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Watson's Tin Box

IRENE'S CABINET

Results of the Literary and Artistic Aspirations
of the Membership in the form of essays, poetry,
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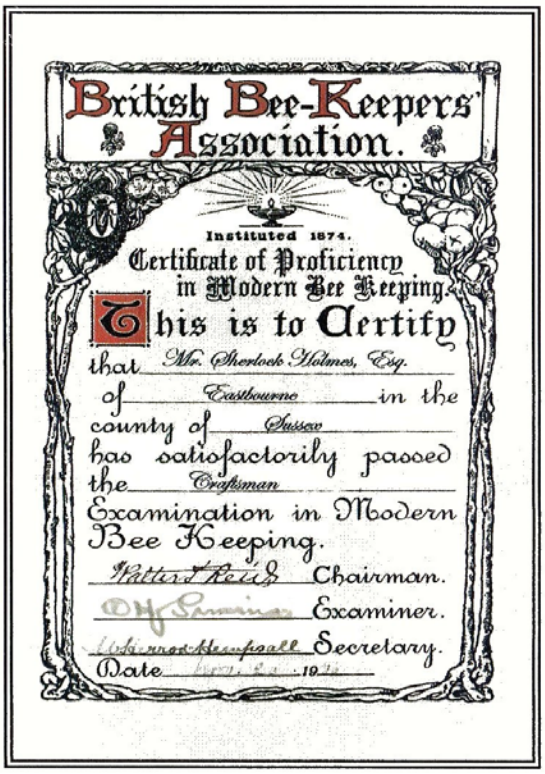
in honor of all things

Sherlockian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Editor: Beth Austin
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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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Sophy's Choice

– Carla Coupe

Holmes sat before the fire reading a letter, a crease between his brows, when I entered our sitting room.

"Another ridiculous request for assistance?" I warmed my hands at the fire before taking my usual seat.

He tore his gaze from the sheet of paper and hesitated before replying. "No. Quite the opposite in fact." Handing me the letter, he drew his pipe from his pocket and filled it as I settled back to read.

Dear Mr Holmes,

In the course of my travels, I happened upon a copy of the September issue of *The Strand Magazine, in which appeared a story entitled "The Greek Interpreter." You may imagine the horror and heart-ache I experienced upon reading, but no. You cannot imagine anything, for I have not yet provided the necessary explanations. Please bear with me as I do so.*

I was young and naive in the way only a protected, yet indulged, child may be. My parents ensured that my beloved brother and I received every advantage of wealth and station. My brother used these advantages to become a man and assume the mantle of responsibility, whilst I only wished for romance and excitement. Upon receiving an invitation to visit friends in England, I prevailed upon my parents to allow me to go, and was welcomed into my friends' home as an honoured guest.

Would that l had never gone! Yet l did go, and must forever bear the guilt for the awful results of that decision. However, such expressions are self-indulgent, and I shall attempt to restrain them.

During a dinner party, I chanced to meet Mr. Harold Latimer. He was handsome, dashing, and so very charming. And I, poor fool, was willing to be charmed. We met at parties, in the park, and once alone in the library of my friends' home. There amongst the dusty books he flattered me, appealed to my romantic spirit, and convinced me to fly with him to a secluded location where we would exist in a state of blissful romance before we were wed. That very night I shared my plans with one friend and enlisted her help, and by morning, I had stolen from the house with only the most basic necessities. Harold waited for me at the street corner, where he had a brougham waiting.

When we reached the house I met Mr. Wilson Kemp, a horrible, twisted little man, who, try though he might, could not hide his blackened soul. However, I was in love, and this blinded me to the reality of my situation. It was several weeks later when I entered that room and saw my poor, dear brother, my Pavlos, half-hidden behind bandages and as thin as death. Only then did the sharp edge of truth burst my idyllic dreams. When Harold tore me from my brother and forced me into our bedroom, locking me in with nary a word of explanation, my love withered and died in the space of a heartbeat.

I was not alone for long, and when Harold and Kemp returned, I attempted to rush past them, calling for my brother. They caught me and we struggled, then Harold struck me, knocking me to the floor. He drew a knife from a sheath strapped to his ankle, threatening to slice my face to ribbons. Before I could rise, the two men dragged me across the room and flung me onto the bed. Kemp pushed my sleeve above my elbow and held my arm while Harold withdrew a syringe from his pocket.

"No!"I screamed as he plunged the needle into my flesh and depressed the plunger. Within moments my vision blurred and my limbs grew heavy. I barely remember the subsequent days, for each time I resurfaced from those drugged depths Harold was there with his syringe, sending me back into darkness. Before the drugs took hold, however, I was able to see that we resided in different quarters – hotels, probably, from the decor – but I had no knowledge of where they were taking me, or even in which city we were currently located.

Eventually my moments of lucidity grew, as my constitution became accustomed to the drugs. I was able to feign unconsciousness for longer and longer periods, listening to the two men talk, and piecing together their unholy plot. I understood Paul was dead – it took all my self-control not to cry out at that dreadful knowledge – and, that they had fled with me that very night, traveling through Europe until they felt it safe to settle again. At that point Harold would marry me, and thus gain control over the fortune that Paul died to keep from him. They were preparing to rent a remote house outside Buda-Pesth, and had found a priest who would perform the ceremony, regardless of my wishes.

I was running out of time in which to act.

That evening when Harold came into my room, syringe at the ready, I turned over in my bed and smiled at him, holding out my arms.

"Dearest Harold," I murmured with a sleepy smile. "Why do you look so stern? Come to me, my love. I miss your embraces."

God forgive me for being a liar.

He hesitated, and I moved in a way which I knew would affect him. With a licentious grin, he locked the door behind him and laid the syringe on the table before turning to me and loosening his clothing. I slid my hands over my body in a gesture so wanton that my cheeks still burn with shame at the memory.

Harold breathed his desire as he climbed onto the bed and covered me. I used my hands to distract him as I slid lower, then reached down and snatched his knife from the scabbard strapped to his ankle. Holding the knife in both hands, I thrust it hard into his belly. I cried out as he screamed, pushing him over onto his back and plunging the blade into his body again and again, until the bedclothes were red with his blood and he lay still.

I sat in the midst of the gore for a long moment, shaking with the enormity of what I had done, as well as the growing lack of drugs in my body. Gradually I became aware of pounding on the door, and Kemp calling out to Harold.

Kemp. If ever there was a man who deserved to die, it was he.

Concealing the knife behind me, I crossed to the door. "Fetch a doctor," I cried. "Oh, Harold is ill, he must see a physician!"

I unlocked the door and Kemp rushed in. Before he could even take in the sight of Harold's corpse on the bed, I stepped behind him, pulled him against me, and cut his throat.

He gave one horrible, gasping gurgle, then collapsed. I let him fall and threw the knife beside him on the floor.

The next several hours passed in a fog. I washed my hands and face and changed my clothing, then filled my reticule with the coins both men had in their jackets before venturing out into the streets. It was late afternoon, the golden sunlight falling warm onto the creamy stone of the buildings that surrounded me as I explored the town. I had just killed two men, yet I felt no remorse. I was free of everything save a need for the drugs they had plied me with.

The pain began then, rippling through my body like a serpent coiling around its prey. I gasped and would have fallen, but for the assistance of three Holy Sisters who happened to be passing. They took me to a hospital, where I was able, after several pain-wracked weeks, to recover my health.

I have traveled throughout Europe since then, but my attempts to flee my responsibility for Paul's death have been in vain. I shall never forget my last sight of his dear, haggard face, and must bear the knowledge that my foolish actions led to his death. Yet I am not alone in this; Mr. Holmes, if you had acted sooner on the information Mr. Melas brought to you, my brother might have survived his frightful ordeal. That is your burden to carry, and I am selfish enough to hope that it weighs upon you, especially when you are feeling self-satisfied.

As for me, I have decided to dedicate my life to helping the poor and indigent. By the time you receive this missive, I will have retired from the world to embrace poverty, obedience, and the hope that God's love will eventually bring some peace to the mind and heart of this poor sinner.

I sign this name for the last time,

Sophy Kratides

I set the letter aside. "That poor child. What a frightful story." With a sigh, I contemplated my friend. "She is mistaken about your culpability, however. Her sorrow and guilt have obviously affected her reason."

Holmes continued to puff meditatively on his pipe, his sharp eyes hidden by half-closed lids. "Would that you were right," he said before rising and striding to the window. He stared out at the watery sunlight. "No, I must admit that I did not act with sufficient promptness in this case, and that a man's life was forfeit."

"You mustn't blame yourself," I said. "Your brother – "

"Yet I am not my brother. Or so I thought."

And with a shake of his head he took up his violin and played plaintive airs until dinner.

