2. The Reigate Squires 3. The Man with the Twisted Lip
4. A Study in Scarlet 5. The Five Orange Pips 6. A Case of Identity
7. A Scandal in Bohemia 8. The Greek Interpreter 9. The Blue Carbuncle
10. The Engineer's Thumb 11. The Veiled Lodger 12. The Lion's Mane
13. Charles Augustus Milverton 14. The Red Circle 15. The Dancing Men

In Memoriam [1]

Paul Stephen Clarkson, Jr.
"Morse Hudson" BSI
25 October 2004

Si requiris monumentum, circumspice.

If you seek a monument, look about you.

Only once or twice perhaps in a lifetime do we meet a person whom we admire deeply and who has a life-changing impact on us. For me, Steve Clarkson was such a man. He was my friend of 17 or so years and a mentor in my acquiring a knowledge of Sherlock Holmes. Others know him as a father, a husband, a grandfather, an author, or a co-worker, but it is through our shared interest in Sherlock Holmes that I know him best, and that viewpoint must guide these final words about my friend on the day his mortal body is laid to rest.

Steve got interested in Sherlock Holmes through the influence of his father, Paul Clarkson, co-founder of The Six Napoleons of Baltimore, a holder of the coveted Two-Shilling award, the highest honor bestowed by the Baker Street Irregulars, the BSI. Steve himself held the office of Gasogene in that scion society and was awarded his shilling at a fairly young age.

One of Steve's early contributions to the Sherlockian milieu was his establishment of The Board School Beacons as a correspondence society for young Sherlockians, especially those in areas away from centers of Holmesian scholarship. That effort netted several future luminaries into the fold: Chris Redmond, Kate Karlson, Susan Dahlinger, et al. Of the twenty or so members, as many as five have gone on to receive their shillings.

In 1988 I met Steve through his step-daughter who was my student at the time, a perceptive young lady who deduced from the deerstalker I was wearing on Halloween that I was a Sherlock Holmes fan! I told her I was interested in forming a group of like-minded people, a group which could meet around a table and share in our mutual interest. She put me and my colleague Rod McCaslin in touch with Steve so that we could follow through on

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[1] The printed version contains an abridged version of Paul's eulogy. The full text is reproduced here - Les

that dream. The meeting led to the establishment of a scion society originally called "The Agency," but which later became Watson's Tin Box, named after the well-worn and battered receptacle somewhere in the vaults of Cox and Company Bank in Charing Cross which contained the unpublished manuscripts of the Sherlock Holmes adventures. That group today is flourishing, due in no small way to the original guidance which Steve provided.

He later served as Gasogene IV, like a President, and was for over five years the quizmaster, taking the title of Torquemada, the legendary, or should I say notorious, Inquisitor of the lamentable era called "The Spanish Inquisition." Those quizzes, sixty on the individual stories, and five yearly examinations were then published as *The Sherlockian Star Chamber* by the Battered Silicon Dispatch Box, a work which I was proud to illustrate.

Several years ago Steve was asked by Les Moskowitz, a fellow Tin Boxer, to act as moderator of The Hounds of the Internet, A Sherlockian chat list, and he performed this job admirably for one run through the stories, the Canon, at the rate of one story a week. Later Steve was asked to take over as List-Owner of the Hounds, a task he zealously executed until his recent medical difficulties. I leave it to you to read for yourself some of the deluge of postings following his demise, postings which reveal the depth and breadth of his impact on Sherlockians around the world.

Back in the 60's Steve began to work with his friend and colleague Bill Fleishauer on a project of indexing by page number topics in the Canon, such as mentions of hansom cabs, the contents of 221B, weapons used in the stories, names of characters, and so forth. They came up with some 184 topics and sub-topics and listed them on 3×5 cards. Unfortunately Bill died as they came nearly to the end of the project, an event which devastated Steve and caused him to lay the project aside for thirty years. His interest was renewed after he got involved in Watson's Tin Box, and I was fortunate enough to help him index two of the last stories. Then he got a computer and the task was made a lot easier. Still later he hit upon the idea of indexing the information not only to the Doubleday edition's pages but also to the Murray, the Heritage, the Oxford and the Baring-Gould Annotated editions. It was published as *The Canonical Compendium*. It is an awesome work that I believe will be regarded with increasing respect over the coming years for the way it will help current and future scholars in their quests for details to support their research. I believe it is a seminal work, equal to and in many ways superior to all other previously published reference books. Just as the *Annotated Sherlock Holmes* provided a way to remove the blinders for new readers, the *Compendium* opens up a wide vista for experienced readers who need an efficient way to locate specific information.

Steve has had several articles published in *The Baker Street Journal*, including in the most recent issue an article relating the handwriting styles of the two halves of Ellery Queen to the similarity of styles of the Cunninghams in the Adventure of the Reigate Squires.[2]

Last year Steve Rothman, editor of *The Baker Street Journal*, asked our Steve to edit the Christmas issue of the Journal. The issue dealt with the emergence of young Sherlockian scholars in the 1970's, a topic for which he was eminently qualified from his role as mentor to The Board School Beacons. The Christmas issue is a stunningly well written and well edited work. It was definitely a labor of love for Steve, as it allowed him the opportunity to get back in touch with several of the young people, no longer quite so young, with whom he had had contact so many years ago. His love shows through in the contributions of those widely scattered scholars, and the BSI is indeed fortunate to have had Steve at the helm.

