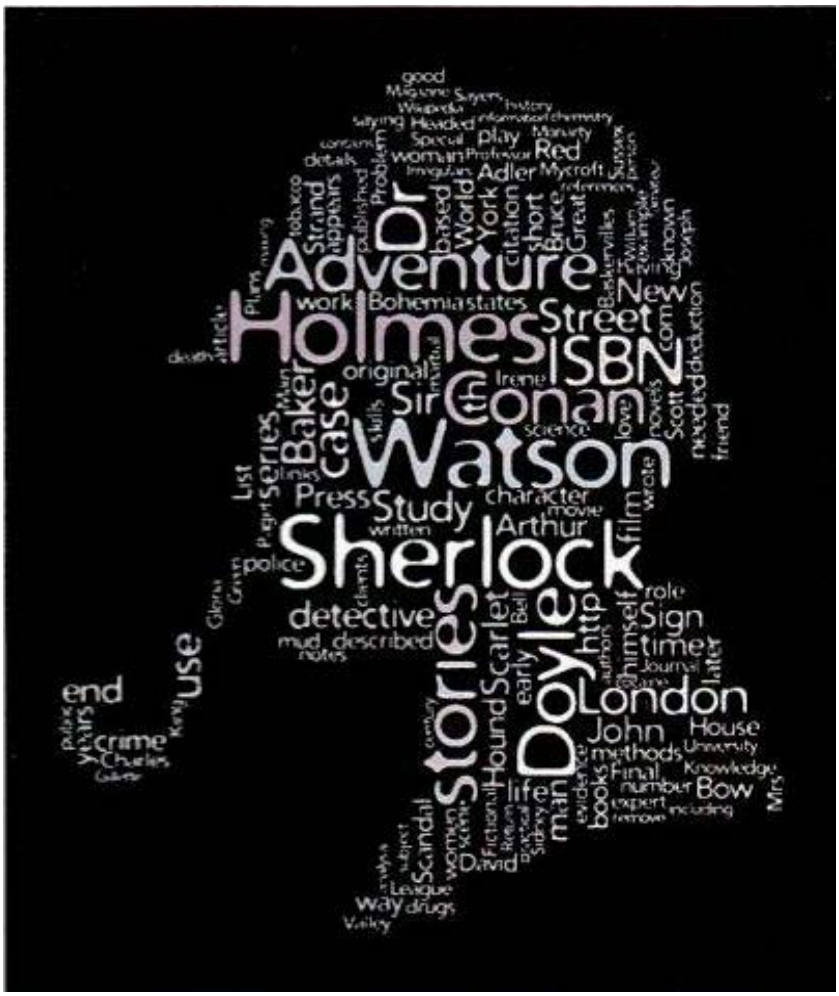
Presented by

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

Sherlockian



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http://web2foryou.wikispaces.com/Word+Clouds
I was unable to locate Mr. Bradley, to ask his permission and so can only ask his forgiveness. I hope he will regard my use of his lovely Holmesian Word Cloud as the compliment intended and forgive my presumption.[1]

"And Mademoiselle's address?" he asked.
"Is Briony Lodge, Serpentine Avenue, St. John's Wood."
Holmes took a 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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[1] I don't understand why she couldn't reach Phil Bradley. That web site leads to these accounts:

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- Les

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Victim of A Heartless Wile:
The Exploitation of Agatha

– William Hyder, BSI

When he was working on a case Sherlock Holmes went for the jugular. He was impatient with side issues.

One of the side issues in "Charles Augustus Milverton" was an innocent and trusting young woman whom we know only as Agatha. She was Milverton's housemaid, and Holmes, posing as "a plumber with a rising business, Escott by name," shamelessly used her to learn her employer's habits and the layout of his house. "Escott" walked out with Agatha in the evenings, mixing lovers' talk with shrewd questioning, and to keep the thing going he went so far as to propose marriage.

When Holmes coolly described what he had been doing, Dr. Watson, ever the gentleman, was horrified. "But the girl, Holmes!" he protested.

Holmes "shrugged his shoulders. 'You can't help it, my dear Watson. You must play your cards as best you can when such a stake is on the table.'"

Then, possibly responding to a disapproving glare from the doctor, he hastily added, "However, I rejoice to say that I have a hated rival who will certainly cut me out the instant my back is turned."

That might have been true. It also might have been something Holmes invented to appease his friend.

In the England of Holmes's day, breach of promise of marriage was a civil offense. A man could be sued for breaking a formal engagement and, if found guilty, compelled to pay damages to the woman he had jilted.[1] The offense was dealt with under the laws governing business deals and other formal agreements, and came under the jurisdiction of the Court of the Exchequer.

Holmes would have felt sure that there was no danger of Agatha going to law. For one thing, Escott the plumber did not exist, so Agatha would have been hard put to find him. For another, she could not have afforded to consult a solicitor, and still less afforded to have that solicitor approach a barrister to plead her case in court.

Realistically it was only women of a certain standing who could sue for breach of promise. The amours of a servant girl like Agatha were considered comic by persons of the higher classes, and not only by them. The British music halls were patronized largely

[1] **https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Breach_of_promise**

by working-class people, and as late as 1906 an artiste called Vesta Victoria won great success with her song "Waiting at the Church,"[2] whose chorus runs:

There was I, waiting at the church,
Waiting at the church,
Waiting at the church,
When I found he'd left me in the lurch,
Lor', how it did upset me!

All at once he sent me round a note,
Here's the very note,
This is what he wrote –
Can't get away to marry you to-day –
My wife won't let me! [3]

Even when brought by a woman of a higher class, a breach of promise action, as perceived by the public, had something amusing about it. So the higher a woman stood in the social scale, the less willing she would have been to expose her situation in open court.

Charles Dickens had great fun describing the case of "Martha Bardell, widow, v. Samuel Pickwick," in which the naive Mr. Pickwick, because of a misunderstanding, is sued for breach of promise by his landlady. The trial of Bardell v. Pickwick is reported in comic detail in *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* (better known as *The Pickwick Papers),* which was published as a serial in 1836-1837.

It was not Dickens's intention to mock the woman in the case. Mrs. Bardell was herself a victim, persuaded to bring the action by the rascally lawyers Dodson and Fogg, who were fully prepared to send her to a debtors' prison when they were unable to collect their fee. As he did more grimly in *Bleak House,* Dickens was satirizing the English legal system of the time, which he had learned to hate during his early years as a court stenographer.

Later in the century came *Trial by Jury,* a one-act comic opera written byW. S. Gilbert, with music by Arthur Sullivan.[4] Because breach of promise actions made private affairs public and exposed the plaintiffs to ridicule, the few women bold enough to bring such actions were often obvious fortune hunters. Gilbert therefore characterized his plaintiff (a

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[2] Sigmund Spaeth, A *History of Popular Music in America* (New York: Random House, 1948), 351.

[3] Fred W. Leigh and Henry E. Pether, "Waiting at the Church" (London and New York: Francis, Day & Hunter, n.d. [1906]).

[4] Arthur Jacobs, *Arthur Sullivan. A Victorian Musician* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 89-90.

soprano) as a calculating and mercenary young woman. To be fair all around, however, he depicted the defendant (a tenor) as promiscuous and shifty, the judge (comic baritone) as corrupt, and the chorus of jurymen as outspokenly biased in favor of the beautiful plaintiff.

The plaintiffs counsel, in his opening statement, uses his professional histrionic talent to arouse sympathy for his client (and incidentally provides an appropriate title for this paper):

With a sense of deep emotion
I approach this painful case;
For I never had a notion
That a man could he so base,
Or deceive a girl confiding,
Vows, et cetera, *deriding.*

See my interesting client,
Victim of a heartless wile!
See the traitor all defiant
Wear a supercilious smile!
Sweetly smiled my client on him,
Coyly woo'd, and gently won him.

First seen in London in 1875,[5] *Trial by Jury* was an immediate hit[6]. It was widely performed during the rest of the 19th century and has held the stage throughout the 20th century and into the 21st.

Breach of promise of marriage is no longer actionable in the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth countries, or the United States (it was abolished in England in 1970, in the Canadian province of Saskatchewan as recently as 2010[7]). Despite this, *Trial by Jury* remains a popular item in the Gilbert and Sullivan repertory and shows every sign of continuing to entertain audiences indefinitely.

To our unfortunate Agatha, of course, there was nothing at all amusing about breach of promise. She had been left waiting at the church (figuratively, at least) by a callous impostor, which would have made her the butt of cruel jokes by some other fellow servants; the more sensitive of which, realizing that she was truly the victim of a heartless wile, would have considered her an object of pity, which might have been even harder for Agatha to bear.

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[5] Jane Stedman, *W. S. Gilbert. A Classic Victorian and His Theatre* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 128-129.

[6] Stedman, 129; Jacobs, 93.

[7] **Wikipedia**, loc. cit.

We can only hope that Holmes's offhand mention of "a hated rival who will certainly cut me out the instant that my back is turned" was the truth, and that the rival was a more compassionate and trustworthy man than Sherlock Holmes.

Watson, Holmes, and Marfan Syndrome

– Peter Jacoby

"But facts are facts, Watson, and after all you are only a general practitioner with very limited experience and mediocre qualifications."

– Sherlock Holmes, "The Dying Detective"

Watson was quite naturally "bitterly hurt" by Holmes's unflattering appreciation of his medical skills quoted above. One can only hope that his wounded pride was eased after Holmes explained that his excoriation of his longtime friend was necessary to prevent Watson from discovering that the detective's illness was a sham, the better for the doctor to convincingly solicit assistance from Culverton Smith in treating that condition. "Do you imagine that I have no respect for your medical talents?" Holmes assured him. And yet, Canonical scholarship often concurs in Holmes's initial description of Watson's mediocre capabilities.[1]

Certainly, by all indications Watson was as unsuccessful in his medical practice as his literary agent, Arthur Conan Doyle, had been in his own medical career.[2] We are told in *The Stockbroker's Clerk* that the general practice in the Paddington district that Watson purchased had been so seriously reduced by the illness of his predecessor that it produced "little more than [£]300 a year." Watson labored to expand the practice; in the first three months after the purchase, he "was kept very closely at work" (*The Stockbroker's Clerk,*)

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[1] See, e.g., Howard Brody,"*Notes from the Malpractice Trial of John H. Watson, M.D.*" 33 Baker Street Journal (New Series) (December 1983) pp. 229-232. There is even skepticism among some scholars whether Watson overstated his medical credentials, because the Doctor of Medicine he stated he acquired in 1878 was an advanced degree, achieved only after successful presentation of a thesis and the acquisition of a prerequisite bachelor's degree in surgical skills. See W.S. Baring-Gould, *The Annotated Sherlock Holmes* (John Murray, London 1967) ("Baring-Gould") pp. 74-75. But other more recent commentators accept that Watson had in fact acquired such advanced qualifications. See Robert S. Katz. MD "*John H. Watson. M.D.: Pioneer Neuropathologist,*" 30 Baker Street Journal (New Series) (September 1982) 150-52.