A Musical Toast to Dr. Watson

(to be sung to Tom Lehrer's "Elements" version of the
"Modern Major General" song by Gilbert & Sullivan)

– Karen Wilson, Gasogene XXV

Verse the First:

He is the very model of a British Army medico
He'll treat your wounded shoulder, leg pneumonia, gout or headache, oh
He's battlefield hardened but retired on a pension
'Cause he caught a Jezail bullet in a spot he cannot mention.

He led a life of discipline, and now as a corrective
He rides shotgun on exploits with a Bohemian detective
Whose adventures he has chronicled for publication in The Strand
And, thanks to him, the name of Sherlock Holmes is heard throughout the land.

He's good with a revolver: that's a skill of some utility
And when a crook needs catching, he can move with great agility
The women of three continents attest to his virility
Says Holmes, dissimulation is his only non-ability.

Verse the Second:

He's married Mary Morstan; she's a creature of uncommon grace
He's quite devoted to her, she is kind of heart and fair efface
You'd think with such a paragon at home, he'd never leave the place
But let old Sherlock beckon and he's off to help him solve the case.

He's looked at with suspicion by new clients come to Baker Street
Until they're reassured they can rely on him to be discreet
And, as each case progresses, that's exactly what he proves to be
Till, later on, he puts it in a book for all the world to see.

As roommates go, he's quite a prize; his tolerance is off the chart
A man of science and letters - that must mean he's pretty smart
But of his sterling qualities, the ones that set him most apart
Are loyalty and decency; we love him for his noble heart.

Verse the Third:

In writing him for stage a screen, adapters have played fast and loose
Few characters can be portrayed by Lucy Liu “and” Nigel Bruce
And Freeman, Kingsley, Sallis, Law, McNee, Burke, Hardwicke, Allan Cox
Mills, Blakely Stoak, Morell, Reg Owen, Bob Duval, and Bernard Fox.

John Hillerman, James Mason, Thorley, Walter Marion-Crawford, too
Hu’ Willis, Dudley Moore, and Joanne Woodward, just to name a few
And each brings something to the role, depending on your point of view
The task of choosing who’s the best is one that I’ll leave up to you.

Like all great men’s associates, the Doctor functions as a gauge
The “normal chap” alongside whom his clever friend can be the sage
He’s quite the greatest sidekick in the hist’ry of the printed page
He’s John H. Watson, M.D., the one fixed point in a changing age.

Coda:

So raise your glass and give a cheer, and spare a little thought, son
Tell me where would Sherlock Holmes be if it wasn’t for his Watson?

Chair à Canon

– Andrew L Solberg, ASH, BSI

The Baker Street Irregulars
"It's the Baker Street division of the detective police force," said my companion, gravely; and as he spoke there rushed into the room half a dozen of the dirtiest and most ragged street Arabs that ever I clapped eyes on."[1]

In 1932, there were no Sherlockian literary societies. However, it is likely that the first Sherlockian society was founded by Christopher Morley in 1902, with a twelve year old Morley and three friends on the streets of Bolton Hill in Baltimore. They called themselves "The Sign of Four."[2] Morley then went on to study at Haverford College. (His father had taught math at Haverford and moved to Baltimore to head up the Math Department at Johns Hopkins.) Christopher wanted to be a writer. In 1917, he wrote a delightful book about a traveling bookseller, *Parnassus on Wheels,* which turned out to be a best seller. He then wrote many more excellent and well received books. During the 1920s, Morley helped found the *Saturday Review of Literature* and became an editor and essayist. He never lost his enjoyment of Sherlock Holmes. In 1926, he began to plant Sherlockian references in his column in the *SRL*. In 1930, Doubleday commissioned Morley to write the introduction to its *Complete Sherlock Holmes.*

Morley also liked to share his meals with friends. To do so, he formed many "clubs" that met periodically for meals. One of his favorites was the "Three Hours for Lunch Club," which met at a speakeasy in Manhattan starting around 1920. Out of that, in 1931, grew the Grillparzer Sittenpolizei Verein ("Grillparzer Morals Police Association") or the Grillparzer Club, which Morley named after a random book he happened to buy. Attendees to the club would sign their names in the book and add comments.[3] Club "members" (attendees who signed the book) included W. S. Hall, Rex Stout, Edward G Robinson, Elmer Davis, A. A. Milne, Buckminster Fuller, Robert Montgomery, Nelson Doubleday, Ginger Rogers, Morley's brothers Frank and Felix, Don Marquis, Ogden Nash, H. G. Wells, A. S. W. Rosenbach, T. S. Elliott, Gene Tunney, Judith Anderson, and many, many more men and

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1 *A Study in Scarlet*

2 Lellenberg, Jon L., *Irregular Memories of the Thirties,* (New York, The Baker Street Irregulars, 1990), p. 1

3 Lellenberg, pp. 62-63

women.[4] A number of its members shared Morley's interest in Sherlock Holmes, and, out of these, grew another club.

1930 brought a heightened interest in Sherlock Holmes, partly because of the death of Arthur Conan Doyle. S.C. Robert's book *Dr. Watson* was published in 1931. T. S. Blakeney's *Sherlock Holmes, Fact or Fiction* was published in 1932. W.S. Bell's *Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Watson* was published in 1933, as was Vincent Starrett's *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes.*

In 1933, the *SRL* published several articles on Sherlock Holmes, including Morley's assertion that Holmes's birthday was January 6 and reviews of some of the aforementioned books. Meanwhile the practice of asking challenging questions began to arise in Morley's clubs (with the loser having to buy a round of drinks). Some of these questions related to the Canon, and people started re-reading the stories a bit more closely.

In late 1933, Morley noticed that the *SRL* would be publishing an issue on January 6, 1934, his date for Sherlock Holmes' birthday. He called for a cocktail party at the Hotel Duane to celebrate the event. There were some birthday toasts at the party, and while Morley may have mentioned the Baker Street Irregulars, no one took any notice of it. However, three weeks later, Morley reported in the *SRL*:

> W.S.H. (i.e., Bill Hall), secretary of the Baker Street Irregulars, has allowed us to look over the minutes of the first meeting of the club. Among other business, it appears that the matter of an official toast was discussed. It was agreed that the first health must always be to "The Woman." [5]

Thus, the BSI was born.

Following that, mention of the BSI occurred regularly in Morley's articles in the *SRL*. Then, Morley printed Elmer Davis' Constitution of the BSI. The SRL began receiving letters from people who added Baker Street Irregulars to their names. Morley became concerned that his whimsical little idea for having meals with his friends was getting out of his control.

His brother Frank had developed a Sherlock Holmes Crossword Puzzle and sent it to Morley, which Morley published in the *SRL* and used as a requirement for membership in the BSI. He asked people to mail him their completed puzzles. Men and women from all over the country did so.

Someone in Great Britain must have been reading the *SRL*. Morley received a letter stating that the English Sherlock Holmes Society now formed, sends its greetings to the Baker Street Irregulars, and would hold its first dinner on June 7, 1934. Morley felt that the Brits were recognizing the BSI's seniority, and was spurred to hold a BSI dinner before

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[4] Lellenberg, pp. 69-70

[5] Lellenberg, p. 41

the Brits met. Hence, he wrote a letter to all of the people who successfully (or almost successfully) completed the puzzle that the BSI would hold its first formal dinner on June 5th. He added a phrase that would haunt the BSI for nearly sixty years. "This first meeting will be stag."

One has to realize that some of Morley's clubs were stag while others were not. Morley seemed to like the character of both co-ed and non-co-ed groups. (The three Hours for Lunch Club was stag, and the Grillparzer Club was not.) A lot depended on which friends he wanted to dine with. For example, sometimes, they happened to be other male authors, sometimes they were authors of both sexes. And there is certainly no evidence that Morley was a misogynist. At any rate, once the BSI took flight, it did not change its policy until Tom Styx opened it up in 1991.

The BSI held its "second annual" dinner on December 7,1934. The attendees included Morley, W.S. Hall, William Gillette, Elmer Davis, Earle Walbridge, Frederick Dorr Steele, H. W. Bell, Vincent Starrett, Gene Tunney, and others, including Alexander Woollcott, who had only been invited by Starrett and proceeded to alienate everyone else.

As Morley always considered the BSI to be an informal club that met at his whim, it did not meet again until January 6, 1936. In the meantime, the first Scion Society was formed, The Five Orange Pips of Westchester County. Soon there was the Speckled Band of Boston, the Six Napoleons of Baltimore, and others.