Those are part of the curriculum vitae of Steve Clarkson. It falls to me now to relate some personal recollections about my friend.

Steve was invested in the Baker Street Irregulars as "Morse Hudson," a shopkeeper mentioned in The Adventure of the Six Napoleons. Once Steve found a book containing cartoons of many Sherlockian characters, but there was none of his BSI namesake. He wrote to the illustrator and asked what pecuniary inducement it would take to get him to do a rendering of Morse Hudson. The illustrator provided, at no cost whatsoever, a wonderful sketch of the irascible Kennington Road dealer in pictures and statuary. Steve used the image on his personal stationery and showed it off whenever he could.

Steve was an avid collector of many things: coins and weapons to name a couple, but his greatest interest was in the collecting of first magazine appearances of Doyle's works, Sherlockian and non-Sherlockian. It is a curious coincidence that the last Holmes magazine he needed to complete that portion of his collection was given to him gratis by a gentleman whom he had befriended on the Hounds List and whom Steve had assisted in some enquiry. That magazine contained The Adventure of the Dying Detective. How ironic that it was Steve who was really dying at the time, although he did not know it!

I shall miss being invited over to Steve's digs for dinner. He made a wonderful shrimp salad, a scrumptious beef stew, spaghetti sauce that would delight any chef, and he even got me to taste, and then actually enjoy, corned beef and cabbage!

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[2] *Baker Street Journal*, Summer 2004. Also reproduced in *Irene's Cabinet*, 2004 – Volume 2 – Les

Sherlockians are by their very nature weird. I say that because it is true of every Holmesian I have ever encountered, and it is certainly true of myself. But Steve was even a bit weirder than most. I mean, what would induce a grown man to construct a model of the Reichenbach Falls of Switzerland in his back yard, equip it with a working pump to circulate the water, and furnish it with flora to scale? I wonder whether that project was the final problem that made him decide it was time to move away to find that cabin in the woods that had been on his mind for decades.

Steve was addicted to many things, although he had long since given up smoking and drinking in favor of a healthier life style. Not so eBay! He was hooked on that phenomenon, as am I from time to time. He had a daily routine of searching the site for things Sherlockian, and he often forwarded to me certain listings of items which he thought I would like to acquire for my Canonical evidence boxes. Our collections have become extensive and our wallets considerably thinner thereby!

There is a tendency when a person passes away to make the person into a saint. That has certainly been true when I think of the way in which some people have tried to turn my deceased wife into the Blessed Virgin Mary. But the Blessed Virgin Mary couldn't heave a toy xylophone at me as my Jo once did, and Steve would be the first to admit that he was no saint! But he was an honourable man, a man of conviction, and a man who inspired others to their better natures. He had a temper and did not suffer fools gladly. He was at his worst around people who preen themselves or put on airs because of their money, or possessions, or knowledge or contacts. I admired him and he still guides me.

Steve flirted with every woman he ever met! He was not, however, a womanizer. He was himself a whole-hearted admirer of womanhood, and he had always championed their inclusion in Sherlockian society. It has always amazed me that even his ex-wives and girlfriends still love him! I don't get it! Truly baffling!

I used to worry about Steve after he left Maryland (and its outrageous taxes: Steve often referred to our State as The People's Republic of Maryland) and went to live on his mountain in West Virginia. I pictured him as living the life of a hermit, albeit the fact that he was in daily contact with hundreds of people worldwide through the Hounds of the Internet. Still, he was far away, some 90 miles or so, and our weekly breakfasts at The Trolley Stop in Ellicott City had fallen to a monthly or semi-monthly trip to visit Audrey and Adam at our favorite haunt. He still made it to Watson's Tin Box, at least until his final months when the hernia pain got too much for him. I went to see him at his cabin three times I think. My last visit there included a wonderful rest while I watched him feed the deer which abound in the area. They would wait for him to scatter seed corn and then cautiously come in to feed. It was neat to see my friend in this rural setting. But I still worried about his becoming a hermit. It wasn't until the viewing yesterday that I realized that he was not at all devoid of

human company. Two beautiful ladies came to pay their last respects Sunday evening. They are owners of the Warm Springs (WV) Restaurant, Susan and Susie. They regaled several of us with stories of Steve. Susan said, "I know you! You're Paul! I knew every time Steve came down to see you!" He ate at their place often, once a day usually, and sometimes more. He had his standard order of three pancakes and FOUR strips of extra crisp bacon, not the THREE strips that are on the menu. All the waitresses knew him. The cook knew him and said hello. Steve would see Susan with her hair pulled back and pinned, and flour all over her, and he'd say, "Good morning, gorgeous! You look beautiful!" He would stop by to tell them when he was coming down to Maryland, and he would check in with them to say he had returned safely. They will miss him greatly. They asked for a copy of the postings to the Hounds and said they'd get the pages laminated and keep them in the restaurant. He wasn't the hermit I had imagined him to be.