[2] Conan Doyle struggled to make a go of his original Southsea practice, but when he left there in 1890 to pursue training in ophthalmology in Vienna the practice was too small to be saleable to another physician, and he simply closed it and referred his patients elsewhere. After his return, he set up a consulting room in London but, as he later admitted, not a single person crossed the threshold there and he ultimately threw his energies into a writing career. See Daniel Stashower, *Teller of Tales: The Life of Arthur Conan Doyle* (Henry Holt and Company, New York 1999), pp. 114-117. Fortunately for Canonical devotees, that new endeavor was eclipsed by the enormous success of his agency on behalf of Watson.

and he asserted in *The Engineer's Thumb* that "[m]y practice had steadily increased" due to those efforts.

But the evidence belies that claim of success. There is but a single recorded instance in the Canon in which Watson claimed he was so busy treating patients he could not tear himself away to assist Holmes in one of his investigations.[3] Otherwise, he seemed perpetually to be at a loose end.[4] One or another of Watson's colleagues was "always ready" to take over his patient load, which therefore cannot have been substantial.[5] Indeed, in *The Red-Headed League* Watson was constrained to admit "My practice is never very absorbing."

However, financial success is not the sole indication of medical talent and, while Watson was not without other faults as a physician,[6] he appears to have been a practitioner whose

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[3] On that occasion, in *The Boscombe Valley Mystery*, when Watson protested that his practice was busy ("I have a fairly long list [of patients] at present") his wife successfully cajoled him without much effort to go out on the case with Holmes. She must have had a more realistic appreciation of the state of Watson's practice. On another occasion, in *The Mazarin Stone* Holmes teasingly accused Watson of fibbing about his ability to drop everything to aid in a case. ("You bear every sign of the busy medical man, with calls on him every hour.") Watson's diffident rejoinder ("Not such important ones") was a telling demonstration of the true state of things.

[4] See *The Naval Treaty* ("I was going to say that my practice could get along very well for a day or two, since it is the slackest time in the year."); *The Red-Headed League* ("I have nothing to do today."); *The Mazarin Stone* ("Count me in, Holmes. I have nothing to do for a day or two.") Most tellingly, in *The Final Problem* Watson unhesitatingly agreed to Holmes's proposal to come away with him to the European continent for an entire week – which in the event became even longer. ("The practice is quiet… and I have an accommodating neighbour. I should be glad to come.")

[5] See *The Boscombe Valley Mystery* ("Oh, Anstruther would do your work for you"); *The Crooked Man* ("I have no doubt Jackson would take my practice."); *The Final Problem*, note 4 *supra*. By the same token, the fact that Watson took on his neighbor's practice when the latter was away (*The Stockbroker's Clerk*) indicates that he was not overly busy himself, and may have welcomed the opportunity to employ his medical talents even on another physician's patients.

[6] His principal treatment for everything from fainting spells to traumatic amputations was the dispensing of copious amounts of brandy to the affected individuals. See *The Blue Carbuncle*; *The Naval Treaty*; *The Priory School*; and *The Engineer's Thumb*. (In *The Greek Interpreter* the alcohol was supplemented with ammonia to bring around the unconscious client, Mr. Melas.) With respect to organization and tidiness, in *The Musgrave Ritual* he also admitted to being "rather more lax than befits a medical man."

capabilities belie the assertion that he lacked training and skills.[7] We certainly know that he kept up to date with developments in his profession. For example, in *The Stockbroker's Clerk*, he was poring over his copy of the *British Medical Journal* when he was interrupted by Holmes, importuning him to come away to Birmingham to investigate the spurious Harry Pinner. Again, in *The Sign of Four* Watson turned his attentions away from thoughts of Mary Morstan and "plunged furiously into the latest treatise upon pathology." And in *The Resident Patient* Watson showed himself familiar with Dr. Percy Trevelyan's "monograph on obscure nervous lesions," a work that had achieved little sale among the medical fraternity. Clearly, Watson was well-read in medical matters.

Indeed, at the very outset of his medical career,[8] Watson appears to have been the first member of his profession to describe an important genetic disorder of human connective tissue. And yet, when it came to those with whom he was in regular contact, he seemingly failed to detect – or, more likely, chose not to comment publicly upon – the very same disorder in his closest friend, Holmes himself.

The visible characteristics of this hereditary disorder may be briefly stated. Sufferers of the syndrome tend to be unusually tall, with long limbs; long, thin fingers; and abnormal joint flexibility.[9] But the condition has a range of other symptoms, from mild to severe. At the latter end of that spectrum, the most serious complications are defects of the heart valves and aorta. It may also manifest itself in defects in the skeletal structure, the lungs, the eyes, the dural sac surrounding the spinal cord, and the hard palate.[10]

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[7] See Robert S. Katz MD, "*Doctor Watson – A Man of Mediocre Qualifications*?" 30 Baker Street Journal (New Series) (June 1980) pp. 75-76.

[8] Watson graduated in 1878 from the University of London, took the course for surgeons at the Army Medical School at Netley, and then was briefly stationed in Afghanistan before being invalided home, and he did not formally resume practicing medicine until some years later. *See A Study in Scarlet* and *The Stockbroker's Clerk*. Although the account of the duo's first case together was not published until 1887, the chronologies of Sherlockian scholars place the events it recounts in 1881, less than four years after Watson's graduation.

[9] The most famous historical personage once suspected of having had this syndrome was Abraham Lincoln, known for his greatly above-average height and long fingers. It is now believed he instead suffered from a different condition, multiple endocrine neoplasia type 2B. *See* John G. Sotos, MD, *The Physical Lincoln* (Mt. Vernon Book Systems 2007.) Others thought to have had the condition include Howard Hughes, William Tecumseh Sherman, Niccolo Paganini, and Sergei Rachmaninoff. *See* Robert M. Cabbitt, *The Case of the Telltale Toes* (BookBrewer 2011) ("Cabbitt").

[10] For a discussion of the symptoms, pathogenisis, epidemiology, diagnosis and management of the syndrome, *see* Peter N. Robinson and Maurice Godfrey, eds., *Marfan Syndrome: A Primer for Clinicians and Scientists* (Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers 2004).

"Marfan syndrome," as this disease is now known, is named after Antoine Bernard-Jean Marfan, who presented a paper about a five year old female patient with the characteristics of this disorder in 1896 to the Société Médicale des Hôpitaux de Paris.[11] It is especially ironic that Marfan and not Watson is credited with the discovery of his eponymous syndrome, for two reasons. First, today it is thought that Marfan's patient (a girl named Gabrielle) was in fact affected by an entirely different condition known as congenital contractural arachnodactyly.[12] Even more significant, however, Watson had already described the essential characteristics of that hereditary disease in A *Study in Scarlet,* published in 1887 in *The Strand Magazine* – nearly a decade *before* the French physician whose name is now associated with that condition.

There, early in the account of that case, we are told that Jefferson Hope, the murderer of the Mormon elders Joseph Stangerson and Enoch Drebber, "was more than six feet high," a deduction by Holmes from the crime scene of Drebber's death that was later borne out when Hope was captured. We are also told that, even as a much younger man living in Utah, Hope's hand "was hardly more fleshy than that of a skeleton." These are classic physical symptoms of the disease.

Most significantly, when at his invitation Watson placed his hand upon Hope's chest, he felt "an extraordinary throbbing and commotion" which his training told him could be only one thing:

"Why, you have an aortic aneurysm!" (it was from the rupture of that aneurysm that Hope died on the night after his capture.) This is a critical diagnostic clue. "The most important vascular defect [from the condition] is in the aorta... Cardiovascular disorders are the most common cause of death in Marfan's syndrome."[13] All this has lead knowledgeable

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[11] See Biography of Marfan at **http://www.whonamedit.com/doctor.cfm/972.html**. In fairness, Marfan was not so immodest as to name the condition after himself; that appellation was applied to it in 1931 by Henricus Jacobus Marie Weve, a Dutch ophthalmologist. *Id.*

[12] *Id.*

[13] Raphael Rubin, David Sheldon Strayer, and Emanuel Rubin, eds., *Pathology: Clinicopathologic Foundations of Medicine, 6th ed.* (Lippincott Williams & Wilkins 1989), p. 236 ("Rubin et al.").

medical observers,[14] Sherlockian scholars,[15] and even the popular press[16] to credit Watson with the discovery of the syndrome that instead bears Marfan's name.

Surprisingly, however, there is no similar discussion of the multiple indications that Watson's fellow lodger at 221B was also a victim of Marfan's, albeit in a less severe form than Jefferson Hope. In *The Hound of the Baskervilles,* Dr. Mortimer – who besides being a physician was an amateur physical anthropologist – observed that Holmes had a markedly "dolichocephalic" skull and "well-marked supra-orbital development." Dolichocephaly (also termed scaphocephaly) denotes a skull that is unusually long in relation to its width. It is a characteristic of several medical conditions, specifically Sensenbrenner syndrome, Sotos syndrome and Marfan syndrome.

The first two of those conditions are associated with fairly serious mental and physical infirmities, from which we know that Holmes did not suffer. To the contrary, he was physically robust. (Recall that in *The Speckled Band* he unbent the poker that Dr. Roylott had twisted.) Holmes's intellect was also fully consistent with many Marfan's sufferers who have charismatic personalities and superior intelligence quotients.[17]

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[14] *See* Earl M. Cooperman, *MD, Marfan's Syndrome and Sherlock Holmes,"* 112 Canadian Medical Association Journal (February 22,1975), p. 423; Earl M. Cooperman, MD, *"More on Sherlock Holmes,* 113 Canadian Medical Association Journal (December 13, 1975), pp. 1024-1025; D. A. Redmond, *"Marfan's Syndrome and Sherlock Holmes,"* 113 Canadian Medical Association Journal (July 12, 1975) p. l9. Some medical authorities believe that Hope's aneurysm was due to neurosyphilis. *See* H.R. Bates, MD " *Sherlock Holmes and Syphilis,* 113 Canadian Medical Association Journal (November 8, 1975) p. 815; *see also* Baring-Gould, *supra,* p. 224 n. 170. But syphilis attacks persons regardless of their great physical stature, gaunt frame, and the thin configuration of their fingers; Hope had all three of those symptoms of Marfan.

[15] See John S. Gilbody, "Sherlock Holmes and the World Medical Literature 1966 Onwards," 21 Sherlock Holmes Journal (Winter 1993), p. 91 (stating Cooperman's diagnosis "would seem the most plausible"); D. A. Redmond, *"The Oasis in the Howling Desert,"* 27 Baker Street Journal (New Series) March 1977) p. 19 (the story "accurately described 's syndrome... ten years before the classic description gave it a name.")