But the BSI, as a formal organization, seemed to be fading in Morley's interest. He would continue to have lunches with his close Irregular friends, but the BSI would not meet again until 1940. In 1938, Edgar W. Smith, a Vice President at General Motors, began writing to Morley and Starrett (befriending Starrett.) Smith offered to take over many of the chores of planning the dinner from Morley, and Morley let him. From that time on, the BSI met every year. Smith formalized the BSI. He did all the work, and the BSI escaped being Morley's whimsical plaything. Morley may have been the titular head, but Smith became the engine that drove the BSI. After Morley's death, Smith ran it. He was followed by Julian Wolff, then Tom Stix, and now Mike Whelan.

I began attending BSI dinners in the early 1990s and was invested in 2001. The BSI is part literary society, part social group, and part source of whimsical entertainment, much like the Tin Box is. Space does not permit for me to address all of the characteristics, good or bad, of the BSI in this article. But I have met, and become friends with, incredible Sherlockians from all over the world because of it. One does not need to be a BSI to do that, but, no doubt, it does increase the likelihood. I certainly believe that the Tin Box members are also incredible Sherlockians, but one cannot have too many incredible Sherlockians in one's life.

Afterward

I knew much of the history in this article as part of the foggy content in my memory. To get the facts right, I consulted Jon Lellenberg's *Irregular Memories of the Thirties,* which he wrote for the BSI as part of BSI's "BSI History Series." The BSI History Series is highly

recommended reading, whether or not you are a BSI. It reflects the historical perspective of different participants, and evaluates the faulty memories that make up history. It also puts the BSI's history in perspective of what is going on in the real world. I read the series before I was ever invited to a BSI dinner, just for enjoyment. And enjoy it, I did.

A Toast to "The Man"

– Yale Stenzler
November 24, 2008

I lift my glass in a toast to THE MAN ...
Who co-founded Watson's Tin Box in Ellicott City.
Who was a member in good, no great standing, in Watson's Tin Box.
Who has been a member of the Baker Street Irregulars in New York City for many years.
Who was a member of the Six Napoleons.
Who personally knew Dr. John H. Watson.
Who was a collector and creator of all things Sherlockian.
Who recreated and lived within 221-B Baker Street, London (Eldersburg, MD.)
Who extended himself to every new member of Watson's Tin Box.
Who had a case box for every Sherlock Holmes adventure in the Canon.
Who loved to talk about his Sherlockian collection and memorabilia.
Who was beyond doubt a gentleman of fine character and gentle disposition.
Who will be greatly missed by family, friends, and those that knew him by name only.

To you THE MAN – Paul G. Churchill, we rise and lift our drinks to recognize you, not once, but always.

The Tramp and the 'Tec:
Charlie Chaplin and *Sherlock Holmes*

– Peter H. Jacoby

Many Sherlockians are familiar with the play *Sherlock Holmes, or The Strange Case of Miss Faulkner* ("*Sherlock Holmes*") by Arthur Conan Doyle and William Gillette. A substantial number are also aware that the play's performance in Britain in 1903 marked the breakout theatrical debut of the then-teenaged Charles Spencer ("Charlie") Chaplin in the role of Billy, the page at the rooms at 221B Baker Street.

Fewer, however, maybe conversant with details of how the young Chaplin achieved his role in its production that gave rise to the career of one of the greatest film stars of all time. Little Sherlockian scholarship has heretofore focused on this facet of the play,[1] and it is to that aspect that this article is addressed.

Sherlock Holmes, the Play (1898-1903)

Doyle faced an economic dilemma in 1898. He had achieved success as literary agent for a fellow medical man, John H. Watson, who had chronicled the cases of the world's first, and greatest, consulting detective. However, in *The Final Problem* published in 1893, Watson had reported the death of Sherlock Holmes. Since then Doyle had engaged in his own literary career, but without the additional remunerative opportunities afforded by placing Watson's accounts with *The Strand Magazine*. Moreover, in 1897 Doyle had built a new country house, Undershaw, at considerable cost, and needed additional income.[2]

Accordingly, he penned the script for a play based upon the duo of Holmes and Watson, as well as Professor Moriarty and a number of other Canonical characters.[3] His literary agent gave the script to Charles Frohman, the era's foremost American producer of plays, who had also enjoyed success as a London producer. Frohman eagerly bid with Doyle for

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1 For example, a computer search of the *eBaker Street Journal* performed in April 2014 for mention of Chaplin in the published BSJ since 1946 disclosed only slightly more than a dozen such references, almost all in passing, to the famous actor and his role in the play.

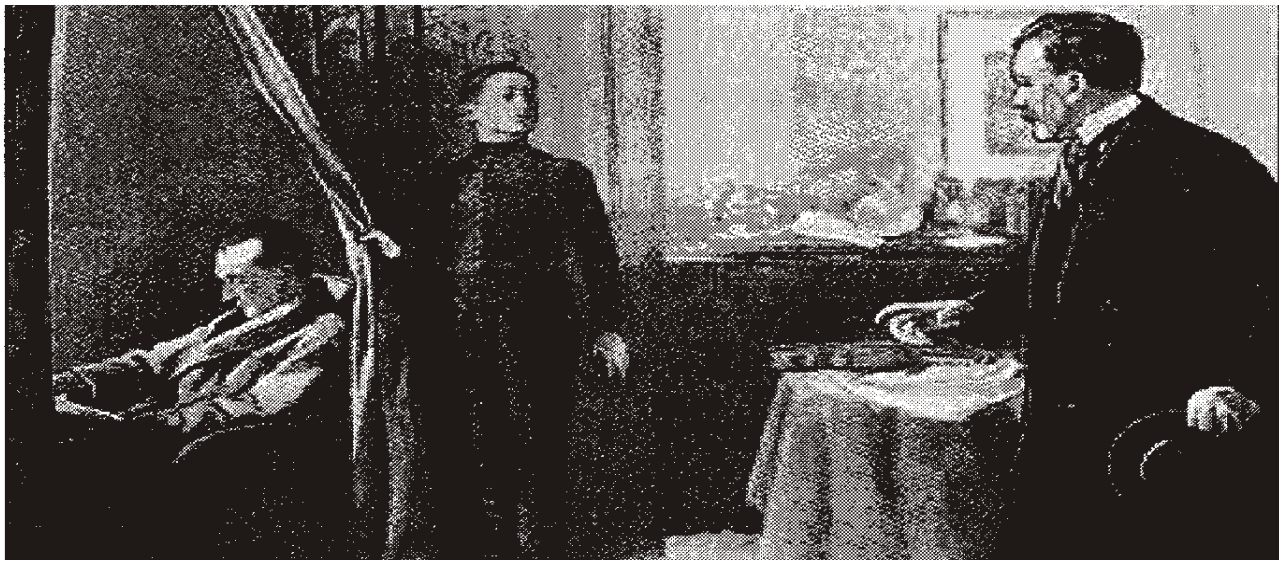
2 Daniel Stashower. *Teller of Tales: The Life of Arthur Conan Doyle* (Henry Holt and Co., New York, 1999), pp 212-213.

3 For a full description of how the play and its script were developed, see Henry Zecher, *William Gillette, America's Sherlock Holmes* (Xlibris Corp, 2011).

production of the play,[4] but he cautioned that the script would require rewriting. Seizing this golden opportunity to cash in, Doyle happily granted the theatrical rights to Frohman.[5]

Gillette, who had collaborated with Frohman in other productions, was given Doyle's script for revision, concluded that it was unworkable, and rewrote it virtually from scratch. In a decision that would have unforeseen consequences for the entertainment industry's future, in the rewritten play Gillette gave the previously anonymous page at 221B, who had appeared in A *Case of Identity* (as "the boy in buttons"), *The Noble Bachelor*, *The Yellow Face* and *The Naval Treaty*, both a speaking role and a name: Billy.

Following a successful run on Broadway, the play debuted in London in 1901 and was once again a hit, with the original run of twelve weeks later extended until April 1903. Frohman then made plans to further exploit the play's success with touring companies in Great Britain.



"Billy advanced and drew away the drapery"
Illustration by Alfred Gilbert for "The Adventure of the Mazarin Stone,"
The Strand Magazine, October 1921

Enter Master Charles (1903-1906)

In June 1903, twelve year old Chaplin, the cockney son of an alcoholic music hall actor and a mother who was a singer, received a card asking him to appear at the offices of

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[4] "We must get those Doyle stories," Frohman told Gillette. Isaac Marcosson and Daniel Frohman, *Charles Frohman: Manager and Man* (Harper & Brothers, New York, 1916), p 101.

[5] Doyle was delighted by the play's commercial potential: as he wrote to his mother, the play "is to make all of our fortunes." John Lellenberg, Daniel Stashower, and Charles Foley, *Arthur Conan Doyle: A Life in Letters* (Penguin Press, New York, 2007), p. 419.