That hernia was caused by the colon cancer that was insidiously, relentlessly working its evil. He wasn't able to keep down his food or his medicine. He lost so much weight that he hadn't a belt in the house to hold his pants up, so he told me by phone. He had taken to wearing suspenders. He checked himself into the county hospital. That night the nurse called me to say they were unequipped to handle the case and were sending Steve to the Winchester Virginia Medical Center, some fifty miles away. I went to see him and got to meet his younger son Ken, a strapping giant of a man who called his dad "Shorty"! Things did not look good. They had discovered the colon cancer and were starting Steve on chemotherapy since he was in no condition to withstand surgery. I brought along many copies of Irene's Cabinet, a publication put out by Watson's Tin Box under the editorship of Beth Austin, to which Steve had been a contributor. I got him to sign all the copies, the only signatures we hadn't been able to get. I saw him again the following week, but things had already deteriorated significantly. Then, last Monday, I paid my final visit. I arrived at noon and found a sign on his door that instructed visitors to see the nurse first. I did so, and she went in to see Steve. He asked me to come back in an hour because he needed his rest. The morphine was allowing him to be relatively pain free, but he was not able to sleep soundly. I came back later and was admitted to his room. He said to the nurse, "This is Paul Churchill. He's my best friend!" I needed very much to hear that. During his few waking moments of that half-hour visit, I told him that Watson's Tin Box had decided unanimously to name the first prize in its essay writing contest for 7th graders the Clarkson Award. He was visibly surprised and pleased to hear the news. I am glad I went that day. The following afternoon I received a telephone call from Ken, and he told me that his dad had lapsed into a coma earlier in the morning and had passed away at four o'clock.

There is a card provided by the Witzke Funeral Home, and on it is a poem that Steve liked and which the family asked to have inscribed. It is called "Indian Prayer" and it goes as follows:

Do not stand at my grave and weep;
I am not there. I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow,
I am the diamond glint on snow.
I am the sunlight on ripened grain.
I am the gentle autumn rain.
When you wake in morning hush,
I am the swift uplifting rush
Of quiet birds in circling flight.
I am the soft starlight at night.
Do not stand at my grave and cry.
I am not there. I did not die.

Steve and I had many discussions about religion and faith and the afterlife. His faith was unconventional but profound. I gave up religion for Lent. I would like to think that there is a place beyond the Reichenbach, so to speak, a place where Steve has already gotten the autographs of Sherlock and Dr Watson and Sir Arthur on his Compendium, and that he is now privileged to peer into that old battered tin dispatch box to see first-hand the unpublished manuscripts that scholars have longed to view. But in a sense it does not matter whether there is a place beyond. In fact he still lives on in the people with whom he came in contact, in you and in me and in the thousands of people around the world who met him and knew him, in person or on the net or in his books. He has changed us and will continue to live on in us.

Si requiris monumentum, circumspice: If you seek a monument, look about you.

WE are the monument, the legacy which he has left behind, and we will remember him.

Rest in peace, my friend.

The Contest

Late last summer, crazed by heat and humidity, the members of the Tin Box were inspired to challenge one another to create the best, the worst, the most torturously contrived rhyme, and the most sublime limerick. What follows is a sprinkling of the membership's effort.

Doctor Roylott kept a swamp adder
Who climbed up a rope like a ladder.
Poor Helen it bit;
It gave Violet a fit,
And if not for Holmes, it'd've had'er!
– Debbie Clark

Tobias Gregson you should know
Says that he tests Gorgiano
But the Pinkerton guy
And our Holmes only sigh,
The credit goes to Gennaro.
– Dana Richards

A London detective named Holmes
Said to Irene Forsyth (Mrs. Soames)
"Dear Ms. Adler, no mystery:
You'll go on to make history
In John Galsworthy' trilogy tomes."
– E. A. Herzog

The Dreaded-Day Quiz

– Paul Churchill

Originally presented at the 60th Anniversary Meeting of The Speckled Band of Boston, Friday, May 13, 2005.

Your assignment, should you choose to accept it, is to answer the following 19 queries and then use the initial letters to find what links these seemingly disparate items, which will constitute the answer to the 20th question. Ready? Here goes!

1. In *Shoscombe Old Place* what bone's upper condoyle was bound in the central heating system furnace?

2. What brand did Ted Baldwin ride in *The Valley of Fear?*

3. Its odour told Holmes that Watson was back in active practice in *A Scandal in Bohemia.* What was it?

4. What was the queer old book which Holmes picked up in a London bookstall in *A Study in Scarlet?*

5. In *The Red Circle* its messages prompted Holmes to utter, "Unmitigated bleat!" What was it?

6. What colour was the honeydew tobacco box in *The Cardboard Box?*

7. What was the topic of the Fortescue Scholarship Green examination in *The Three Students?*

8. What skull was with Cro-Magnon and Neanderthal in *The Three Garridebs?*

9. There was one in Baden in *The Disappearance of Lady Frances Carfax* and another one in Meiringen in *The Final Problem.* What was it?