[16] See Lisa Sanders, MD *"Hidden Clues,"* The New York Times Magazine (December 4, 2009) (the account of Hope's symptoms "was among the first to describe an inherited disease now known as Marfan's syndrome"); Cabbitt, *supra.*

[17] For example, in a 1988 study of 30 children with Marfan's, tests showed those subjects with a mean full scale IQ, of 109.3, meaningfully higher than the population as a whole. *See* K. J. Hofman, BA. Barnhardt and R.E. Pyeritz," Marfan *Syndrome: Neuropsychological Aspects* 31 American Journal of Medical Genetics (October 1988), pp. 331-338. (Abstract available at **http://tinyurl.com/oduzxkx** - Les)

He also exhibited the other classic outward manifestations of Marfan's syndrome. According to Watson's description in A *Study in Scarlet,* Holmes "in height... was rather over six feet, and so excessively lean that he seemed to be considerably taller." This was very much taller than the average Englishman of his day.[18] Moreover, in *The Valley of Fear* Watson expressly refers to Holmes's "long, thin fingers" – once again, a symptom of Marfan's.

Another recognized symptom of Marfan's syndrome is abnormal joint flexibility. It certainly appears that Holmes was remarkably limber, as evidenced by his ability to disguise himself successfully. While some of those roles involved the skillful application of theatrical makeup, false beards and the like, others clearly involved his reliance on his loose-jointed frame. In *The Empty House*, Holmes successfully presented himself to Watson as an aged bookseller much shorter than his actual height. When that disguise was shed, Holmes exclaimed "It is no joke when a tall man has to take a foot off his stature for several hours on end." Similarly, in *The Final Problem* Holmes impersonated an elderly Italian cleric to evade Moriarty and his henchman. When in Watson's company aboard their train carriage, he briefly dropped that disguise and, as Watson related, for a moment the priest's "drooping figure expanded," again revealing Holmes's prowess at altering his stature in a manner that must have been considerably advantaged by the effect of Marfan's on his skeletal system.

Finally, even though Holmes exhibited numerous symptoms of Marfan's, his must have been a relatively mild case. How else could he have survived his frequent use of a powerful drug like cocaine, with its impact on the user's heart rate, if he had suffered from the cardiovascular defects of the disease? In like manner, Holmes's eyesight and his use of that faculty in his detection efforts obviously were not compromised, although serious ocular effects are often observed in serious cases of Marfan's.[19]

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[18] Remember that Holmes was the scion of a country squire; in early 19th century England, the difference between the average height of English upper class youth and working class individuals of similar age reached almost 9 inches See J. Komlos, *On English Pygmies and giants: The physical stature of English youth in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.* 25 Research in Economic History (2007). pp. 149-168. The minimum height requirements for British army troops also reflected the short stature of most male Britons. At the time of the Crimean War (1853-1856), that standard was 5 feet 6 inches, but by 1883 it had been reduced to 5 feet 3 inches and during the Second Boer War (1899-1902) it was further reduced to 5 feet. *See "Dwindling Tommy Atkins,"* New Zealand Herald, December 8, 1909, p. 9, available at **http://tinyurl.com/oomnhbg**. Even in our current era, statistical tables show that the average height of English males is only 5 feet, 9 and 1/2 inches. *See* **http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Template:Average_height_around_the_world**

[19] In addition to retinal detachment and severe myopia, Marfan's syndrome may be manifested by dislocation of the crystalline lens in one or both eyes (a condition known as *ectopia lentis).* *See* Rubin et al., *supra* note 13.

Did Watson suspect that the murderer Jefferson Hope and his friend Holmes, "the best and wisest man I have ever known" (*The Final Problem*) shared a serious illness? Certainly there were abundant symptoms to which Watson could have applied his diagnostic skills. But whether or not he knew or suspected that Holmes suffered from the condition now known as Marfan's syndrome is a moot point, because Watson as a physician was accustomed to showing discretion about his patients and would not have revealed such a chink in the armor of his fellow lodger. No such inhibitions applied to his evaluation of Jefferson Hope, with whom he had no doctor-patient relationship and no bonds of friendship. In all likelihood, just as in *The Sussex Vampire* Watson regarded Holmes's illness as "a story for which the world is not yet prepared," and so it has remained until now.

To CAM
From His Dark Lady

– April Cumow

There's danger loving higher than one's worth
And failing, even once, to keep love true.
Those guilty secrets guilty pleasures birth
Are venom dear to vipers such as you.

While torturing lost souls, you merely smiled
And fingered your fat purse of tainted gold.
Speaking of treachery, your tone was mild
Yet prideful of the lives you'd bought and sold.

You caused the heartbreak of a noble man.
I seek my vengeance; there can be no flight.
You never thought to see me here again.
The havoc you have wreaked will end tonight.

Pitiless then, you watched me cringe and kneel.
Pitiless now, I crush you with my heel.

Chair à Canon
Welcome!

– Andrew L. Solberg, ASH, BSI

I think, Watson,' he remarked at last, "that of all our cases we have had none more fantastic than this."

In the last issue *of Irene's Cabinet,* we celebrated the past. So, I decided that in this issue, I would address my thoughts on the present and future. Over the past few years, the Sherlockian world has seen a great influx of new members. This year, we have certainly welcomed a marked increase in attendees at Tin Box gatherings. While some of the new members have been brought in by their love of the Sherlock Holmes stories and their discovery that there is a Sherlockian community, many have come because they are fans of the BBC television show *Sherlock,* and (less so) the CBS *show Elementary* and the Robert Downey, Jr. Sherlock Holmes movies.

The new members have been mostly (though not exclusively) between the ages of 25-35, and are predominantly female. There is an admitted, no, celebrated "fandom" aspect to many in this group, which centers on the television shows and movies mentioned above and their characters and actors. In some cases, the new folks have not yet read much of the Canon.

I simply say, "Welcome! Good to have you here. Pull up a chair. Hope you'll stay."

While the fandom aspect of the current influx of new members in the Sherlockian community has been controversial in some parts of the Sherlockian community among people who shout, "Canon, first and foremost," I don't agree. Honestly, I don't see it as being so different from the traditional reasons why people have come to the Sherlockian community in the past.

How many older Sherlockians were first introduced to Sherlock Holmes through the Basil Rathbone movies or the Jeremy Brett Grenada Series on PBS? A couple of Tin Boxers are primarily fans of Laurie King's Mary Russell novels.

When I first joined the Baltimore Sherlockian community in 1976, there were a lot of 25-35 year olds. Many of the younger Sherlockians were brought in because of William S. Baring-Gould's *Annotated Sherlock Holmes,* which initially was published in 1967. It was quite popular, sold in all the bookstores, and exposed a lot of budding Sherlockians (like *moi)* to the surprising existence of a Sherlockian community.

Likewise, many were brought in because of Nicholas Meyer's pastiche *The Seven Percent Solution.* Meyer's book was enormously popular, was serialized in *Playboy* magazine (which had far more literary *gravitas* and general popularity than it does today), and was

on the *New York Times* Bestseller List for forty weeks between September 15, 1974 and June 22, 1975.[1] When these new folks arrived, they didn't have much knowledge of the Canon, but they enjoyed the camaraderie of Sherlockian community.

Moving to the 1980s, the Sherlockian community saw many new members entering because of the Jeremy Brett Sherlock Holmes series that aired on PBS between 1984 and 1994. At every Sherlockian gathering, a major topic would be Grenada's portrayal of an adventure, its strengths and weaknesses, and how good (or, in my case, how shrill) Brett was. Those brought into the community by the Brett series were older than those brought in by the Meyer pastiche. However, the fandom nature of their devotion to the Brett series is hardly different from today's fans of BBC *Sherlock.*

Then, many of these people who came in because of Meyer and Brett stayed, became active, learned the canon, and are today's Sherlockian leaders.

The Sherlockian community has not seen such an influx of 25-35 year olds since the 1970s. It is, frankly, very refreshing.

There is no doubt that the new members have added a new dimension to the programs and discussions at the Tin Box. Look at the presentations we have had at the Tin Box over the last year. They do reflect the more online dexterity of the new members and, in at least one case, their female interests (which, I will also say, was extraordinarily fun for all of us.) The discussions have included reports of 22lB Con, news of BBC *Sherlock,* the strengths and weaknesses *of Elementary,* and other topics that were not previously discussed.

And every month, the new members appear to have read the Canonical adventure of the evening and participate in the discussions of it, offering insightful comments and points of view and, often, comparing and contrasting the story to other Canonical stories. They have added to the breadth of the discussion in a way that I find refreshing and interesting. They may not have read the entire Canon yet, but the Tin Box has always been a healthy mix of "seasoned" members and members who are reading through the Canon for the first time. In fact, that was one of the goals of the founders of the Tin Box. There is nothing new here, except the refreshing points of view brought by new members.

And, judging from all of the online and offline activities that they have organized, they appear to have impressive organizational and leadership skills. The Baker Street Babes, which started as a fan based group, has over 3,000 "Likes" on Facebook, an active website (**http://bakerstreetbabes.com/**), an active Twitter account, an active blog, a podcast series, and periodic in-person meet-ups. Sherlock NYC and Sherlock DC also have active websites, (**http://sherlocknyc.tumblr.com/** and **http://sherlockdc. www.wordpress.com/**), Facebook pages and meet-ups. And, they support the more traditional Sherlockian community. In fact, the current Sherlock DC website has a notice of call for submissions for this issue *of Irene's Cabinet*! There is no apparent schism between the fandom based Sherlockian world and the more traditional one, aside from some membersof the traditional community who do not consider the fan based members "elite Sherlockians."

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[1] **http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Seven-Per-Cent_Solution**

My guess is that those in the traditional community who are condescending to the new members simply do not have any real interaction with them. Further, I think that they forget what they were like, themselves, when they were new members of the Sherlockian community. Can one expect newer members to be as familiar with the Canon and all that has been written about it as more seasoned members? Of course not. In fact, I have always been envious of newer members who discover Vincent Starrett's *The Private Life Of Sherlock Holmes* for the first time. They have so much to look forward to. I say to those who feel critical of the fandom based crowd, "Get to know them. Look what they are doing. And think back to when you were a new member, yourself. These new members have huge potential and skills. And, they love Sherlock Holmes."

And, to those of you who are new members, I say, "Welcome. Thanks for your contributions to the Sherlockian community. Hope you'll stay."

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's 1898 Novel: The Tragedy of the *Korosko*

– Fred Glueckstein

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, renowned for his stories about the detective Sherlock Holmes, was a prolific writer. His wide range of works include science fiction stories, plays, romances, poetry, non-fiction, and historical novels. An example of the breadth of Conan Doyle's creativity is seen between the Holmes novels *Sign of Four* (1890) and *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1902), in a desert adventure novel titled *The Tragedy of the Korosko.* First serialized in 1897 in *The Strand Magazine,* Conan Doyle wrote *The Tragedy of the Korosko* in 1898. Later, he adapted it into a play, *Fires of Fate,* which was then made into a 1923 silent film, and a 1932 sound movie.