Blackmore's, a theatrical talent agency. He was interviewed by Mr. Blackmore himself and then sent on to the Frohman London office, where Chaplin was offered two roles. Most important, he was to play Billy for a run of 40 weeks in a *Sherlock Holmes* company touring in the Midlands and the North of England. Additionally, there was a boy's part in a new play titled *Jim, the Romance of a Cockney,* written by the actor who would play Holmes in the touring company, to be produced for a two week trial run prior to the tour. Chaplin was sent to meet Harry Arthur Saintsbuy, the lead actor in the *Sherlock Holmes* touring company and author of Jim.

Saintsbury was an accomplished playwright and an actor who had made his name on the Victorian stage in romantic roles. (As Chaplin was later to write,[6] Saintsbury was also "a living replica of the illustrations of Holmes in the Strand Magazine, with a long sensitive face and a wonderful forehead.[7]) Saintsbury offered young Chaplin the part of "Sammy the newsboy" in Jim, stating that role was one of the most important characters.

In one of those moments on which so much of later importance rises or falls, Saintsbury then handed the script *of Jim* to Chaplin. Chaplin feared that Saintsbury might ask him to read from his part on the spot, because he had little formal education and was, by his own later admission, almost unable to read.[8] Fortunately, Saintsbury told him rehearsals would not start for another week, and to read over the script at home. There, his half-brother Sydney helped Charlie to memorize Sammy's lines.[9]

Saintsbury took Charlie under his wing and instructed him in such techniques of stagecraft as pausing after a comedic line, taking a cue, etc. He also corrected young Chaplin's admitted tendency to move his head and mug unduly while speaking. Chaplin was a quick study and readily took to Saintsbury's mentoring. Ironically for an actor who later became renowned for his gifts of physical comedy, Chaplin's greatest difficulty turned out to be the mechanics of stagecraft, such as handling a tray or other props, at which he considered himself clumsy.

Jim was panned by the critics, but Chaplin received complimentary notices. One presciently wrote that the role of Sammy "was made vastly amusing by Master Charles Chaplin, a bright and vigorous child actor. I have never heard of the boy before, but I hope to hear great things from him in the near future."[10] Following the closing of that play, the

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[6] Charles Chaplin, My Autobiography (Simon and Schuster, New York,1964) "Autobiography").

[7] Ibid, p. 81.

[8] Ibid, p. 77.

[9] Ibid, p. 78.

[10] David Robinson, *Chaplin: His Life and Art* (DaCapo Press, New York, 1994) ("Robinson"), p. 47.

Saintsbury company commenced its *Sherlock Holmes* tour in the provinces. It then played in the London suburbs, where its performances were again phenomenally successful.

Chaplin as Billy in an undated photo

By this time, Chaplin was so skilled playing Billy that his plaudits were cited in the play's advertisements. For example, a notice for a London area performance repeated this praise from a critic: "A faithful portrayal of 'Billy' is given by Master Charles Chaplin, who shows considerably ability and bids fair to develop into a capable and clever actor."

The Saintsbury company broke up for good during the summer of 1904, but Charlie was able to catch on as Billy with another of the provincial road companies that were then performing *Sherlock Holmes*. However, a second rate producer had bought the touring rights from Frohman, and for Chaplin it was a depressing come down playing the smaller towns in the north of England with an inferior company.[11] But just when his career seemed to have dimmed, fate again smiled on young Charlie. Gillette had come to London to star in a production of *Sherlock Holmes.* Summoned to Gillette's dressing room, Chaplin was asked "Would you like to play in *Sherlock Holmes* with me?" In a burst of nervous enthusiasm, Chaplin replied "Oh, very much, Mr. Gillette!" He was so excited that he even neglected to ask about his wages.[12]

At the rehearsals young Chaplin developed an instant crush on Marie Doro, the actress playing Alice Faulkner, "transfixed at her beauty." Years later, when Chaplin was the world's leading silent motion picture actor, Doro visited Hollywood and told a friend that

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[11] Joyce Milton, *Tramp: The Life of Charlie Chaplin* (Harper Collins, New York, 1996), p. 36.

[12] *Autobiography*, p. 88.

he was the one person there she hoped to meet. She had no idea he had played Billy in her company. When they were introduced, Chaplin told her "But we've met before. You broke my heart. I was silently in love with you."[13] However, during the run *of Sherlock Holmes* the teenage Chaplin was too shy to do more than say "Good evening" as they passed backstage.[14]

Sherlock Holmes reopened in London on October 7,1905, where it was again a great success. By then, Chaplin was an accomplished hand at portraying Billy. He continued to garner praise for his performances, including an entry in the first edition *of The Green Room Book,* precursor to *Who's Who on the Stage.* There he was described as "an impersonator, mimic and sand dancer" who had "fulfilled engagements with several of Charles Frohman's companies (playing Billy in *Sherlock Holmes)* at many of the leading variety theatres in London and the provinces."[15] *Sherlock Holmes* with Gillette and Chaplin continued its run into November, 1905, ending with a royal gala performance. Marie Doro was now to return to America, and on the night of the final performance Chaplin went off alone and in his words got "desperately drunk."[16] Chaplin played Billy in another road company until March 1906, when he was let go. He was by then 17 years old and no longer a child actor, and would pursue other endeavors in the entertainment world.

Afterward (1907-1977)

Chaplin immigrated to the United States in 1912 and became employed by the Mack Sennet studio, which in February 1914 released his first movie with his Little Tramp character. It was an immediate sensation among film audiences and Chaplin quickly became a popular Hollywood star. He portrayed the tramp in over a hundred silent movies until he officially retired the character in *Modern Times,* released in 1936. In *The Great Dictator,* released in 1940, Chaplin acted in his first "talkie," satirizing the European forces of fascism. The film was seen as an act of great courage given the political environment of the era. But following World War II Chaplin was persecuted for his left wing views, particularly by J. Edgar Hoover's FBI. When Chaplin visited Britain in 1952, Hoover had his re-entry permit

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[13] Ibid, p. 219. When they both later visited New York City, Doro invited Chaplin to dine with her. Chaplin's Autobiography (p. 220) states that the two "just dined quietly in Marie's apartment alone," but because the adult Chaplin was a notorious womanizer, his biographers disbelieve this claim of a platonic meal. As one of the decorously wrote "Chaplin would not have been Chaplin if he had simply dined quietly with Marie." Kenneth S, Lynn, Charlie Chaplin and his times (Simon and Shuster, New York, 1997)("Lynn"), p. 211.

[14] Lynn, p. 77.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Autobiography, P. 92.

revoked. Chaplin went to live in Vevey, Switzerland, near Geneva.[17] He returned to the United States only once, in 1972, to accept an honorary achievement award from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences "for the incalculable effect he has had in making motion pictures the art form of this century."[18]

Chaplin died in his sleep at his Swiss home on Christmas Day 1977 at the age of 88 and was buried in Vevey. Hopefully his final hours were made more bearable by happy memories of his youthful day when he trod the boards as Billy and all the world was bright with promise.

Personal Postscript

In 1937, a young lawyer graduated from Columbia Law School and went to work at an entertainment law firm that represented many prominent motion picture personalities, including Chaplin. The young lawyer formed a strong friendship with Chaplin and soon became his attorney, a personal and professional relationship that lasted until Chaplin's death. I am very proud to say that lawyer was my late father, Herbert P. Jacoby.

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[17] Robinson, pp. 544-630.

[18] See **http://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Academy_Honorary_Award#1970s**

Score

– April Curnow

One evening in a concert hall before the gathered throng
A fair contralto named Irene sang an enchanting song.
The Crown Prince gazed in rapture as the audience cried, “Encore!”
Irene was happy to oblige (of course, she knew the score.)
His Highness, eager for a fling, showed her a princely time.
But when he sought a wife it seemed Irene looked less sublime.
She wasn’t of his station, he opined – the royal bore!
The cad was mad to slight her so. He didn’t know the score.

With scandal threatening his plans, the King spared no expense
And hired a great detective to retrieve some evidence.
A compromising photograph eluded them once more.
The Woman bested both her foes. Two-nothing was the score.
Upon a Stradivarius Sherlock was wont to play,
But Irene played him for a fool before she slipped away.
Detectives and deceitful royals, this truth you can’t ignore:
When dealing with musicians, you’d better know the score.

"Thus Ended My Career in Politics"

Written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

– Fred Glueckstein

On 1 December 1923, *Collier's, The National Weekly,* an American Magazine, published an article by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle about his experiences in politics and twice being defeated for parliament. Inside the Five Cents magazine, his article was titled *Thus Ended My Career in Politics*. In his piece, Conan Doyle answered three questions: first, what were his reasons for entering politics; second, what were his campaign experiences, and third, what lessons did he learn?