10. What kind of smoke shield was on Mortimer Tregennis's lamp in *The Devil's Foot?*

11. Whose tales by Offenbach contained the *Barcarolle* in *The Mazarin Stone?*

12. What were the opening two words of the *Lament of the Irish Immigrant* in *The Valley of Fear?*

13. What was the surname of the author of *The Martyrdom of Man* given in *The Sign of Four?*

14. Whose origin was in the title of one of the old bibliophile's pile of books in *The Empty House?*

15. What did the cook neglect in *Thor Bridge* owing to the arrival of The Family Herald?

16. In *The Retired Colourman,* what was the last name of the Vicar of Mossmoor-cum-Little Purlington?

17. What 2 letters on some shavings did Holmes use to deduce a Faber pencil in *The Three Students?*

18. What type of slippers did Grimesby Roylott wear in *The Speckled Band?*

19. What was Thaddeus smoking in *The Sign of Four?*

20. Hey it's (The initial letters of the first 19 questions.)

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1. Femur 2. Ridge Whitworth 3. Iodoform 4. De jure Intergentes
5. Agony Column 6. Yellow 7. Thucydides 8. Heidelberg 9. Englischer Hof
10. Talc 11. Hoffman 12. I'm Sitting 13. Reade 14. Tree Worship
15. Eggs 16. Elman 17. NN 18. Turkish 19. Hookah 20. Friday the thirteenth

The Serpent and the Sorcerer-Knight

– John C. Sherwood

St. George uses his lance to slay a dragon in its cavern.

"It is a romance!" cried Mrs. Forrester. "An injured lady, half a million in treasure, a black cannibal, and a wooden-legged ruffian. They take the place of the conventional dragon or wicked earl." "And two knight-errants [sic] to the rescue," added Miss Morstan. ... " – From *The Sign of Four,* published 1890.

We take many of our favorite Canonical images for granted. They were, after all, "created by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle." But when these complex images are lightly scratched, they reveal underlying aspects of something unintended, unconscious, ancient and archetypal.

On close examination, they may even include spiritual allegories, rooted in earlier centuries – and, ironically, in the religious faith Conan Doyle had consciously dismissed.

Conan Doyle was born into a family that practiced Roman Catholicism in a culture where Anglicans and Presbyterians dominated. In time, however, his mind left no room for any religion he saw as inflexible and unprovable. He made his formal break with traditional faith while in his 20s.

By then, however, the Church's values and iconography were etched on his mind even though he consciously rejected their theological meaning. As a result, the symbols of traditional faith were to emerge in his writings – symbols that may not have been entirely intended, but which produced forms that had lasting subliminal impact on readers.

In fact, almost from the start of the Holmes saga, Conan Doyle borrowed from images inspired by religious faith – specifically, the iconography of Roman Catholic belief, history and symbolism: Conan Doyle couldn't have avoided seeing these icons. Among the ruins of England's abbeys and churches linger thousands of figures that for centuries spoke to the masses. These figures embody the battle between good and evil, typically in the form of a knight – a soldier of God – slaying a dragon or serpent, rescuing the world's future – represented by a maiden – from Satan, in the form of a corrupted sorcerer.

Such images probably weren't in Conan Doyle's conscious mind when, at age 28, he set pen to paper to produce *A Study in Scarlet*. As is known, his purpose was – in addition

to paying his bills – to create a thoroughly modern detective cast in a scientific mold. Still, religious faith – represented by Mormonism – had much to do with the tale. In fact, the resulting novel was slyly critical of intense religious faith, representing Conan Doyle's sweeping, youthful view of spiritual subjects. To underscore the point, he provided a hero with no relationship to faith whatsoever.

The scientifically minded Sherlock Holmes became a figurehead of reason and law in contrast to a form of faith-based life depicted – shallowly – as of doubtful merit. In this first novel, Conan Doyle had a young, jocular and sociable Holmes write an article, "*The Book of Life*," which – instead of stating a philosophy involving spirituality – sets forth a philosophy of pure reason. Thus, in an interpretive sense, *A Study in Scarlet* became the young Conan Doyle's statement that reason could triumph in the face of actions motivated by irrational emotions and belief.

Faith and its forms would hold Conan Doyle's mind in a firm grip all his writing life, and he would produce many works that dealt with the nature of belief in a variety of forms – most notably his own late-in-life trust in Spiritualism.

When Conan Doyle was 30, Lippincott's Magazine asked him to produce a new Holmes novel. He retained his notion of a scientific detective, but felt he should embellish the product. He re-invented Holmes as a reclusive drug addict who rises above his personal drawbacks to battle sinister forces. Superficially stated, Holmes finds a task to occupy his powers – and to avoid the need for stimulating drugs.

However, beneath this image's veneer is something very old. It's the persona of the shaman – the healer, seer and seeker of knowledge who turns to mental stimulants as part of his regimen – recast as a modern sorcerer of detection. Just as the shaman fights evil spirits on behalf of his tribe, Holmes now sets forth against the forces of greed and death, which in *The Sign of Four* appear as a modernized dragon (Tonga, who used his breath to kill) and "wicked earls" (Small, Col. Morstan and Sholto.)

The images of knights and dragons are pervasive in literature and myth, and were compelling to a man such as Conan Doyle, who considered his greatest fiction to be his tales that harkened back to an age of chivalry.

In this second Holmes novel, the detective emerges – much more fully formed – as just such a chivalrous being. He achieves the state of emblematic goodness stated outright by Mary Morstan, as a bachelor knight-errant serving a noble cause. Watson, in his most primal yet exalted moment in the Canon, even wins the supreme prize – the hand of the tale's beleaguered maiden. The Duo thus entered the pantheon of a grand tradition.

Fifteen years after first painting Holmes so nobly, Conan Doyle returned to a similar image, this time stated by Watson himself in reference to Charles Augustus Milverton: "I understood the joy which it gave [Holmes] to be confronted with this green and gold monster, the dragon which held in its maw the reputations of many fair ladies."