Conan Doyle's idea for *The Tragedy of the Korosko* occurred while on a visit to Egypt, where he took his wife, Louisa, to improve her health. While in Cairo, Conan Doyle, Louisa, and his sister celebrated the 1896 New Year. Afterward, they took a Cook's boat tour up the Nile "getting as far as the outposts of civilization of Wady Halfa," wrote Conan Doyle in his 1924 autobiography, *Memories and Adventures.*

"The banks in the upper reaches were not too safe, as raiders on camels came down at times, but on the water one was secure from all the chances of fate," he wrote. "At the same time I thought that the managers of these tours took undue risks, and when I found myself on one occasion on the Rock of Abousir with a drove of helpless tourists, male and female, nothing whatever between us and the tribesmen, and a river between us and the nearest troops, I could not but think what an appalling situation would arise if a little troop of these far-riding camel men were to appear."

Conan Doyle continued: "We had four Negro soldiers as an escort, who would be helpless before any normal riding party. It was the strong impression which I there received which gave me the idea of taking a group of people of different types and working out what the effect of so horrible an experience would be upon each. This became *The Tragedy of the Korosko.*"

The story was first serialized in *The Strand Magazine* between June and December 1897 with illustrations by Sidney Paget. The British book edition was published on February 1, 1898. The first American edition was published by Philadelphia's J. B. Lippincott Company on January 22, 1898. It was titled A *Desert Drama/Being The Tragedy of the Korosko.* The book is dedicated "To my friend James Payn [*an English novelist*] in token of my affection and esteem." Conan Doyle later wrote: "It is a book of sensation, but it has a philosophical basis, and for that reason is among my favourites."

Chapter I of A *Desert Drama – Being The Tragedy of the Korosko* begins: "The public may possibly wonder why it is that they have never heard in the papers of the fate of the passengers of the *Korosko.* In these days of universal press agencies, responsive to the slightest stimulus, it may well seem incredible that an international incident of

such importance should remain so long unchronicled. Suffice it that there were very valid reasons, both of a personal and political nature, for holding it back.

The *Korosko,* a turtle-bottom, round-bowed stern wheeler, with a 30-inch draught and the lines of a flat-iron, started upon the 13th of February, in the year 1895, from Shellal, at the head of the first cataract, bound for Wady Haifa. I have a passenger card for the trip, which I hereby produce:"

S.W. *Korosko* February 13th.

PASSENGERS.

Colonel Cochrane Cochrane	London
Mr. Cecil Brown	London
John H. Headingly	Boston, USA
Miss Adams	Boston, USA
Miss S. Adams	Worchester, Mass, USA
Mons Fardet	Paris
Mr. and Mrs. Belmont	Dublin
James Stephens	Manchester
Rev. John Stuart	Birmingham
Mrs. Schlesinger, nurse, and child	Florence

As the *Korosko* travels on the Nile, the reader is introduced to a fascinating array of people of different nationalities that "formed a merry party." Among the conversations of the passengers, Conan Doyle included an absorbing discussion among the American, Englishman, and Frenchman on a major issue of that day, English Colonialism. The next day, under dark blue skies, some of the tourists with four Sudanese escort soldiers left the *Korosko.* With donkey boys present, the group rode donkeys to examine ruins and the famous pulpit rock of Abousir. On the Abousir, with its wondrous view of a black cliff, the river, and the yellow Libyan desert, the tourists suddenly saw men on camels appearing in the distance.

"They all looked at the stirring of red-turbaned riders who were winding out of the ravine, and there fell such a hush that the buzzing of the flies sounded quite loud upon their ears," wrote Conan Doyle. "Colonel Cochrane had lit a match, and he stood with it in one hand and the unlit cigarette in the other until the flame licked around his fingers. Belmont whistled. The dragoman [official guide] stood staring with his mouth half-open, and a curious slaty tint in his full, red lips. The others looked from one to the other with an uneasy sense that there was something wrong."

The riders were Dervishes. A bloody battle of guns and spears occurred between the male passengers, who fought bravely, and the Arabs. The American, Headingly, was killed, and the rest of the group captured. The Dervish leader demanded that the passengers convert to Islam or die. After the group refused, he then conferred with another on what to do with the captured passengers. Ultimately, the leader decided not to kill them but ransom their lives for gold. The men and women of the group, the dragoman, and two wounded escort soldiers

were put on kneeling brown or white camels and taken with the Arabs into the Libyan Desert.

Using his personal experience in Egypt, as well as his creative imagination, Conan Doyle explained what happened next: "None of the white prisoners with the exception of Colonel Cochrane had ever been upon a camel before. It seemed an alarming distance to the ground when they looked down, and the curious swaying motion, with the insecurity of the saddle, made them sick and frightened. But their bodily discomfort was forgotten in the turmoil of bitter thoughts within. What a chasm gaped between their old life and their new! Less than an hour they had stood upon the summit of that rock and had laughed and chattered."

The further adventures of the prisoners make *The Tragedy of the Korosko* an exciting story. Showing human nature under trying circumstances, Conan Doyle displays how different travelers respond to the dangers faced. *The Tragedy of the Korosko* added to Conan Doyle's reputation as a writer.

Following the publication *of The Tragedy of the Korosko,* Conan Doyle wrote a dramatized version of the book into a play named *The Fires of Fate.* It opened at the Shakespeare Theatre in Liverpool, on June 11-12, 1909 and transferred to London's Lyric Theatre, where it ran from June 15 - October 8,1909. The play also appeared in the United States in Chicago and New York.

In 1923, *Fires of Fate*, a British-American silent adventure film was made. Adapted from the play, it was directed by Tom Terriss and starred Wanda Hawley, Nigel Barrie, and Pedro de Cordoba. The version released in the United States was known as *Desert Sheik.* Ten years later, in September 1932, *Fires of Fate* was released as a talking movie. The British movie was directed by Norman Walker and starred Lester Matthews, Kathleen O'Regan, and Dorothy Bartlam.

The Tragedy of the Korosko is an exciting adventure story with memorable characters, set in the African desert. Although not well-known, Conan Doyle's story is a literary success published in England and the United States. Admirers of Conan Doyle and the Sherlock Holmes series will enjoy *The Tragedy of the Korosko.* Readers will again achieve a high appreciation of his writing and his understanding of human nature.

The reader will also delight in the magnificent descriptions of traveling the Nile, such as when the rescued group was aboard a boat returning them to Cairo: "It was very soothing and restful up there on the salon deck, with no sound but the gentle lipping of the water as it rippled against the sides of the steamer," wrote Conan Doyle. "The red-after-glow was in the western sky, and it mottled the broad, smooth river with crimson. Dimly, they could discern the tall figures of herons standing upon the sandbacks, and farther off the line of river-side date-palms glided past them in a majestic procession. Once more the silver stars were twinkling out, the same clear, placid, inexorable stars to which their weary eyes had been so often upturned during the long nights of their desert martyrdom."

Note to the Reader: Paperback and hardcover of *The Tragedy of the Korosko* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is available on Amazon.com.

A Toast to the Second Mrs. Watson

– Evelyn Herzog, ASH, BSI

There are two kinds of people in the world: those who divide the world into two kinds of people, and those who don't. There are, however, three kinds of people who read the Sherlock Holmes stories: those who want to be Holmes, those who want to be Watson, and those who want to enter the stories themselves.

Now, I'm not quite sure who the people are who want to be Holmes. A silent mental survey of our Sherlockian acquaintances might suggest some who (perhaps in a hidden way) see themselves in this heroic and omniscient light – but most of us have crossed Holmes off our list. We've come to realize not only that we can never achieve Holmes's skills but also that we could never survive life with his personal baggage. So, most of us, if we are wise, do not see ourselves as Holmes.

Watson is a different matter. His genius as a writer and his glory as a human being is that, as he recounts each of his tales, we are at his elbow, following his thoughts, feeling his emotions, agreeing with his conclusions, puzzling our heads at his confusions. Just as Holmes, in judging Moriarty as an opponent, knew he didn't have to make any allowance for a lesser intelligence, so we, in judging Watson as a narrator, know we don't have to make any allowance for a lesser morality. In bravery, energy, honesty, sympathy – well, in everything – Watson has the character we want to have.

Perhaps it is my age speaking, but I believe matters change somewhat when it comes to Watson's adventures with Holmes. It is unquestionably a thrill to experience each case through Watson's narrative, but after a while some of us begin to count the costs. The downsides of the adventures are many – the interrupted sleep, the missed meals, the forced marches (and with a bad leg, you'll recall), the lunging guard dogs, the occasional poisoning or bullet wound. The downside of the periods between the adventures is, in its own way, just as bad – the endless hours in the company of a bored, cranky, drugged-up genius in a small flat without climate control. No, on consideration, I don't actually want to be Watson.

But I do want to know him. His sympathetic nature; his discerning and appreciative eye for the details of a woman's appearance and dress; his honesty and modesty; his athleticism and courage; his ability to get along on a small income and then supplement it with a return to medical practice and even to invent a new career as an author; his success in winning over the trust and respect of so complicated a character as Sherlock Holmes – well, I could go on and on. I'm not positive he can dance, sing on key, or cook an omelet, but he certainly checks a lot of the boxes on the "ideal man" chart.

Mary Morstan certainly considered Watson her ideal man. To my mind, theirs was not only a true love match but also the first marriage for both. Their wedding removed Watson from the Baker Street rooms but not from Holmes's career. The former Miss Morstan evidently knew how to pick her battles, and Watson's excursions at Holmes's side always

returned him to his own home. Later years, however, found Watson living alone; Holmes speaks of Watson's "sad bereavement."

Watson returns to live at Baker Street. Still later, Watson "deserts" Holmes for a wife (Holmes's word, of course.) Sherlockians have developed numerous theories of almost innumerable Watsonian wives. Nonetheless, it is possible that all the Canonical references concern Mary Morstan Watson alone – a sufferer from a severe physical or mental illness for a time who made a full recovery and returned to normal home life. That is my position here today. Within the Canon, Watson's first and only wife is his Mary. But what, then, of my toast? I've already told you, really. There are many of us who want to enter the Canon, not as Holmes, not as Watson, but as a form of ourselves. Thus, I give you Dr. Watson's Second Wife – ME! Also [pointing in turn to all the women at the table] you! And you! And you! To all of us! Thank you.

If Abe Only Had a Brain – A Sing-Along

(To the tune of "If I Only Had a Brain")

– Jacquelynn Morris, ASH

Abe could while away the hours
Trampling the flowers, Causing Elsie pain.
On the sill he'd be scratching
Little men who would be dancing.
Slaney didn't have a brain.

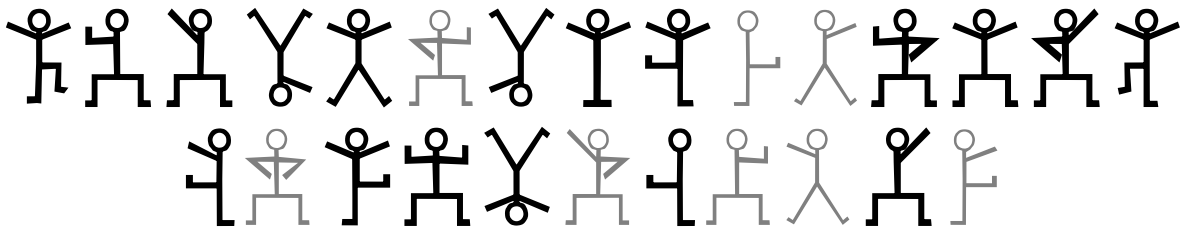
CHORUS: Oh, he could tell you why
He wrote upon the door.
Make Elsie love him as before,
She would be his... forevermore.