Conan Doyle's experience with electoral politics began in 1900 after he had just landed in Scotland from South Africa, where he served as a volunteer doctor in the Boer War. The Conservatives and Liberals both approached Conan Doyle to run in the October 1900 elections.

He was aware that the major issues of the upcoming election included home rule of Ireland, free trade, and the Boer War, which was an issue of importance to him. Conan Doyle was also aware that the Conservative party, which was the ruling party, favored seeing the war through to its conclusion, however, factions of the Liberal Party opposed the conflict. A third party, Liberal Unionists, a party formed in 1886 by a faction that broke away from the Liberal Party, had formed a partnership with the Conservatives to continue the Boer War.

Upon his return home, Conan Doyle received a letter from Robert Cranston, chairman of the Liberal Unionists. The party was led by Lord Hartington, later the Duke of Devonshire, and Joseph Chamberlain. In his letter, Cranston suggested Conan Doyle 'stand' for Dundee; however, Conan Doyle told his mother that he was inclined to stand but not for Dundee, which he described as "odious place with every disadvantage." However, he told Cranston he would meet with him and talk it over.

Conan Doyle's decision to become a member of Parliament, as he told his mother, was because he was 41 and at the next General election would be 48, which he felt was too old to begin. "It is now or never if I am to do it," he told her.

Conan Doyle attended the meeting with Cranston and the Liberal Unionist party members. Conan Doyle was offered several 'safe' seats, where he would be assured a victory; however, Conan Doyle made up his mind that he wanted a fight. Thus, it was decided he would run for the seat in Central Edinburgh, which was considered the Radical stronghold of Scotland.

During the meeting, Conan Doyle remembered listening to a debate on the pros and cons of what his views were to be on the central questions of the election. After it was settled by the party members and written down before his election address, Conan Doyle with some amusement said: "Gentlemen, may I ask who is going to honor these promises that you are making?"

"Why you, of course," said the party members.

"Then I think it would be better if I made them," said Conan Doyle who crumpled up their document and picked up a pen to write out his own views for his speech. Perhaps, the members were surprised at Conan Doyle's independence, but in any case he said 'it was well received.'

Conan Doyle's Liberal Party opponent was George Mackenzie Brown, a wealthy Canadian-born Scottish publisher. Coincidentally, as the publisher of Thomas Nelson and Sons in Edinburg, Brown published Conan Doyle's books. Brown had been chosen to fight for the seat when William McEwan announced his retirement as Liberal Member of Parliament for Edinburgh Central.

In September 1900, Conan Doyle went up to Edinburgh and began ten days of nonstop electioneering. "I was fresh from the scene of war and overflowing with zeal to help the army," he wrote. "So I spared myself in no way. I spoke from barrels in the street or any pedestal I could find, holding many-side meetings besides my big meetings, which were always crowded and uproarious." Conan Doyle's political strategy was to tell the audience that he and Brown agreed on most social issues and matters of local concern; however, he and Brown differed on the war in South Africa.

During the campaign, Conan Doyle was often heckled by the audience who disagreed with his positions. Some of the hecklers addressed him as Sherlock Holmes, such as: "Sherlock Holmes! Are ye no' a believer in home rule?" "This title," reported a Glasgow paper, "the doctor acknowledges genially."

However, an unexpected smear campaign in the eleventh hour affected the outcome of the election. "There was an evangelical fanatic named Potts or Potter living in Dunfermline, who thought it was his special mission in life to keep Roman Catholic candidates out of Parliament," wrote Conan Doyle in *Collier's, The National Weekly.* [Daniel Stashower in *Teller of Tales: the Life of Arthur Conan Doyle* identified the organizer as Jacob Plimmer, who managed the Dunfermline Protestant Defense Organization.]

On the night before the voting, hundreds of placards went up throughout the district that attacked Conan Doyle as a "Papist conspirator, a Jesuit emissary, and a Subverter of the Protestant Faith." It went on to say that his candidature constituted an assault on "everything dear to the Scottish heart," wrote Conan Doyle.

"My unhappy supporters saw crowds of workingmen read the placards and calling out 'I've done with him.' As it was, I very narrowly missed the seat by only a few hundred votes." Actually, Conan Doyle lost by 569 votes as reported to American readers by *The New York Times* in a story from London on 5 October 1900. The article, titled *Detailed Election Returns,* incorrectly referred to Conan Doyle as a Conservative and not a Liberal Unionist. *The New York Times* story read: "In the Central Division of Edinburgh Dr. A. Conan Doyle, Conservative, was defeated by G.M. Brown, Liberal, who received 3,028 votes, as against 2,459 for Dr. Doyle."

Looking back at the election, Conan Doyle believed that the late hour campaign cost him the seat in Parliament. He described the tactic against him: "It was very cleverly done, and

of course this fanatic alone could not have paid the expenses, though I cannot believe that Mr. Brown, my opponent, knew anything of the matter," he wrote.

"The question of an appeal came along, but the thing was so clever that it really was difficult to handle, since it was true that I had been educated by Jesuits and yet absurdly untrue that this education influenced my present frame of mind. There we had to leave it," said Conan Doyle.

Although Conan Doyle had no desire to enter politics again, the circumstances changed. "I had no further urge to try political adventures, but when the Tariff Reform election of 1905 came around I felt that I should make some sacrifice for the faith that was in me," he wrote. "Mr. 'Tommy' Shaw, as he was called – now Lord Shaw – was one of the most energetic Radicals in Scotland, and was reputed to be firmly established in his seat, which was called 'the Border Burghs,' consisting of the small towns of Hawick, Galashiels, and Selkirk, all of them engaged in the woolen trade, and all of them hard hit by German competition."

Conan Doyle worked hard to garner votes. Even, on the last night of the election, he addressed meetings in each of the three towns, which were separated by many miles and hilly roads. "However, it was to avail and I was beaten... The thing which annoyed me most about the election was that my opponent, Tommy Shaw, appeared once, so far as I remember, in the constituency, and did everything by deputy, so that I found myself like a boxer who is punching his rival's second instead of himself all the time," wrote Conan Doyle.

"Thus ended my career in politics," wrote Conan Doyle in his 1924 autobiography, *Memories and Adventures*. "I could say with my friend [American author, editor and satirist] Kendrick Bangs: 'The electors have returned me – to the bosom of my family.' A very pleasant constituency it is. I had now thoroughly explored that path, and had assured myself that my life's journey did not lie along it."

Conan Doyle went on to say: "And yet I was deeply convinced that public service was waiting for me somewhere. One likes to feel that one has some small practical influence upon the affairs of one's time, but I encourage myself by the thought that though I have not been a public man, yet my utterances in several pamphlets and numerous letters in the press may have had more weight with the public since I was disassociated from my political interest which could sway my judgement."

Conan Doyle also thought that his time in politics helped him professionally later: "My political work was not wanted. I stood in the two most heckling constituencies in Scotland, and through that odious and much-abused custom I gained a coolness on the platform and a disregard for interruption and clamor which has stood me in good stead since. Indeed, I hold that it was to fashion me more perfectly for my ultimate work that I was twice passed through this furnace."

Today, the public would be of the same opinion that Conan Doyle's 'life's journey' in the literary world, rather than in politics, was the right outcome, as the author is best remembered as the creator of the world's most famous detective, Sherlock Holmes.

Conan Doyle, Sir Arthur. Memories *and Adventures.* London: Wordsworth Editions, 2007.

Stashower, Daniel. *Teller of Tales: The Life of Arthur Conan Doyle.* New York: Owl Books, 1999.

Magazines and Newspapers

Conan Doyle, Sir Arthur. *Thus Ended My Career in Politics,* Collier's, *The National Weekly,* for December 1,1923, p.5 and 31.

Detailed Election Returns. (1900, Oct 05). New *York Times* (1857-1922), pp. 1-1.

London to have a Mills Hotel. Subsection: Poster Defeats Conan Doyle (1900, Oct 13). *Chicago Daily Tribune* (1872-1922), pp. 5-5.

Benedict with Martin as John

(Sung to "Abraham, Martin, and John" by Dion)

– Melissa James

Has anybody here seen BBC Sherlock
One of the hottest shows that's on
I've seen a lot of Sherlocks, but this guy's cute and young
He's Benedict, with Martin as John

Anybody here seen Holmes played by Benedict
He's as brilliant as they come
The fangirls love the sexy new Sherlock
With Benedict, and Martin as John

Anybody here seen Watson played by Martin
He's the steady, loyal one
The fangirls cried at the last clifihanger
Seeing Benedict, with Martin as John

Didn't you think they deserved at least one Emmy
Didn't Martin win a BAFTA for the BBC,
They're better than Elementary
Some day soon, they're gonna be some big stars

Anybody here waiting for the Hobbit
And the next Trek film to come
These guys are everywhere, just wait and see
Bilbo Martin, and Benedict as Khan

Sherlock Holmes Essay Contest

2013 Clarkson Prize Winning Essay

This year, Watson's Tin Box is celebrating its Tenth Annual Sherlock Holmes Essay Contest for seventh graders in Howard County, Maryland. Once again, the Tin Box partnered with Howard County Library System 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 ten years, the contest has reached more than 3,000 students, honored 32 students, and bestowed more than $2,500 worth of prizes.