Conan Doyle painted Holmes's enemies and dark sojourns with evocative images and names. Yes, he may have chosen the names "Moriarty" and "Moran" because they hint at a link with the "Irish mafia;" but the first syllable – the Greek root *mor* – has a long and splendid mythic history, associated in our language with sleep, death and murder.

In Europe's most ancient tales, the enemies of King Arthur's knights were Morgana and Mordred. J.R.R. Tolkien, an expert of ancient literature, used similar names blatantly in his fiction: His Sauron is corrupted by the supreme dark lord Morgoth; Sauron's tower lies in Mordor; the Balrog falls into the chasm in Moria.

Conan Doyle did much the same. The blue carbuncle that spawns greed and death belongs to the Countess of Morcar. And the greedy Grimsby Roylott's estate is Stoke Moran. Add a few letters to Tolkien's chasm-ridden "Moria" and you get "Moriarty," who also plunged into a great chasm.

Holmes's deeds in *The Speckled Band*, parallel the trials of the perfect knight in medieval legend. In myth, the knight and his squire typically circumvent bizarre creatures – usually including a large cat such as a lion – before entering the dark cave to confront the dragon. Holmes and his squire, Watson, do the same, a leopard serving as their huge feline. In the dark chamber itself, Holmes lies in wait and eventually drives the deadly serpent back against its master, who dies. Evil is thwarted, and the intended victim is restored to her legacy, to marriage and the fertility of the world.

Of course there are no Indian swamp adders that climb ropes or respond to a flute. Whether the story is possible or believable isn't relevant. The supernatural serpent is *stopped.* The maiden is *rescued.* The evildoer is *obliterated.* Thus order is restored, and justice is served.

Conan Doyle has Holmes state this reassurance at the end of *The Speckled Band* saying, "Violence does, in truth, recoil upon the violent, and the schemer falls into the pit which he digs for another."

Such words were part of Conan Doyle's religious and secular education: "He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it" (Ecclesiastes 10:8). "Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein" (Proverbs 26:27). John Milton's *Paradise Lost* described Satan's fall into the pit. A little more than a year after "Band" first saw print, the Reichenbach demanded the same word – a "boiling pit

of incalculable depth." Thus Holmes's role as a soldier of God did not change much during the 15 months that separated publication of *The Speckled Band* and *The Final Problem*.

For Conan Doyle, that image worked powerfully – and stayed with him. By 1927, both *Band* and *Problem* ranked among the author's top four favorite Holmes stories, with *Band* his favorite. Both stories – with *The Hound of the Baskervilles* – still rank among the most popular. Despite that impossible snake, *The Speckled Band* actually leads those polls.

When we ask "Why?" we point to Conan Doyle's plotting – but what he plotted so well was at root a spiritual allegory. Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* shows a 9th century B.C. alabaster panel from the palace of an Assyrian king. It shows the Assyrian sun god, holding lance-like thunderbolts, driving away a flying dragon.

Most people then – as now – had never seen a sun god, let alone a flying dragon. But that did not stop the carver from producing this image. He did not fear those Who might say, "There is no such creature." Neither did Conan Doyle.

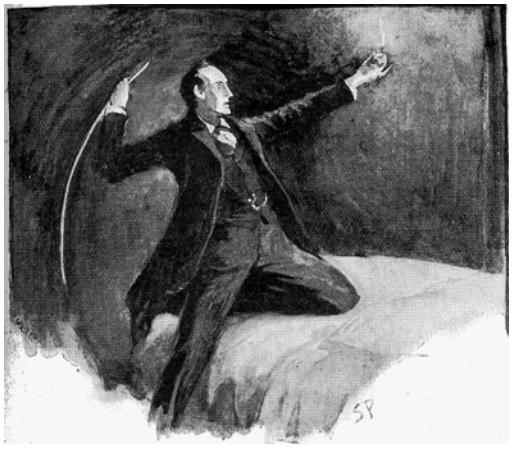
As far as conveying the action, that 3,000-year-old panel is identical with Sidney Paget's illustration of Holmes lashing at the equally nonexistent swamp adder. And it is the same allegory – powerful evil fleeing from powerful good.

Using thunderbolts, the sun god drives back the reptilian chaos monster in a 9th century B.C. panel from the palace of Assyria.

In the same fashion, the Dartmoor of *The Hound* is a fantasy land. The real Dartmoor never could support a stately manor; it never harbored gypsies or fatally deep mires. It was necessary for Conan Doyle to transform the region into a land of myth, where a dog – bred into a canine dragon – could be immune to phosphorous so fire might "burst from its open mouth."

In this land of sudden fogs and roaming horrors, Holmes slays the impossible beast. The schemer Stapleton presumably plunges into the mire, where fiends belong. The ensnared Beryl is freed and the realm made safe under the returned baronet.

This is *myth,* replete with all the flavors of the ancient recipe. The tasty proof is in the pudding: When most people read *The Speckled Band* or *The Hound,* they are *satisfied.* Impossibilities be damned – skepticism is set aside by even the most reasonable, ignored for a simple reason: These tales reach that part of the psyche that craves justice, reassurance and the restoration of an orderly universe.



Using his cane, Holmes drives back the swamp adder in the famous illustration by Sidney Paget for "The Speckled Band."