Abe had written every riddle,
Beginning, end, and middle
To win Elsie back again.
Who could know what he was thinking?
At romance he was stinking.
Slaney didn't have a brain.

CHORUS: Oh, he could tell you why
He left Hilton on the floor.
Elsie would never love him as before,
She would hate him... forevermore.

Abe Slaney was a ruffian
His head was full of stuffin'
To think that he could gain
Elsie's heart by killing Cubitt
Abe was really pretty stupid,
'Cause he didn't have a brain.

(Originally presented as a toast to Abe Slaney at a meeting of Mrs Hudson's Cliffdwellers of Edgewater, New Jersey, on July 7, 2013.)



(The above two lines represent the alphabet in dancing men font. The eight letters not included in DANC are grayed out - Les)

Baskerville Hall

– April Curnow

Brooding as the moors at dusk,
Ancient as the curse laid on its sons,
Silent stone of wall and tower
Keeps watch over the wild land.
Every granite block
Recalls a legacy:
Violent deeds spawn violent death.
Impossible tales come out of the mists,
Leaving the wise to ponder.
Listen while darkness closes in.
Even logic retreats a step or two.
Holmes was right to be cautious.
As shadows fall, evil rises,
Letting slip a dog and its cruel master,
Legends living or dying as they must.

Sherlock Holmes Essay Contest
2103 Clarkson Prize Winning Essay

This year, Watson's Tin Box is celebrating its Ninth Annual Sherlock Holmes Essay Contest for seventh graders in Howard County, Maryland. Once again, the Tin Box partnered with Howard County Library and Howard County Public Schools. Participating students read the *Adventure of the Speckled Band* and wrote essays. English teachers in the Public Schools voluntarily participated, and Howard County Library made the participation possible for home schooled, private school, and public school students (whose teachers do not participate). Watson's Tin Box is very grateful to its partners for making this contest such a success. We survey the teachers to find out how many of them used the *Speckled Band* as part of their curriculum as a result of the contest. This year, we reached approximately 250 children. Over the last eight years, the contest has reached approximately 2,800 students.

Each year, the Tin Box has awarded First, Second, and Third Place Prizes to the top three essays. The First Prize in the contest is *The Clarkson Prize,* an award named after Tin Box founder Steve Clarkson, BSI, who was a mentor to so many young Sherlockians. Steve started a Sherlock Holmes literary society for young people in the late 1960s. It included members from across the country. Before the advent of email, the young Sherlockians would distribute their analyses of the Sherlock Holmes stories to each other in real envelopes. Steve continued his mentoring of young Sherlockians until he passed away in 2004.

This year, the Essay Contest winners are:

First Prize – The Clarkson Prize
Jisoo Choi
Grade 7
Age 12
Burleigh Manor Middle School
Teacher: Ms Pierantozzi

Second Prize
Kira Anthony
Grade 7
Age 13
Bonnie Branch Middle School
Teacher: Ms Taylor

Third Prize
Nicole Meister
Grade 7
Age 12
Burleigh Manor Middle School
Teacher: Ms Pierantozzi

A hearty congratulations for a job well done goes to all three winners. With the approval *of The Clarkson Prize* winner, the winning essay is published in *Irene's Cabinet.* It is with great pride that we publish this year's *Clarkson Prize* winning essay on *The Speckled Band.* Miss Choi can be proud to be a young published author.

The Adventure of the Speckled Band

– Jisoo Choi

Dr. Grimesby Roylott dies a brutal death, killed by his own weapon, in Arthur Conan Doyle's short story, "The Adventure of the Speckled Band." It is through Roylott's death that the reader learns that the moral the story contains the universal truth which Doyle wished to communicate. His death holds a figurative significance as well as a literal importance in the story.

During their vigil to decipher the whistling noise, Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson hear the dreaded sound, and by lashing at the false bell-pull, Holmes drives the poisonous snake back through the ventilator and against Dr. Roylott. When they enter his room and discover the body of Dr. Roylott and the venomous swamp adder, Sherlock Holmes realizes, "Violence does, in truth, recoil upon the violent, and the schemer falls into the pit which he digs for another." Spoken by the protagonist of this story, this is the stated theme of "The Adventure of the Speckled Band." In this story, Dr. Roylott was like a predator in the wild animal kingdom, and his stepdaughters were his prey. Doyle describes Helen Stoner's appearance in the beginning, stating, "with restless frightened eyes, like those of a hunted animal." Showing the prevalence of good over evil, this theme communicates that the evil and the violent will always fail and fall to the power of good. Holmes made use of the action of recoiling, stating that violence will recoil upon the violent. The verb "recoil" creates a metaphor comparing violence and the snake. In the story, the swamp adder serves as a symbol of violence, the weapon responsible for Julia Stoner's death, and to coil again, as in the position of a snake when ready to strike, pertains to the speckled band. Violence will recoil upon the violent as the snake recoiled upon the violent antagonist, Dr. Grimesby Roylott.

The death of Dr. Roylott, who fell by his own weapon, carries a figurative significance to the theme and the story. As Sherlock Holmes describes how the murder of Julia Stoner was executed, he states that when he attacked the bell-pull, some of the blows of his cane were met by the snake, which had been driven back to Dr. Roylott's room through the ventilator. Having been abused by the cane, the speckled snake bit the first human it could find, who was Dr. Grimesby Roylott. Holmes states that hitting the snake with his cane led to the "result of causing it to turn upon its master on the other side-it flew upon the first person that it saw." Here, Doyle describes Dr. Roylott as the "master" of the snake,

therefore implying that the purpose of the snake was to carry out his will and perform the deed which he wished for it to do. However, in this situation, the snake instead turns "upon his master." This shows the snake figuratively rebelling against Dr. Roylott, refusing in a way to follow his will, and carrying out a sort of revenge against his evil master. After Holmes and Dr. Watson had seen Dr. Roylott dead and the "speckled band" which had killed him, Holmes threw the snake into the safe and closed it, trapping the snake inside. Helen Stoner also describes her stepfather as "a man of immense strength, and absolutely uncontrollable in his anger." Here, Dr. Roylott is compared to a tyrant, and illustrates with a metaphor the consequences of tyrannical rule and the cost he paid, a simple comparison expressing the imperfections of society.

After he has finished with his narrative of the crime associated with the speckled band, Holmes says in the final line of the story, "In this way I am no doubt indirectly responsible for Dr. Grimesby Roylott's death and I cannot say that it is likely to weigh heavily on my conscience." This was because of the literal importance of Dr. Roylott's death. The death of Julia Stoner and the attempt at the murder of Helen Stoner were preceded in each case with their engagement. In the will of their mother, who had passed away, Helen tells Holmes that she wrote that "a certain annual sum should be allowed to each of us in the event of our marriage." Reading over the specific amounts of money allotted for the daughters in each marriage, Sherlock Holmes realizes that if both Julia and Helen had married, Dr. Roylott would have been left with a "mere pittance" and even if only one had married, it "would cripple him to a very serious extent." Thus, Dr. Roylott's motivation to commit these murders is revealed, showing that he opposed the girls' marriages as it deprived him of his wealth. His death, poisoned by the snake, gives Helen the right to marry Percy Armitage and inherit the money from her mother, both her marriage inheritance and the other money which would have remained her stepfather's. Through his evil scheming which led to his death, Dr. Roylott has given Helen, his remaining daughter, his money, both her rightful inheritance, and even the amount which would have stayed his. Hence, Roylott's plan backfired in many more ways than one.

The venomous India swamp adder, which serves as a symbol of violence in Doyle's short story, "The Adventure of the Speckled Band," and the death of the violent Dr. Grimesby Roylott, carries much significance in the story. The theme is communicated through the way through which Dr. Roylott dies, and the figurative and literal meanings of his death had a great impact on his family and his community. "Violence does, in truth, recoil upon the violent, and the schemer falls into the pit which he digs for another." This theme has been illustrated by Dr. Roylott's death in this story. Yet it also applies to all of us, causing us to reflect on our lives. Have you schemed violence for another? Have you dug a pit for another? But most importantly, have you, yourself, fallen – into that same pit?

Schrödinger's Watson

– Linnea Dodson

Elementary, with its tagline "New Holmes, New Watson, New York," premiered on CBS this year, adding another revision of canon to the Holmesian renaissance. Where the Ritchie movies kept the Victorian setting with a strong steampunk flavoring and the BBC updated canon as intact as possible to modern London, CBS has gone for a complete rewrite occasionally using canonical names, dialog, and plots while leaning heavily on an American viewpoint, firmly grounded in the sights and people of New York City.

In this version, Sherlock Holmes spiraled into heroin addiction when Irene Adler, whom he loved, was brutally murdered. His wealthy father (never named or seen onscreen) sent him to America for rehab and now Holmes lives in a New York City brownstone, "the least of my father's three properties in this city," rent-free on the condition that he stays sober.

To ensure this, Holmes Sr. hires Joan Watson, a former surgeon who now works as a sober companion, to live with Holmes Jr. for six weeks. Her duties are to ensure that Holmes does not return to drug use, to keep him going to 12-Step meetings, and to facilitate his transfer to a long-term mentor.

Holmes is initially repellant and abusive to her – he shouts at her, tries to ignore her, runs away from her – even wrecks her car! Yet because in every episode she will find at least one important clue and her medical training is useful, he begins to take her more seriously. He defends Joan to her domineering mother and begins to compliment her and her efforts, although often in a self-centered way: "I am a better person around you."

On Joan's part, she has been struggling to find a purpose for her life. She became a sober companion both to help people and to punish herself for killing a patient during surgery. Viewers will discover that her official sanction was only a 3-month suspension – it wasn't the hospital, but Joan herself who could not face her failures. One episode revolves around her saving a child with her retained knowledge, but Joan turns down the request of a former colleague that she return to medicine. She even goes so far as to erase photographs of her and her friends from her surgery days. It's not as though she enjoys the sober companion work, though; it takes Holmes less than half an episode to list all the reasons why she's doing it out of duty and despair.

Initially forced to follow Holmes to crime scenes because she cannot let him out of her sight, Joan discovers an interest in detective work and a fascination for the man – so much so that when her stint as a sober companion is up, she refuses to move on to the next person. She tells Holmes that his father had extended her contract and lives off her savings until he discovers the lie, deduces her motives, and offers her a paying job as his apprentice.

Holmes isn't much kinder as an employer than he was as a subject; for one thing, his idea of teaching Joan wariness and self-defense is to randomly throw tennis balls at her "for [her] own good." But he is legitimately teaching her deduction, gradually giving her a bigger and bigger role in The Work, to the point that in the season finale Holmes cedes

an entire case to her, saying that Joan is the only one he can trust to fight Moriarty properly while he is too distracted to do so.