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

Hanna Al-Kowsi
Grade 7
Age 13
Mount View Middle School
Teacher: Ms. Kann

Second Prize

Ceoli Jacoby
Grade 7
Age 13
Bonnie Branch Middle School
Teacher: Ms. Taylor

Third Prize - A Tie!

Sriya Potluri	Skyler Sauers
Grade 7	Grade 7
Age 13	Age 13
Clarksville Middle School	Bonnie Branch Middle School
Teacher: Mr. Puryear	Teacher: Ms. Taylor

Hearty congratulations for a job well done go to all the winners. With the approval of the Clarkson Prize winner, the Clarkson Prize 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.* Ms. Al-Kowsi can be proud to be a published author.

From the Journal of John H. Watson

Title: Just some “critique” from Holmes

– Hanna Al-Kowsi

July 12th, 1891

The dull, foggy light shone through the windows on that warm, humid July evening of ’91. It was one of those evenings where, even if you had work to do, things to be done, you hardly had the energy to get out of bed and ready yourself. The slightest movement was a great exertion. I had been busy with my practice as of late, and this was one of the few occasions on which I had time to visit my dear friend, Sherlock Holmes. He sat curled up in his armchair, with his knees drawn up to his chin, and his arms clasped around them, smoking his pipe in his usual fashion. His gaze lingered absent-mindedly on the flames. After some minutes, he spoke rather abruptly.

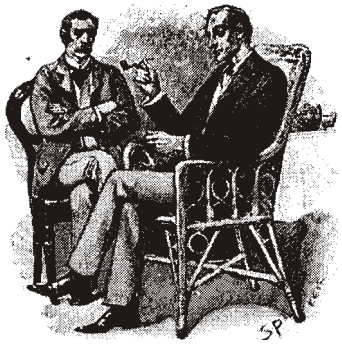
“Watson, I wish to ask a question of you.”

“Yes? What is it?”

“Do you remember that publication you put out, of “The Speckled Band” adventure?”

“Why, yes, I put it out quite recently due to the death of that young woman. Why?”

“I read it.”



“Did you like it?”

He paused a moment. “Some aspects, yes, but on a whole, no. You romanticized too much, as you tend to do.” I started to interrupt, but he held up a hand. “Patience, doctor, I have but a few things to say.

“It was a fair account, but there were a few points I wish to discuss. I noted three main faults. The first was that you over-dramatized, the second was that you did not keep to the facts, and the third was that you kept the reader in the dark for a long period of time.

“Let us begin with the drama. You, Watson, have this tendency to add romance and suspense to your works, even when there is none. I fear that this will never change, but critique may aid you. For instance, when describing our client Miss Roylott, you wrote, and I quote, “... with restless frightened eyes, like those of some hunted animal.” Now, did you really need to add that bit? It was unnecessary work. A simple, ‘She appeared to be agitated,’ would have sufficed. But, ah, drama won out over practicality.

You do the same bothersome thing again when describing our night at Doctor Roylott's house. Upon describing the wait we had, you wrote, 'How shall I ever forget that dreadful vigil? ... How long they seemed, those quarters! Twelve struck, and one and two and three, and still we sat waiting silently for whatever might befall.' It was unnecessary to write so much to describe so little. I would have suggested saying 'My companion and I waited quietly for four hours.' It would have been much simpler."

"Holmes, I was merely..."

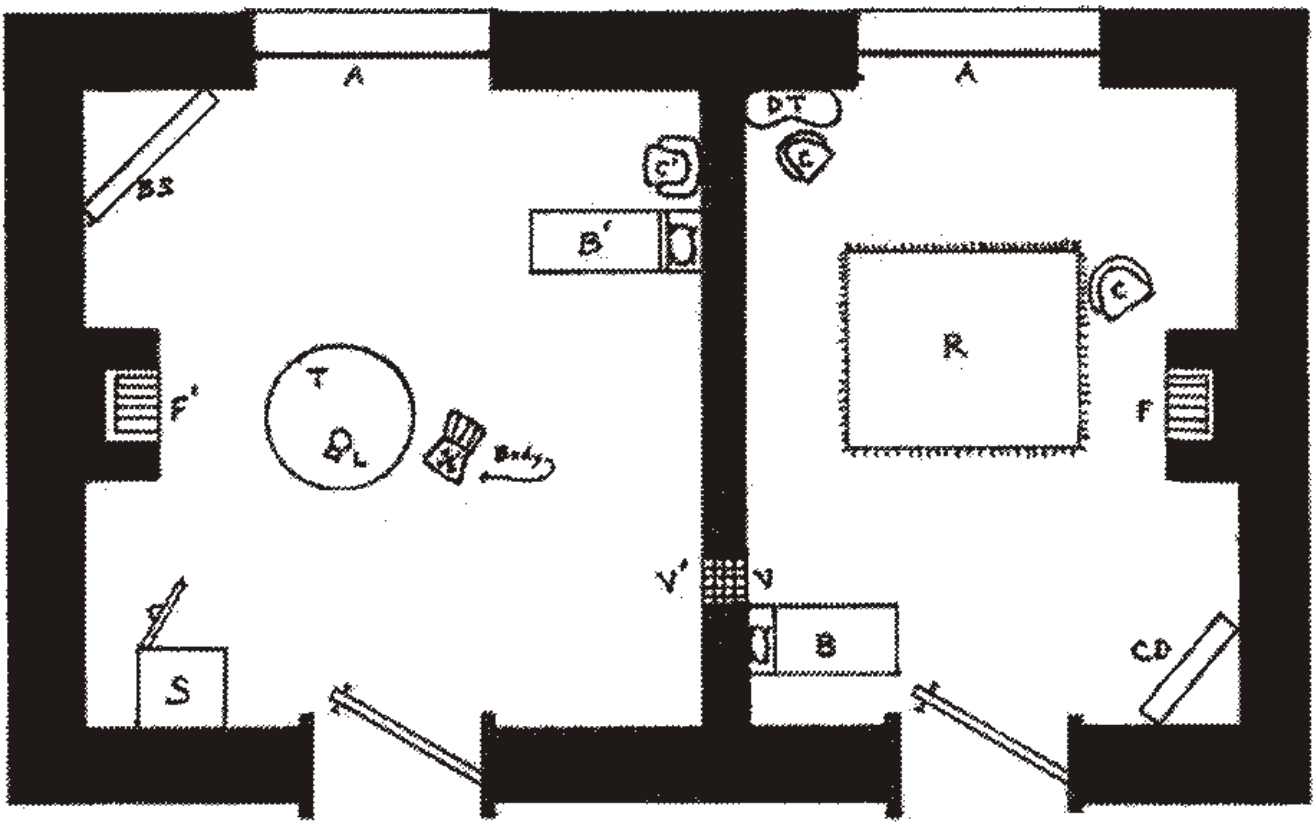
"Let me finish, Doctor, let me finish."

I closed my mouth sullenly, awaiting the next bit of criticism.

"Thank you," he said, smiling slightly at my frustration.

"Onward we go, Watson, to our next fault: you do not stick to the facts, observe a tendency to continuously interject with your own thought and opinions. As an example, I present this. When describing our ride down to Stoke Moran, you wrote, 'It was a perfect day, with bright sun and a few fleecy clouds in the heavens.' I am sure you know that all of that is strictly opinion, which strays very much from facts. It was also rather unnecessary to describe the weather, as it had no effect on the murder, which all occurred indoors. Next, I present this example. You said, when writing of the attack by the doctor's pet snake, 'They say that away down in the village, and even in the distant parsonage, that cry raised the sleepers from their beds.' Doctor, this is nothing but hearsay, which is rarely true, and almost always exaggerated. It means nothing, and has no basis in fact other than that Roylott did cry out. Not factual, therefore unnecessary.