So it's no wonder the tales mentioned here, by and large, remain the most popular among the reading public. Through them, a touch of the Unknown enters our souls, transforming Holmes into something more than a mere man. Subliminally, we recognize that most mysterious of beings, a chivalrous wizard who – though plagued by drug-induced visions – can see the future, heal the afflicted and chase away the dread demons that torment the innocent.

At root, then, the Canon fascinates us not because it offers a plea for reason in an irrational world, but because it allows us to believe in the *divinity of reason.* It's an irrational notion itself, a form of faith in its own right. And Conan Doyle wins the credit for having shaped it for the modern age.

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The Clarkson Prize

Over a year ago, Watson's Tin Box decided to sponsor a Sherlock Holmes Essay Contest for Seventh Graders. We established a committee, and through the hard work of many Tin Boxers and partnerships with the Howard County Library, Howard County School System, and Barnes & Noble Booksellers of Ellicott City, we reached approximately 400 public and home schooled students. The Tin Box awarded prizes to the three top essays. The First Prize, "The Clarkson Prize" (affectionately named after the late Steve Clarkson, one of the Tin Box founders, a Baker Street Irregular, and a mentor to many young Sherlockians worldwide), was awarded to Ms. Celia Studt. The Clarkson Prize included a Certificate, a $50 Gift Card to Barnes & Noble, a copy of the Complete Sherlock Holmes, and publication of her essay in this issue *of Irene's Cabinet.* All of the essays were, in true Sherlockian style, highly analytical and all of the students can be proud. Ms. Studt can be particularly proud of her accomplishment of having the best essay.

Fear and *The Speckled Band*

– Celia Studt

In Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's story *The Adventure of the Speckled Band*, the relationship between Miss Stoner and Dr. Roylott, her step-father, is very complex. This relationship centers on fear, and it is one in which the parent-child roles have been reversed. Because of its unusual qualities, this relationship leaves the reader feeling uneasy throughout the entire story.

First of all, Miss Stoner is terrified of Dr. Roylott because he is a brutal, violent man who cannot control his anger. Miss Stoner reveals how much she fears him when she says, "He is so cunning that I never know when I am safe from him." However, she attempts to protect him by not revealing to Holmes that she has been abused by her step-father. When she does not reveal this, Sherlock Holmes asks her if she has disclosed all of the relevant information, she replies that she has. He replies, "Miss Stoner, you have not. You are screening your step-father." Miss Stoner continues deceiving Homes by replying that she does not know what he means, until he notices the scars on her wrist.

Secondly, Dr. Roylott comes from a wealthy family that has lost most of its fortune. He is avaricious, and he fears and resents Miss Stoner because she possesses the ability to deprive him of most of his income. Miss Stoner explains this to Holmes, telling him that if she or her sister got married, that daughter would receive a portion of their mother's money

that had previously been sent to Dr. Roylott. It is his greed and his fear that drive him to murder Miss Stone's sister and to attempt to murder Miss Stoner.

Finally, Dr. Roylott has sudden fits of anger and gets himself into dangerous and embarrassing situations, like a child who is out of control. "Last week he hurled the local blacksmith over a parapet into a stream, and it was only by paying over all the money which I could gather together that I was able to avert another public exposure," Miss Stoner says when describing Dr. Roylott to Sherlock Holmes, showing that this is not the first time her step-father has acted in this way. This is an example of a reversed parental relationship because Miss Stoner feels responsible for her step-father.

This complicated and uncommon relationship centers on terror. It is this relationship that drives this story to the end, if Dr. Roylott and Miss Stoner did not fear each other, the story would not have had the same tension, intensity, or excitement, and it would not have ended with the attempted murder of Miss Stoner or the death of Dr. Roylott. The relationship between Miss Stoner and Dr. Roylott is the core of this story, and it is what makes *The Adventure of the Speckled Band* captivating, and intense.

More Limerick Madness

In the barque called the Gloria Scott
There was hatched such a mutinous plot;
They killed all the crew
And when they were through,
All their chances for rescue were shot!
– Paul Churchill

There was a horse named Silver Blaze
Who galloped out of the haze
He kicked trainer Straker.
Sent him to his maker
Then won Homes and Watson a raise.
– Marjie Leonard

Escott, that rising young London plumber,
Kissed and woo-ed Agatha all one sweet summer;
At pipes, good at wrenching,
With Agatha, bad at wenching;
He left her saying, “Ah, bummer.”
– Dave Hatch

Standing on the Terrace
Dawn Culbertson

– Submitted by Andrew Solberg

For years, I knew Dawn Culbertson only as the woman who mysteriously showed up at every annual Pratt Library Saturday with Sherlock Holmes program and nearly always won the quiz. Then, in early 2004, Dawn joined the Tin Box. We were graced with her presence for all too short a time. In July, Dawn treated the Tin Box to a fabulous presentation on the polyphonic motets of Lassus (on which, we learn from *The Bruce Partington Plans,* Holmes was writing a monograph.) She pointed out that all motets are polyphonic and described Lassus's role as chief court composer in Italy in the sixteenth century. Who can forget how Dawn and five of the friends whom she brought for the occasion sang a Lassus motet in praise of wine. The assembled sat there in awe.