It's a controversial way of handling literature's most famous duo and it seemed as though before it even premiered, people were making up their minds that this was either the best or the worst possible Watson ever even though she had yet to be seen in action, as if Joan were Schrödinger's cat. In 1935, the physicist, Schrödinger, came up with a thought experiment about a cat locked in a box. The actual experiment was a highly technical illustration of a paradox in quantum mechanics; but since then the phrase "Schrödinger's Cat" has mutated into a general zen philosophical statement that a cat locked in a box with poison is both alive and dead at the same time – that is until someone opens the box to see the cat.

Much of the pre-airing controversy revolved around the casting of Lucy Liu as (ex) Doctor Watson. This was, in retrospect, a signal that the show intended to faithfully reproduce the full diversity of New York City – Liu is an NYC native herself and has said in interviews that one of the attractions of the role was that she did not have to play it "with an accent." Different nationalities, races, genders, and lifestyles are casually used as a backdrop to this new canon – like or loathe *Elementary* (and it is very polarizing), it is not just the most diverse version of Sherlock Holmes, but arguably the most diverse detective show on TV.

Once *Elementary* actually premiered, it became obvious that Joan would not be shunted aside, dismissible as the token person of color in the background as Holmes did his deductions. Joan is the main viewpoint character. Like the Canon, the audience sees all the action through Watson's eyes. But unlike the Canon, the episodes are more about her actions, reactions, and thoughts than Holmes'.

Putting Joan front and center invites the audience to judge her, as a character and as a Watson. Yet looking at Joan Watson in action is like looking through 3-D glasses: everything about the role can be viewed with either a rose-colored positive tint or a blue-saturated negative hue. The way Joan is shown and treated makes her simultaneously the best and the worst of Watsons.

It starts with Lucy Liu herself and the show's premise that this Watson works with recovering addicts:

> POSITIVE: A woman of color cast as half of the most famous duo in all of literature – how wonderful!
> NEGATIVE: Yet another woman and/or person of color who has to mop up the mess when a white man-child ruins his life.

Then there's how the show treats Joan as a woman:

> POSITIVE: Joan is a strong role model, a woman who never backs down when the men around her dismiss her because of her gender.

NEGATIVE: Joan has to do a lot of fighting back because the men around her treat her terribly. Friends of Holmes repeatedly ask her to her face what kind of companionship her job really provides. Holmes allows her no privacy – the show makes a running joke about how often he bursts into her room while she's sleeping so he can wake her up with deductions. He also makes her run and pay for his errands under the guise of training. In the final episode of the first season, Inspector Gregson of the NYPD goes down the complete checklist of patronizing behavior: despite her having proven to be a good detective, he tells her she doesn't understand how dangerous the work is and he tries to force her back into her companion role over her repeated objections.

Because Joan has a non-military backstory, her medical training, how she and Holmes feel about it, and why she left her career is completely different than any of the other Watsons:

POSITIVE: Joan is obviously an excellent diagnostician. In one episode she goes out of her way to make a tricky diagnosis that saves both a child's life and a former friend from making the same surgical mistakes she did. The audience sees her finding several key clues specifically due to her medical training. Holmes relies on her skills to keep him patched together when he is injured. These are highly unusual compliments to a Watson – even in thr Canon, Watson's medical expertise was rarely called upon and Holmes tended to ignore or belittle it (see "The Adventure of the Dying Detective"). The setup of introducing Watson to Holmes requires a hurting, confused, Watson – depression is just as valid and damaging of a mental injury as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. It is reasonable that someone as driven and perfectionist as Joan is would be shattered by a death, no matter how accidental, and what must have seemed like public disgrace at her suspension. She shouldn't be seen as a "damsel in distress," but instead someone who worked very hard her whole life towards a goal and now needs to stop and process the disconnect between her lifelong plans and her new interests.

NEGATIVE: Every doctor makes mistakes, every Holmes and Watson meeting requires a hurting Watson – yet none of the other Watsons just walked away from a career they had spent much time, effort, and training to obtain simply because of a crisis of conscience. In fact, none of the others walked away at all – despite their physical injuries, even despite some blatant mistakes on the job (most notably Jude Law"s Watson declaring a living man dead,) most of the Watsons retain a medical career. If they are general practitioners instead of surgeons, it's not because of their decisions but their circumstances. Uninjured Joan simply walks away. It makes her look as if she's prone to making snap emotional decisions – an impression furthered as the audiencewatches her walk away from her companion career and lie to her

former client about it. (It must also be added that because Joan never had military training, she is the only Watson that Holmes had to teach self-defense techniques. She is not, however, the only Watson to be kidnapped – so has BBC's John Watson. His military training hasn't stopped him from being kidnapped by either Mycroft or the villain in almost every episode.)

Most importantly, there is Joan as a detective:

POSITIVE: Finally! A Watson that a Holmes takes seriously as an equal! Even in the Canon, Holmes was dismissive of Watson's efforts to do any kind of deductive work, whereas this Holmes outright says that Joan is the only one he would trust to stop his arch nemesis. No other Watson has been honored (or competent) enough to go toe-to-toe directly with Moriarty!

NEGATIVE: The tradeoff for Joan achieving this praise is that she has nothing else in her life – not one single thing outside of Holmes and The Work. Unlike other Watsons, she has no outside romantic relationships and she gave up her other careers. She doesn't even write; not for the Internet, not for publication. She is in an incredibly precarious position if anything like a waterfall or aconsulting criminal makes her Holmes disappear. She is living in his father's house (a man who knows that she lied to his son) and has only the remains of her savings to live off of until she might establish a reputation as a detective in her own right – something Inspector Gregson apparently will not help her with.

The driving sub plots of the season were less about Holmes's recovery or deductions and more about letting the audience watch Joan's evolution from failed surgeon and lost soul to Holmes' equal as a consulting detective. Despite Irene, it is quite clear that Joan, no matter which lens you view her through, is The Woman *of Elementary.*

The Blind Banker: Holes

– Andrew Vetsch

A *short fantasy in which Benedict Cumberbatch and Martin Freeman give fan-based opinions on the synopsis of "The Blind Banker."*

WARNING: SPOILERS

Filming was supposed to start soon but was delayed because the two lead actors, Benedict Cumberbatch and Martin Freeman, wanted to talk to the scriptwriter, Stephen Thompson. "All right Mr. Cumberbatch and Mr. Freeman; what do you two want. We've got a tight schedule so tell us what you would like to know right away." He asked what they wanted.

"Yes Mr. Lyn. We called you both here to discuss the storyline of this coming episode; The Blind Banker." Cumberbatch held up the script in front of them.

"We read it over," Freeman started, "and there are things we were wondering about because they do not make much sense. And the fans will easily notice most of these."

"Like what?" Thompson complained. After writing scripts for other shows like *Doctor Who,* he started to feel absolute. "What do you guys not get about it?"

"Well for starters: the smugglers. Why would they spray their coded messages in such public places? Couldn't they just take a sheet of paper, draw the markings and leave it in their offices on their desks; better yet, mail them. It would be simpler, and it seems like they're *trying* to get attention in using a can of spray paint on an office wall."

"The smugglers needed to be absolutely sure that the victims would see the message," Thompson retaliated.

"You actually can't be as sure. Because – the library. What if someone saw the message beforehand, told the librarian about it and it would be covered up. Then how would the journalist know that the smugglers were after them?"

"Aw come on, the markings didn't attract *that much* attention."

"It got Sherlock's attention."

"They didn't know about Sherlock Holmes when they came to England."

Cumberbatch remarked, "If you were a general working for Napoleon venturing into England, would you be ignorant as to who could catch you?" [1]

"Well then what do you have to say?"

Benedict started giving his thoughts, "General Shan, the leader of the Chinese smugglers. Although she is the leader, why is she the one doing the work? Why is she the one taking our pictures and none of her other henchmen?"

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[1] For those that think I'm referring to the Brigadier Gerard stories; you've got no sense of humor.

"Maybe they were too busy setting up the circus performance."

"That's exactly the kind of work the leader should be doing. The one standing behind the curtain giving out orders to her supporters to do the dirty work while she creates their alibi and makes sure nothing goes wrong."

"There's also the tunnel scene – where Watson and his girlfriend, Sarah are interrogated by the smugglers to where the hairpin was. Somehow, she, the smuggler, mistakes Watson as Sherlock in spite of all the things he said and did. To find out about Sherlock, couldn't she have asked M about him? And if she searched Sherlock, surely she'd find his picture."

Before Thompson could reply Freeman gave another thought, "What about Soo Lin, the museum curator."

"Now what could be wrong with her?"

"First, she's living right next door to where the smugglers drop off their stolen items. No wonder it was so easy for them to find her. Second, how could she possibly get to England from China? She wasn't part of the organization at that time, so did she sneak on a boat and become an illegal immigrant; did someone help her get there? This just makes her phony. Third, how could she know so much about the code? The book they were using? The words she was trying to translate? And fourth, the most annoying moment in the whole episode, when the spider comes in to kill her, Sherlock goes out to confront him. After a few shots, Watson runs out to help him and leaves a targeted civilian alone. Even though he hopes she would lock the door, you can't trust that she wouldn't. Because she believes that all hope for her is lost. Wouldn't it have been easier if Holmes and Watson just stayed in the room, waited for the spider to get her, and then jumped out of the dark to catch him? That sounds more like Sherlock Holmes to me."

"But Moffat gave me its approval. He knows more about Sherlock than either of you."

Freeman and Cumberbatch glanced at each other. "Anything else you two have to say?" Thompson asked. Cumberbatch had one last thing, "As a matter of fact, yes. When I was given the role of Sherlock Holmes, Steven Moffat handed me a copy *of The Complete Sherlock Holmes.* I've haven't gotten very far, but I have been able to learn more about the character. First, how does Sherlock know that the book the smugglers were using was a 'book that everyone would own?' No one gave a clue, or a statement. Second, instead of Sherlock using his powers of observation and deduction, we run around shooting guns, dealing with acrobats, and gunmen, like *Spooks.* Third, when we go to look for more symbols, how do we know it's in a railroad runway? Watson manages to find the coded text, but when he goes and brings me along, it's gone. How could a coded message be painted over in so short a time? Why was it even there in the first place? And lastly, when Sherlock is trying to locate where Watson and Sarah are being held, he pulls out a map! Doesn't Sherlock have the whole city mapped out in his head? How does he even know where they are held? Sherlock Holmes doesn't explain any of these plot holes."

Before he could go on Thompson waved his hand to silence them. "Gentlemen, I guess I can understand your complaints. But they are nothing more than fan-based opinions on the episode. It's too late to add explanations and Sherlock explaining them all would make

the episode longer than the limited-90-minutes. Filming is about to start so I suggest you make sure you don't slip up on your lines." He left.

Just wait. One day, I'll write another episode, one that will be brilliant and delicate. Thompson worried though that the story was his doom. No I can't let this conversation affect me. Maybe next time I'll just read a few of the Canon and then I'll be sure to make that one authentic. Then will see who's a good writer.[2]

The two actors just looked at each other.

Well, should we just go ahead with what we have, or just quit and end the show before disaster strikes? Freeman gazed at Cumberbatch.