"Finally, Doctor, we come to the fault of keeping the poor reader in the dark. Throughout the story, you continuously write as though you yourself know nothing, which is true. However, this should not prevent you, as the writer, from placing knowledge you did not have at the time in your work. For instance, when we conversed about my expectance of a ventilator in Miss Roylott's room and the crime which I predicted, you should not have left out my deductions. Instead of writing your shock at my knowledge, you should have put the steps I took to reach that conclusion. Here is my example: 'My companion came to the conclusion that there was a ventilator and connected it to the crime through a series of observations and deductions. In Miss Roylott's story, she mentioned that her sister could smell the Doctor's cigar. Henceforth, there must be some connection between the Doctor's room and hers. The obvious answer is a ventilator. This, however, is not an effective ventilator if it leads not outside but to another room, so it must serve some alternate purpose. Holmes also observed that there was a dysfunctional bell-pull and that the bed was clamped to the floor. From these comes the conclusion that something from the Doctor's room was to come through the ventilator, down the bell-pull, and onto whoever was in the bed. From the symptoms of poisoning that the victim had, a possible answer would be a snake. Coupled with the Doctor's love of odd foreign animals, this theory becomes very likely.' This would have been much more informative.



(Credit to Tom Hanratty, Milwaukee, WI,
http://redbirdstudio.com/CrimeScenes/speckled_band.html[1])

"And so, to finish off, I repeat that you over-dramatize, stray from the facts, and keep the reader in the dark too long. But, with some effort, these errors can be corrected."

Here my friend stopped, and gave me a questioning glance. I was somewhat overwhelmed by his onslaught of critique, but I managed to say, "Thank you, Holmes, I'll keep that in mind. But wasn't there any particle that you liked?"

He smiled, almost gently, and said "I appreciate your displaying of this to the public, and more so to possible clients. You have given me quite a lot of business."

There was a knock on the door.

"Come in, pray, sit down."

And business, as usual, resumed.

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[1] That web address is no longer active. The drawing can be found at **http://170w.qwriting.qc.cuny.edu/files/2011/12/speckled_band.jpg** - Les

Toast to The Second Mrs. Watson

– John Baesch, ASH, BSI

This toast goes back to the very beginnings of the Baker Street Irregulars, to a directive in Christopher Morley's Bowling Green column in *The Saturday Review of Literature.* The toast was incorporated by reference in Elmer Davis's Constitution and Buy-Laws for the BSI.

All that is straightforward: a toast to "The Second Mrs. Watson." Right! Problem is, as Sherlock Holmes might say, "Data! data! data!" or "I can't make bricks without clay." The data that is missing is the fixed point in a changing age. In other words, in order to toast the Second Mrs. Watson, we have to identify who was the first. As with so many things in this world where it is always 1895, the answer to the question is, "Well, that depends."

This much we know: there was one. There is a second Mrs. Watson (at least!). After all, the fair sex was Watson's department – he tells us (in SIGN) that he had an experience of women over many nations and three separate continents. Who she was depends on where you start the count. In a long Sherlockian career of listening to and giving Canonical toasts, I've found there has been no end of imagination in the identification of the various Mrs. Watsons.

I prefer to use the data and respect what Dr. Watson himself says so enigmatically, leaving out necessary data that would remove the doubt.

And so I offer the toast to The Second Mrs. Watson – whoever she might be!

Toast to Irene Adler

– Evelyn Herzog, ASH, BSI

Sherlock Holmes found Irene Adler something of an enigma and after all these years she still continues to intrigue Sherlockians. With modern online databases at our fingertips – not to mention the ever-growing heaps of volumes that so many of us almost unwittingly acquire – we are all surrounded by vast intellectual resources. Perhaps there are some topics we could research to gain insight into this special woman. Let me suggest a few:

Adventuress;
Bonnet (comma) daintiest thing under a;
Contralto;
Diva;
Emigration;
Fury (comma) Hell's;
Glamour;
Holmes (comma) Sherlock (comma) beaten three times by men and once by a woman;
I for Intelligence *and* Intuition;
Jersey (comma) New (comma) distinguished daughters of;
Klein (comma) Isadora – compare and contrast bad and good adventuresses;
London;
Matrimony;
Norton (comma) Godfrey;
Opera;
Photographs (comma) cabinet size;
Queens and Kings of Europe (after all, she almost was one);
Railways; St. John's Wood (comma) notable residents of;
Trouser Roles;
Ulster (the garment, not the locality);
Victoria (comma) Queen – more compare and contrast;
Wilhelm King of Bohemia (comma) errors of;
Xena Princess Warrior (comma) inspirations for;
Yugoslavia (specifically Montenegro); and
Zeisler (comma) Ernest B. (because sometimes you've got to deal with chronology).

And yet, even if you research all these topics and correlate them with what we know of Irene Adler, I think she will remain as intriguing and mysterious as Sherlock Holmes found her. To Irene Adler!

Coping with the Coronet

– William Hyder, BSI

> Holmes walked over to his desk, took out a little triangular piece of gold with three gems in it, and threw it down upon the table.
> With a shriek of joy our client clutched it up.
> "You have it!" he gasped. "I am saved! I am saved!"

That is the high point of the adventure Dr. Watson called "The Beryl Coronet." The client, a banker named Alexander Holder, had made a substantial loan to a client of exalted rank (whom he did not identify to Holmes and Watson). As security he unwisely accepted the coronet of the title, which was a public possession. Even more unwisely, he took it home with him rather than entrusting it to his office safe. During the night an attempt had been made to steal it, and in the process a projecting part of the coronet had been broken off and was now missing. Holder was unhappily convinced that his son, in debt from gambling, was the thief.

Holmes recovers the missing piece, clears the son of theft and collects a huge reward. But the narrative ends with one important point unexplored. A Sherlockian scholar named A. Carson Simpson pointed it out:

"(T)he injuries to the coronet pose a problem to which there seems to be no solution. We are told that 'any injury to it would be almost as serious as its complete loss.' But it was in fact injured, being twisted out of shape and having a piece broken off. How did Alexander Holder expect to get it made as good as new between Saturday morning, when he got back the missing piece, and the following Monday, when the borrower would return to reclaim it? If this could not be done, how did he expect to placate the borrower on Monday, unless by a little genteel blackmail? Apparently he did not worry about these questions, for his first act, after getting back the missing piece, was to rush off – not to the nearest goldsmith, as one might expect, but – to make his peace with his son Arthur."[1]

Holder described his client as "one of the highest, noblest, most exalted names in England." Simpson identified him as Queen Victoria's eldest son, H.R.H. Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, later to become King Edward VII. Other scholars have agreed.[2] After warning Holder to take good care of the coronet, the prince added, "Any injury to it

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[1] Simpson, A. Carson, "Whose Was It? Conjectures on a Coronet," *Baker Street Journal Christmas Annual,* No. 2 (1957), 9-17.

[2] Jones, Kelvin L, "The Prince and the Coronet," *Wheelwrightings,* Vol. 10, No. 3 (January 1988), 21-24. The identification is generally accepted in the Sherlockian world.

would be almost as serious as its complete loss, for there are no beryls in the world to match these, and it would be impossible to replace them."

That statement is the crucial one. It was the loss of one or more of the beryls that the prince feared. He assumed that an injury to the gold could be repaired, and so did Holder when he found the coronet had been injured. It would have been a matter of melting the gold at the joint, molding the broken piece back and touching up the chasing to match the chasing on the body of the coronet. A delicate task, but within the ability of a master goldsmith.

Holder would have taken the coronet and the missing piece to a leading firm of jewelers, asked for their discretion, told them some cover story and paid them a stiff price for their skilled work, their speed and – most importantly – their silence.

The leading jewelers in London at the time were Asprey and Garrard. Holder would have avoided the latter. Garrard had been Crown Jewelers to Queen Victoria since 1843, and its personnel would have recognized the coronet as a public possession. Asprey, then. Holder's client had told him, "I should not dream of doing so [leaving the coronet as security] were it not absolutely certain that I should be able in four days to reclaim it," later adding, "I shall call for it in person on Monday morning." Therefore he visited Holder on a Thursday, the attempted theft occurred that night and Holder consulted with Holmes on Friday. Holmes did his work on the same day, finishing around 2 a.m. Saturday, and returned the missing piece, with its three beryls, to Holder on Saturday morning.

Simpson noted that Holder's "first act, after getting back the missing piece, was to rush off – not to the nearest goldsmith, as one might expect, but – to make his peace with his son Arthur" (and, presumably, see about getting the boy released from prison). It is true that the banker declared his intention to do so, but given that Holmes had already informed Arthur that his innocence was known, Holder's terror of returning a twisted, broken coronet to an exalted and powerful client might well have prompted him to take care of another little errand first.

With the right financial incentive, which Holder was rich and desperate enough to offer, Asprey could probably have started work directly and finished the work on the Sunday. On the Monday morning Holder would have been prepared to receive the prince in his office, return the supposedly unblemished coronet, accept the repayment and the interest, carefully refrain from writing a receipt (the prince would not have wanted any record of the transaction) and close the matter with a vast sigh of relief.