Born in Baltimore in 1951, Dawn earned a masters degree in composition from the Peabody Conservatory. She became a leader in the Baltimore area music community. She sang as a soloist in many church and university choirs. Dawn also worked as one of the overnight voices of WJHU-FM where she hosted a weekly radio program on "Exploring Early Music" and served as the station's music librarian. In 1993, she founded the Baltimore Composers Forum which showcased locally composed music. Many of her own compositions have been performed by local choirs. She was an accomplished musician, vocalist, composer, radio personality, and organizer.

Despite a longstanding love of Sherlock Holmes, the Tin Box was her first and only Sherlockian Society. Even during her short stay, she made a contribution through her presentation that will last with us for the rest of our lives. We were lucky to have her as a Tin Boxer and will miss her presence.

The Sign of Twenty-Two

– Fred Campbell

During the May 2005 meeting of Watson's Tin Box, members were invited to participate in a survey covering various aspects of the Sherlock Holmes adventures. The answers to those questions are listed here.

The first question asked which three short stories from the canon do members most enjoy reading? The range of answers was impressive: there were no less than eighteen different choices. The three with the most votes are:

1. *The Adventure of the Speckled Band*
2. *The Adventure of the Red-headed League*
3. *The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle*

In attached explanations, *The Adventure of the Speckled Band-was* picked because of the characters and, as John Sherwood explained, "the seemingly strange and/supernatural became fully explainable." *The Adventure of the Red-headed League* was Paul Churchill's favorite because it "is an excellent story to use with kids since no murder or much violence was depicted." As for *The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle,* some appreciated the art of deduction Holmes used to solve the adventure, while others liked its Christmas flavor.

The next question asked which three adventures did the members find most lacking. If one is ever at the track and notices a horse named Mazarin Stone, it might be a good idea to drop a few dollars on this horse because it will win by a mile. Yes, the adventure Sherlockians love to hate won handily. With twelve different answers among members, the race for second was a bit closer. There was a five way tie with *The Adventure of the Creeping Man, A Case of Identity, The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire, The Adventure of the Three Gables,* and *The Adventure of Yellow Face* all receiving the same number of votes.

The next question asked respondents to pick (aside from Moriarty) their favorite villain. The top three worst of the worst were Baron Gruner (ILLU), Charles Augustus Milverton (CHAS), and Grimesby Roylott (SPEC). The comments on these three were pretty similar. Gruner was seen as a user, hypocrite and depraved. Milverton was described by one Tin Boxer as, "the guy you love to hate, and he deserved what he got." Roylott was hated not only because of his violence, but because he was too cowardly to commit the violence himself. Instead he employed a snake. "What a slug!"

Another question asked was: If you could be a fly on the wall and experience one of the adventures, which one would you have liked to have lived through? A majority of people answered *A Study in Scarlet.* For some it contained the most action while others felt that seeing the first meeting between Holmes and Watson would be a treat.

Finally, the survey asked what were people's favorite non-canonical experiences with Sherlock Holmes. Answers varied greatly and may be looked at as suggestions for others who have not had these experiences. Many held the Granada series in high esteem. As for pastiches, *The Seven Percent Solution* had a few mentions. Others had more personal experiences. Andy Solberg said, "My first Sherlockian Dinner." And Brent Morris mentioned the Watson's Tin Box dinners.

All told, this survey gave some interesting insight into the world of Holmes and his Tin Boxer aficionados. I would like to thank everybody who participated and I would be happy to discuss one-on-one your own personal choices.

Terrorists in the Canon?

– Marshall S. Berdan

In addition to reminding Sherlockians of how little Scotland Yard has improved since the days of Lestrade and Gregson, this July's terrorist attacks in London might have prompted them to wonder whether the great Sherlock Holmes himself ever had to deal with terrorists. Well, the answer to that all depends on how they define the word "terrorist." If they accept the traditional dictionary definition – "a member of an organization who uses terror, violence, and intimidation to achieve an end" – then there are a number of candidates: the Scowrers of "The Valley of Fear," the Carbonari of "the Red Circle," the Ku Klux Klan of "The Five Orange Pips," even possibly the Mormons of "A Study in Scarlet," though it must be quickly pointed out that none of these groups was based upon British soil and that Holmes only became involved with them when their dogged pursuit of a renegade or counterfeit member brought them to England.

But what about the more modern definition, that is to say, "representatives of an occupied or otherwise suppressed ethnic or national group who seek to attain concessions or liberation from their perceived oppressors by engaging in acts of indiscriminate violence against the civilian population." At first blush, the only Canonical characters who appear to met these criteria are the nihilists Anna and Sergius Coram of "The Adventure of the Golden Pince-Nez," but then the scene of their terrorist activities was czarist Russia, and they had brought not their work, but only a twenty-year old grudge with them.

But there is one home-grown and home soil-active candidate in the Canon and he appears in Holmes's very last chronicled adventure. No, it is not Von Bork, the master German spy, but the Master himself – or more accurately his two-year assumed identity as a bitter Irish-American by the name of Altamont.

Sherlockians, of course, see Altamont not as a terrorist, but as a counterfeit traitor whose mission it is to infiltrate and pervert Von Bork's espionage ring. But it must be remembered that it took Holmes the better part of two years to work his way into Von Bork's trust and service. As he briefly recapitulates to his now even older friend Watson as they await the German's revival, "I. . . graduated in an Irish secret society at Buffalo, gave serious trouble to the constabulary in Skibbareen, and so eventually caught the eye of a subordinate agent of Von Bork."