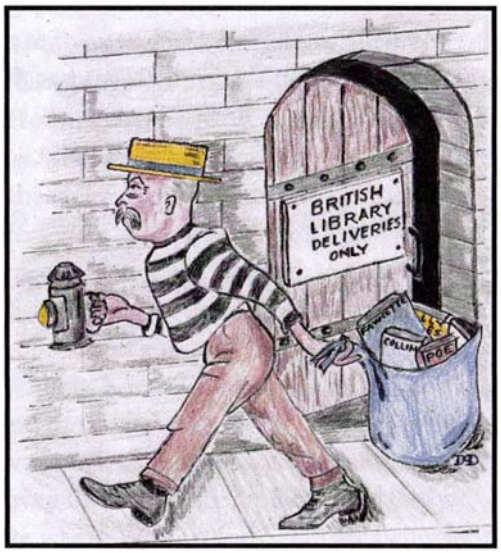
Way I see it; we're looking at another one of those parodies of the great detective. I do not think it will live up to the other two episodes.

THE END

[2] Stephen Thompson would later go on to write the script to "The Reichenbach Fall."

The Thief of Southsea: An Irreverent Look at the Genius of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

– Denny Dobry



Denny Dobry 2013

The body of written works attributable to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is nothing less than awe-inspiring. Although he is best known as the creator of the quintessential detective, Sherlock Holmes, Doyle was a prolific writer of general fiction, horror, fantasy, science fiction, poetry, plays, historical fiction, and even an operetta. Additionally he authored many non-fictional works and publications related to British domestic policy and justice, British foreign policy, and his belief in Spiritualism. One must be in wonder of the diversification in story lines and subject matter found in Doyle's work. Surely he must have been a genius.

A number of Doyle's works are *romans à clef or* works that are based on a true story, but presented as fiction. The names of places and characters are typically changed and some of the details are enhanced to create a more entertaining narrative.

The Stark Munroe Letters, a Doyle novella, is basically Conan Doyle's autobiography of the early part of his professional career as a doctor. Both real life Dr. Doyle and his unethical schoolmate, Dr. George Budd, are barely disguised as Doctors Stark Munroe and James Cullingworth respectively. Doyle also uses the story to impart his true feelings towards organized religion.

Doyle again drew from his own personal experiences in composing *The Captain of the Pole-Star* and *The Tragedy at Korosko.* The former is a short story in which Doyle incorporates his real-life adventures aboard the Arctic whaling ship, the *Hope,*[1] in 1880. The latter is a novel that was inspired by a Doyle family tour on the Nile River in 1898.[2] In both of these stories, Doyle's story telling talent shines forth as he uses his imagination to blend fact and fiction into entertaining tales.

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[1] See *Dangerous Work – A Diary of an Arctic Adventure* edited by Jon Lellenberg and Daniel Stashower, University of Chicago Press, 2012.

[2] Stashower, Daniel. *Teller of Tales.* New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1999.

Although Doyle led a full and exciting life, his real-life personal experiences alone would not have provided a sufficient amount of fodder to feed his massive creative literary appetite. Doyle was a voracious reader[3] and he possessed a remarkable memory. In *Through the Magic Door*,[4] a Doyle memoir describing the books in his personal library, Doyle recounts recognizing several minor changes in the text of a re-publication of Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Pavilion on the Links,* even though a number of years had elapsed between Doyle's readings of the story. Author Pope R. Hill, Sr. also testifies to Sir Arthur's recall: "... Conan Doyle's memory was so extraordinary that it entered the realms of the freakish. For instance, if one examined him on any book that he had not read for as many as twenty years, he could give a fair outline of the plot and the name of every principal character. I have tested him on this on many occasions."[5] Such a vivid memory would certainly serve as a repository of potential story lines and interesting encounters from which to draw.

French Sherlockian Doctor Henri Mutrex writes: "Novelists are speculators of ideas, but in practice they are burglars."[6] T. S. Eliot, who himself 'borrowed' from Conan Doyle, is quoted as saying, "Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal." No one ever described Conan Doyle as being immature.

A number of Doyle's characters and tales were undoubtedly cloned from the writings of Edgar Allen Poe:

- In *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* published in 1841, C. Auguste Dupin seemingly reads the thoughts of his unnamed companion and story narrator, to which the narrator responds: 'Dupin, this is beyond my comprehension.'... 'How was it you should know I was thinking of Chantilly?' In *The Resident Patient* published in 1893, Holmes reads Watson's thoughts to which Watson replies: 'What is this Holmes? This is beyond anything which I could imagine.' In the story, Holmes actually draws a parallel with his skills and that of Dupin. Dupin and Holmes go on to recount each step of their deductive reasoning.

The interpretation of evidence found at a crime scene is also common in the Poe/Doyle stories. Dupin concludes in *The Mystery of Marie Roget* (1842): "... the 'hitch' in the bandage, and the 'sailor's knot,' with which the bonnet-ribbon is tied, point to a seaman." In *The Adventure of the Abbey Grange* (1904) Holmes declares: "... and no one but a sailor could have made the knots with which the cord was fastened to the chair."

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[3] Pearson, Hesketh. *Conan Doyle.* London: Methuen and Company Ltd., 1946.

[4] Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan. *The Works of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.* Delphi Classics, 2013.

[5] Hill, Pope R., Sr.'The Sherlock Holmes Hoax." New York: Magico Magazine, 1952.

[6] Mutrux, Colonel Docteur Henri. *Sherlock Holmes – Roi des tricheurs.* Paris: La Pensée Universelle, 1977.

- Poe's 1843 short story, *The Gold Bug*, featured at least two elements that found their way into Sherlock Holmes stories. The first, in *The Adventure of the Dancing Men* (1903) is the discovery and deciphering of a coded message using simple letter substitution. Second, Legrand in *The Gold Bug* and Holmes in *The Musgrave Ritual* (1893) make use of a 'treasure map' to lead them to their prize. Granted, neither of these are singularly unique elements, and Doyle could have thought of these on his own.
- Samuel Rosenberg in *Naked is the Best Disguise*[7] points out fourteen similarities between Edgar Allen Poe's stories of C. Auguste Dupin and the Sherlock Holmes stories penned by Conan Doyle.
- In a non-Sherlockian short story, an even more blatant example of thievery on Doyle's part is revealed in the comparison of Poe's *The Cask of Amontillado* (1846) and Doyle's *The New Catacomb* (1898). In both stories, the perpetrator lures his victim into a deep, dark and winding catacomb only to trap the victim there to extract revenge upon him.

Edgar Allen Poe was not the only target of Doyle's burglary. In Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* (1868), a corrupt British officer steals a diamond from an Indian idol (The Hindu God of the Moon), and three Hindu priests pursue the thief and his descendants for years, eventually returning the stone to its rightful place on the idol. In Conan Doyle's *The Mystery of Cloomber* (1889), two overzealous British soldiers murder a Buddhist holy man (Ghoolab Shah) during the heat of battle. They are told that they are condemned to die for their actions and that three Buddhist priests (chelas of the Ghoolah Shah) will carry out the sentence. The three Buddhist priests devastate the lives of the condemned soldiers by having the soldiers look over their shoulders for forty years before being drowned by the priest in an isolated bog.

In perhaps the most shameless display of pilfering, and another *roman à clef,* Conan Doyle re-tells the true story of the confrontation between the coal workers labor faction that became known as the Molly Maguires and the coal mine owners:

- In the 1870's in Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania, coal mine owners hired the Pinkerton Detective Agency to infiltrate a coal workers organization known as the Molly Maguires. The founder of the Agency, Allan Pinkerton, chronicled the story.[8] William Pinkerton, son of Allan, wrote of meeting Conan Doyle on a transatlantic crossing, during which Pinkerton shared the exploits of the famous Pinkerton Agency.

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[7] Rosenbery, Samuel. *Naked is the Best Disguise.* Indianapolis, New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1974.

[8] Pinkerton, Allan. *The Molly Maguires and the Detectives.* New York: G. W. Carlton and Company, 1880.

> founded by his father.[9] In 1914, *The Valley of Fear was* published, written by Conan Doyle. The second half of *Valley* is a re-telling of the story originally penned by Allan Pinkerton in 1877, with the names changed by Doyle to perhaps, protect the guilty. Although the name of the location and players' names were changed, Doyle maintained the Pinkerton Agency in the story, but the 'Molly Maguires' became the 'Scowrers.' "William Pinkerton 'raised the roof when he saw the book,' according to his general manager Ralph Dudley. 'At first he talked of bringing suit against Doyle but then he dropped that after he had cooled off.'"[10]

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is usually credited with creating a new science fiction genre based on the existence of prehistoric dinosaurs living in modern times. We find this first in Professor Challenger's adventure, *The Lost World.* However, in 1894, preceding the release of Doyle's *Lost World* by 18 years, a novel entitled *Swallowed by an Earthquake* was published in which explorers descend into the bowels of the earth and encounter living dinosaurs.[11] The author was an Englishman, Edward Douglas Fawcett (1866-1960). In addition to *Earthquake,* Fawcett wrote two other fictional works: *Hartman the Anarchist* (1893) and *The Secret of the Desert* (1895). Although his novels received positive reviews and foreshadowed the development of armored military vehicles and massive aerial bombardments, none were a great commercial success. Fawcett gave up writing novels and married his rich first cousin and lived on to a very full life. He rejected Christianity at an early age, believed in reincarnation, became a Buddhist, raced motorbikes, climbed mountains, was a chess enthusiast, wrote poetry, received a pilot's license at the age of 68 and flew planes through the age of 80. He was a very interesting fellow, somewhat reminiscent of Conan Doyle himself.

Other examples of 'borrowing' from other works by Conan Doyle exist. The path to full disclosure to the sources of the plots and events presented in the Conan Doyle writings is clear. One must first read all of Doyle's 'fictional' works, taking copious notes related to story plots and seemingly singular ventures. Second, the researcher would then need to read all of the books that Conan Doyle would have likely read, comparing the plots and events to the notes taken during the reading of Doyle's works. Having completed these tasks, one could then determine how much of Doyle's works originated from his imagination and how much was retrieved from his brain-attic. Having defined the goal and the process to achieve it – "The game's afoot." (Shakespeare, William. *King Henry V;* Act 3. Scene 1. – 1598)

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[9] Edwards, Owen Dudley. Introduction to: *The Valley of Fear*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

[10] Macintyre, Ben. *The Napoleon of Crime.* New York: Dell Publishing, 1977.

[11] Temple, Robert K G. "E Douglas Fawcett – the English Jules Verne" – *British Heritage Magazine.* Harrisburg, PA: Historical Times Inc., February/March 1985.