Though there were numerous Irish secret societies in this country in the 1910s, only one of them would have provided Altamont with the opportunity to work his way up the chain and back to England. And that was the Clan na Gael, the American scion of the outlawed

Irish Republican Brotherhood, which had been founded in New York City in the early 1870s by deported ex-convict, and IRB stalwart, James Devoy.

The Clan na Gael that Altamont would have joined either in late 1912 or early 1913 was deeply involved in the impending war over Irish Home Rule. In May of 1912, the British House of Commons, under the leadership of Liberal Prime Minister Herbert Asquith, had passed the Third Home Rule Bill. (It was Asquith who would come to visit Holmes at his South Downs farm.) Thanks to the Parliamentary Act of the year before – which stipulated that any law passed by Commons twice in one session would become law regardless of what the House of Lords, which had derailed the Second Home Rule Bill back in 1893, said – this meant that Home Rule would become effective sometime in late 1914.

Having lost the parliamentary battle, the die-hard Unionists of what we now know as Northern Ireland were determined to win the impending military one. To do this, they would need firearms, and these they began to surreptitiously import, generally with the tacit approval – if not downright assistance – of the local authorities. Their single biggest shipment – 20,000 German Mauser rifles – would arrive at the port of Lame, near Belfast, on April 24th, 1914, and may well have been what Von Bork was referring to when he brags to Von Herling of having "stirred ... up such a devil's brew of Irish Civil war."

Not surprisingly, the Irish Republican Brotherhood began to stockpile arms themselves, the majority of which would be shipped from America by the Clan na Gael. Because of its remoteness, i.e., far away from the British garrisons in Dublin, and its location in the extreme southwest of Ireland among the first landfalls for ships crossing the Atlantic, the small port of Skibbareen was a natural selection for IRB gunrunning activities. Whether Altamont was sent there or volunteered to go there, we do not know, but his established connections with the Clan na Gael would have made this his logical assignment once he arrived in Ireland.

Of course we know that Holmes himself was not a traitor and that it was his inside information that had led to the capture of his five fellow agents – Jack James, Hollis, Steiner, and two unnamed others. We might also reasonably surmise that it was Holmes who had alerted the British authorities about the Asgard, the yacht of Robert Erskine Childers which landed some 600 guns from Belgium at Howth, just outside of Dublin, on the evening of July 26th, 1914, where it was unexpectedly met by British solders.

But it also stands to reason that Holmes could not have been sabotaging any of the IRB's Skibbareen operations as to have done so probably would have disqualified him from consideration for the English assignment that he needed to fulfill his ultimate mission.

After all, had the activities of the relatively unknown quantity, Altamont, fallen under any shadow – and especially that of double agency – then it is extremely unlikely that Von Bork, whose own secret mission and personal freedom would also have been at risk, would have recruited him for that even bigger assignment. We must conclude, therefore, that Altamont's nefarious activities in Skibbareen went off without hitch, and that the British government willingly accepted the tradeoff of a couple hundred smuggled firearms for the complete and utter dismantling of Von Bork's spy ring.

Though no Sherlockian would go so far as to opine that the world's first and still finest consulting detective was also a modern terrorist, there does, however, seem to be a case that can be made against a certain bitter Irish-American by the name of Altamont. Now whether this individual is guilty or not all depends upon your definition of "extenuating circumstances."

Contributors

John C. Sherwood of Pennsylvania is an editor for the News Journal Co. in Delaware and runs **MysteryVisits.com**. He is a professional Sherlock Holmes impersonator, has written for the *Baker Street Journal* and is a member of the Hounds of the Internet and Watson's Tin Box. He can be reached at **jcs@mysteryvisits.com**.

Paul Churchill is a semi-retired Latin teacher in Howard County. He is one of the three original co-founders of Watson's Tin Box. He has illustrated many Sherlockian books and prides himself on his forgery skills in collecting relics from the Holmes saga. He likes long walks on the beach, quiet drives through the slums, and gentle breezes through his diminishing hair.

Dave Hatch in real life has reached the summit of his aspirations by becoming and remaining a government bureaucrat. He has maintained a lifelong interest in Sherlockian matters. The first "grown-up" book he bought, while in sixth grade, was the complete SH. He was Gasogene X of Watson's Tin Box.

Andy Solberg BSI, Gasogene VIII, enjoys writing Sherlockian analysis and verse. He is a frequent contributor to the *Baker Street Journal* and was the co-winner of the BSJ's Morley-Montgomery Award for 2004. After attending many Sherlockian societies' dinners, he considers the monthly Tin Box dinners his home.

Marshall Berdan is a long-standing contributor to both the Higher and Lower Criticisms via a series of scholarly submissions that itself extends over three separate continents. As a result of his recent relocation to Weston, CT, he is now a member in even better standing of Watson's Tin Box, The Six Napoleons of Baltimore, and The Red Circle of Washington.

Fred Campbell is fairly new to the world of Sherlockian matters. While occasionally reading some adventures as child, he rediscovered the Sherlock Holmes adventures four years ago while on his honeymoon in London. Currently he splits his time between Howard Community College where he teaches and home with wife Deeanna and two-year old son Miles (who Fred hopes to one day dress up as Holmes for Halloween). Finding Watson's Tin Box has been a great discovery for Fred and he joyfully looks forward to each monthly meeting.