An Open Letter to Mrs. Godfrey Norton (Née Adler)

– Jaime Mahoney

Dear Mrs. Norton,

I'm the first person to admit that I don't always understand the appeal of some things. I've never been particularly fashionable or cutting-edge, and so I often find myself on the outskirts of what is popular. Parkour, for example, is something I don't particularly understand. Wearing tights as pants is another. Pretty much anything involving John Mayer. And you, Mrs. Norton. I just have never been able to bend my brain around your incomprehensible, interminable appeal. Perhaps I'm uncharitable – there are certainly enough people who have called me such for this opinion – but I tremendously dislike you. In fact, despite the numerous warnings I have received over the course of my life about the strength of this word, I would go so far as to say that I *hate* you.

I hate you whether you exist in black and white, in the printed word, or as a disembodied voice on the radio. And I *certainly* hate you when you are live and in full color on my television or cinema screen. I hate you whether you are played by Charlotte Rampling or Rachel McAdams. I even hate you when you are played by Gayle Hunnicutt opposite the incomparable Jeremy Brett (which is really saying something, because even though I consider all of Mr. Brett's performances sacrosanct, your episode remains the least viewed one from my copy of the Granada Television collection.) I hate you whether you are an opera singer, an adventuress, a single mother to a young boy who loves music and puzzles, or even just an unapologetic thief. And I especially hate you in one of your most recent incarnations as a dominatrix (your hairstyle, to be frank, was utterly confounding.) I hate you whether you are a redhead, a brunette, or a blonde. In fact, one of the things that I liked best about the recent television series, *Elementary,* is that I was promised that you were dead. Even better, I was promised you had been *brutally murdered* off-screen, before the series even began. The mere idea of it was delicious. I was thrilled. I was ecstatic. I promise you that I was beside myself with joy. And while it appears that the rumors of your death have been greatly (and cruelly) exaggerated, I assure you that CBS Television still owes me a rotting corpse. Yours, preferably, but I'm not picky. I will wait.

But mostly I hate you because you simply will not *go away*. Must you stick your perfectly powdered nose into every plot that calls for a XX chromosome? The mere mention of your name is often enough to make me put down whatever pastiche I maybe reading – no matter how much I paid for it or how difficult it was to obtain – and use the pages of the book as a liner for my cat's litter-pan. And my goodness, you do turn up so very often, don't you? A popular website, which catalogues historical and fictional characters appearing in Sherlockian pastiches, lists dozens if not hundreds of references to your person in non-canonical fiction. It's really too many. Having only appeared in one original story, you are just as prolific – but not nearly as interesting as – the late, lamented

Professor Moriarty. Does the plot call for a uniquely feminine touch? There you are. Has a member of royalty found himself in some sort of moral morass? Up pops your name. Has Sherlock Holmes, heaven forbid, found himself in some sort of romantic imbroglio? You're involved, Mrs. Norton. And, even more offensive, does the Great Detective need to be brought down a peg? Of course you show up.

But to be honest, you get more credit than you really deserve, don't you think? While Sherlock Holmes once claimed, "I have been beaten four times – three times by men, and once by a woman," I think he was being a little generous. Let's assume, first of all, that Holmes is referring to you in that passage, even though he doesn't mention you by name, does he? A well-timed escape is not the same as *beating* someone. That would be like saying that the Worthingdon bank gang (RESI) *beat* Sherlock Holmes because they managed to drown before their capture.

Or the murderers of John Openshaw (FIVE) *beat* Sherlock Holmes for the same reason, ironically. It would be like saying that Sherlock Holmes was bested in "The Lion's Mane," because the murderer turned out to be a jellyfish and not a human being as originally assumed. Could you imagine the Great Detective saying, "I have been beaten four times – three times by men, and once by a woman... and once by an invertebrate creature"?

Sherlock Holmes caught you out, madam. He devised a trap, and you fell into it precisely as he imagined:

> The smoke and shouting were enough to shake nerves of steel. She responded beautifully. The photograph is in a recess behind a sliding panel just above the right bell-pull. She was there in an instant, and I caught a glimpse of it as she half-drew it out. When I cried out that it was a false alarm, she replaced it, glanced at the rocket, rushed from the room, and I have not seen her since.

You did exactly what he thought you were going to do. Far from being clever, you were *predictable,* madam. When Sherlock Holmes tells the iniquitous King of Bohemia, "From what I have seen of the lady she seems indeed to be on a very different level to your Majesty," I feel it was intended more as a slight at the king, than any compliment of you. And while I'm at it, donning a disguise for an evening stroll and a verbal jab doesn't confirm any supposed cleverness either. If anything, it makes you appear childish, unable to admit you had been run to ground. "Goodnight, Mister Sherlock Holmes," indeed. It was almost like a rude gesture, don't you think? And I should mention that even then you didn't even have the man completely baffled. "I've heard that voice before," Holmes said.

I have also heard your voice before, Mrs. Norton, and it seems I am condemned to hear it over and over again. I find myself lamenting, as Dr. Watson did in *The Adventure of the Copper Beeches*, that Sherlock Holmes expressed no interest in Miss Violet Hunter and her luxuriant, chestnut hair once she ceased to be the focus of a case. Not because I feel that the Great Detective is in any particular need of a female companion, but because it means I would be rid of you. I find myself constantly on the alert for your presence, looking for mentions of your name, just as one would scan a dark alleyway for danger.

I fear you will always be there, on the outskirts, claiming a cleverness that isn't deserved and isn't yours, but believe me, madam, you don't have me fooled. I'm on to you.

Very truly, Jaime Mahoney

Sources Website: **http://www.schoolandholmes.com/irene.html**

Watson's In Box

– Beth Austin

Every January we at Watson's Tin Box to partake of the Mycroft Quiz. That is, a quiz covering all 60 stories in the canon designed to truly test the taker. January 2008 was my first attempt to write a Mycroft quiz. Included here are 10 of the 60 questions. Each is an e-mail address. The taker must identify the character whose e-mail address this is for 2 points and name the story for 1 point.

For example *brendaslover@radixpedisdiaboli.net* is Leon Sterndale from DEVI. Total possible points are 30. Just have fun.

1. Smacksmacksmack@electricblue.net
   Character _____
   Story _____

2. Whosewasit@deadkings.org
   Character _____
   Story _____

3. Twicementionedspy@)bestlaidplans.net
   Character _____
   Story _____

4. Gullibledesperateultimatelysad@worstdeceptionofall.evl
   Character _____
   Story _____

5. BarqueofCalhouon@ithurtsmypride.ego
   Character _____
   Story _____

6. Streetarab@++++.org
   Character _____
   Story _____

7. Onaroll@sparkingplugs.net
   Character _____
   Story _____

8. Pinkertondick@chorusofgroanscriesandbleatings.org
   Character _____
   Story _____

9. Streetarab@mongoose.com
   Character _____
   Story _____

10. Bettermanthanhegotcreditfor@whisperinmyear.edu
   Character _____
   Story _____

Answers: back inside cover

Contributing Factors

April Cumow, Gasogene XXI, regards the Tin Box monthly meeting night as an especially bright spot on her calendar. Between Sherlockian gatherings she sings madrigals, paints watercolors, and works in children's services for Howard County Library.

Denny Dobry is a retired Professional Civil Engineer and a member of WTB, The Denizens of the Bar of Gold (Cambridge, MD), the Regency Irregulars (Phoenixville, PA), and is Gasogene of the White Rose Irregulars (York, PA) as well as an irregular visitor to other scions. He is a contributor to the BSI Manuscript Series (*The Wrong Passage*). A charter member of the Baker Street Builders, he has re-created a full size replica of the 221B sitting room in his home in Reading Pennsylvania.

Linnea Dodson, is a technical writer who was a member of the Red Circle in the early 1990s. She returned to Holmes fandom due to BBC's Sherlock, at which point she joined Watson's Tin Box as well as rejoining the Red Circle and attending Sherlock NYC events. This is her first Holmesian publication, but her *Doctor Who* publications include the short story "God Send Me Well to Keep" in the Short Trips anthology *Qualities of Leadership,* "Greatest Coulrophobia in the Galaxy" in *Outside In: 160 New Perspectives on 160 Classic Doctor Who Stories by 160 Writers,* and "Conscious Colorblindness, Unconscious Racism" in *Doctor Who and Race.*

Fred Glueckstein, attended New York University. Fred has been published in several equestrian magazines, journals, and newsletters. He is a columnist for PhelpsSports.com, a 24/7 all-equestrian sports service. Fred is the author of *The '27 Yankees, Mickey Mantle; Rookie in Pinstripes; Of Men, Women and Horses; and Mimi of Novy Bohumin, Czechoslovakia: A Young Woman's Survival of the Holocaust.* Fred and his wife Eileen live on Long Island. They have two children, Brian and Debra.

Evelyn Herzog, ASH, BSI has a particular devotion to the women of the Sherlockian canon. Admiring Irene Adler from afar, she feels a closer affinity to Violet Hunter. She is a member of Sherlockian societies throughout the Northeast Corridor (and well beyond), but her home scion is now Watson's Tin Box.

William Hyder, BSI has been a member of the Six Napoleons of Baltimore for more than 50 years and the Baker Street Irregulars for 16. His writings have appeared in the *Baker Street Journal* and other Sherlockian periodicals in the U.S. and the U.K. Author *of From Baltimore to Baker Street* and *Introducing Sherlock Holmes,* he has also edited and contributed to two BSI anthologies, *The Napoleon Bust Business Again* (Volume 4 of the BSI Manuscript Series) and *Sherlockian Saturdays at the Pratt.*

Peter Jacoby, a retired attorney, lives in Bedminster, New Jersey. In addition to his longtime membership of The Red-Headed League of Jersey, he is a member of The Sons of the Copper Beeches of Philadelphia, in which he was elevated earlier this year to the rank of Master Beechsmith. In addition to the Canon, his interests include military history and the lore of shipwrecks from the 18th century through the modern era.

Jaime N. Mahoney, Gasogene XXIV, is a proud member of Watson's Tin Box and is also the proprietor of the blog, "Better Holmes & Gardens" (**betterholmesandgardens.blogspot.com**), which updates frequently on a variety of Sherlockian topics. She is currently Gasogene of Watson's Tin Box, where she spends a lot of time trying not to hit herself in the face with her gavel.

Jacquelynn Morris, ASH, Gasolene XI & XIX, Tantalus V, is the creator and organizer of the Sherlockian symposium, A Scintillation of Scions. She has been an invited speaker at numerous Sherlockian events. Jacquelynn is a contributor to the newest in the BSI Manuscript Series (The *Wrong Passage*) and is a U.S. Ambassador for The Undershaw Preservation Trust. Jacquelynn maintains that if not for Holmes she would not know some of the "best and wisest" people she has ever known – her Sherlockian friends.

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

Andrew Vetsch is the youngest (active) member of the Watson's Tin Box and of The Red Circle of Washington, DC. Although still only in high school, he's had a long interest in Sherlock Holmes – since the 6th Grade. This marks his first published work.

Answers to the Mycroft Quiz from page **43**.

1. Edward Rucastle COPP
2. Charles I MUSG
3. Hugo Oberstein BRUC
4. Mary Sutherland IDEN
5. Lone Star FIVE
6. Wiggins SIGN
7. The Kaiser LAST
8. Leverton REDC
9. Simpson CROO
10. Grant "Jack" Munroe YELL