In the heat of the investigation, Holder had declared, "I would give my fortune to have [the beryls] back." But the fee he paid to the jeweler, though no doubt astronomical, was certainly less than that, and Holmes, though offered £10,000 per stone, settled for a total of £4,000. Except for the severe strain on his nervous system, Holder paid a relatively light price for his bad judgment in entrusting a priceless object to a bureau drawer with a common lock.

Cambridge or Oxford? The Answer at Last [1]

– Beth Austin

The debate carries on. Did Holmes attend Cambridge, or Oxford, or some combination of both, or some other university altogether. I have learned the unequivocal answer but before I share the news, let's review the arguments perpetrated over the last 103 years.

It all began with an innocuous treatise by Monsignor Ronald A. Knox published in 1911. The Monsignor wrote the paper for presentation to Oxford students as a satire meaning to comment on contemporary developments in Biblical scholarship and their impact on religious teachings. How one gets from Studies in the Literature of Sherlock Holmes to contemporary developments in Biblical scholarship is a bit beyond me but the student body at large liked the paper; it was subsequently published a few times and eventually became the basis for The Great Game all true Sherlockians play. (That is that Holmes and Watson were/are real, Watson really wrote the stories, and Doyle was his literary agent.) Regardless, that is where it all began.

Without getting too caught up in who said what, the arguments go something like this. First, in *Gloria Scott,* Holmes says he was at college for 2 years. Later in *The Musgrave Ritual* he says "during my last years at the university." These first two statements seem to be contradictory. Later he mentions that Musgrave was a man of an exceedingly aristocratic type " indeed a scion of one of the very oldest families in the kingdom." Such a man would certainly have attended one of the major universities, Cambridge or Oxford, putting an end to any discussion of a lesser establishment.

There is the issue of the dog, the one that bit Holmes as he went down to chapel, not the one that did nothing in the nighttime. The discussion of said dog often degenerates into long, drawn out dissertations about which university allowed pets on campus and which did not. This is irrelevant because Watson's text never tells us that the incident of the dog that bit Holmes as he went down to chapel occurred on school grounds at all. However, Knox not only suggests that the wealth of Holmes's only two college friends, but the aristocratic background of the one and the 'doggie' tendencies of the other inclines him [Knox] "to the opinion that he [Holmes] was at The House [Christ Church]." So Knox not only selected a university but also singled out his college.

T. S. Blakeney weighs in next and insists that Holmes was a Cambridge man. His evidence is that because Trevor was from Norfolk he would naturally attend Cambridge and Holmes's bent for chemistry absolutely indicates Cambridge.

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[1] See *Irene's Cabinet* – 2004, "The Case for Oxford" and "The Case for Cambridge"

Dorothy Sayers also declares Cambridge to be the university in question but she relies on rewriting Watson's text. She has decided that Watson must have "misreported" Holmes' words. In my book that is bringing it a bit too high. Playing the game is one thing but changing the text to suit oneself is out of bounds. And anyway her conclusion that Holmes attended Cambridge is wrong. Gavin Brend rejects the evidence of the presence of the dog and plumps for Oxford. Mr. Percy Metcalf and Roger Lancelyn Green also discuss the dog issue *ad nauseam.*

While *The Musgrave Ritual* and *Gloria Scott* give us the only two direct references to Holmes' university, three other stories supply clues. That *The Missing Three Quarter* takes place in Cambridge is not in question because Watson tells us so. Much is made of the fact that Holmes says, "And now, my poor Watson, here we are, stranded and friendless, in this inhospitable town." An alum wouldn't find the town inhospitable and if he did he certainly wouldn't say so. Most writers don't mention that this comment is made almost directly after their having been forcibly and rudely ejected from the home of Dr. Leslie Armstrong. Many have also mentioned Holmes' lack of knowledge of the surrounding topography and geography. He tells us the order in which he visited the local towns or villages which is all a-hoo; and he complains that the land is flat and empty which lends no cover to a follower. If he had lived there for any length of time, would he not already know that?

Then in *The Creeping Man* (one of the most deeply stupid stories ever written) we are told that our heros have traveled to the imaginary land of Camford. The argument that Camford is actually Oxford is compelling. It is a much more welcoming city, Holmes knows it well – he knows where the best inn is – and he knows the train schedule; something he did not know about Cambridge. I have read arguments that Camford is Cambridge, but sadly they are wrong.

The last of our trilogy of university stories is *The Three Students.* Again, the reader is not told explicitly which actual city this is. We have references to both "quadrangles" and "courtyards." Architecturally quads or courtyards are open areas usually of grass laid out between buildings. Watch any Morse episode[2] and you'll see one. In Oxford these areas are called quads, in Cambridge they are usually called courtyards. In our story, Watson calls them both. No help there. Many debaters have pounced on the character Soames saying to Holmes: "You are aware, Mr Holmes, that our college doors are double." How could Holmes be "aware" unless he were an alum? Simple, he's known Soames for some years and it is not inconceivable that he had visited the university before.

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[2] Inspector Morse - British TV series which ran from 1987-2000 broadcast by PBS in the US. — Les

There does seem to be proof positive that St Luke's in Camford is in fact in Cambridge. That proof lies in the black clay of the long jump. A letter was sent from George Lytellton to James Agate that stated unequivocally that "in those days, whatever it may be now, it was only at Fenner's, Cambridge, where he could have jumped into black clay. The normal long-jump bed was of loose brown loam, but old Watts, the Fenner's groundsman, produced this stuff – probably from the fens – claiming (quite rightly) that, as there was no crumbling at the edges of footprint, measurement of the jump was far more accurate." But since Holmes did not attend school in Cambridge we're okay with that.

So how do I know with such certainty that Holmes attended Oxford? Have you ever heard of the Oxford comma? This is the last comma in a series before the coordinating conjunction in a list. The use of the Oxford comma ensures clarity in a list. A famous example of the confusion that can be caused by its omission is the difference between "He thanked his parents, Ayn Rand, and God" and "He thanked his parents, Ayn Rand and God." The comma before the conjunction is required by the *Oxford Style Manual,* section 5.3. This is the style manual for the Oxford University Press.[3]

Here's the aha moment. We know that Holmes wrote and published many monographs. Conforming to his publisher's style guide would be natural. Holmes wrote two of the canonical stories himself – *The Blanched Soldier* and *The Lion's Mane.* In both stories he uses the Oxford comma.

> *There was Simpson – the fellow we called Baldy Simpson – and Anderson, and I.*
>
> BLAN

> *There was the explanation that he was in hiding/or a crime, or that he was mad and that they wished to avoid an asylum, or that he had some disease which caused his segregation.*
>
> BLAN

> *He listened to everything, tool: note of all we said, and finally drew me aside.*
>
> LION

> *There were his handkerchief, a large knife, and a small folding card-case.*
>
> LION

There it is, incontrovertible proof, Holmes was an Oxford man.

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[3] **http://global.oup.com/uk/archives/index.html?cc=us.** The Oxford University Press has been around since the 15th century - Les.

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CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

John Baesch grew up in Baltimore and first encountered Sherlock Holmes in the ninth grade. There was a significant hiatus while studies, Army Service, and a railroad career occupied his time. In 1988, on a cold January morning, he happened to hear a radio interview relating to the Sherlock Holmes birthday celebrations in New York and London and resolved to find out more. His investigations led him to The Clients of Sherlock Holmes of Philadelphia and they rekindled the interest. He is a member of scion societies in several cities served by Amtrak. He joined WTB in 2002 and was Gasogene XIV.

Carla Coupe read her first Sherlock Holmes story when she was eight, and immediately wanted to be both Sherlock Holmes and John Watson, solving intriguing cases while being rude to the officious and kind to the desperate, and then writing it all up in thrilling prose. Fast forward 50 years, and she's accepted the fact that she's more John Watson than Sherlock Holmes. Her pastiches have appeared in *Sherlock Holmes Mystery Magazine* and *Sherlock's Home: The Empty House,* and one, "The Book of Tobit," was included in *The Best American Mystery Stories of 2012.*

April Curnow, 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.

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 17. 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.

Melissa James read "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" at age 11 and was immediately hooked on the adventures of the famous detective and his biographer. She is part of a filk group that performs song parodies at area conventions on topics ranging from media science fiction to Snuggies. This is her first contribution to *Irene's Cabinet.*

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 co-winner 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.

Yale Stenzler retired after serving for 22 years as the Executive Director for the State of Maryland Public School Construction Program and is now a part-time educational facility planning and management consultant. He has been a member of Watson's Tin Box for many years and has made several presentations at the monthly meetings. He looks forward to each meeting and hopes to someday have the knowledge and memory to effectively complete the monthly quizzes.

Karen Wilson, Gasogene XXV, "It all started at a 5000-Watt radio station in Fresno, California." But seriously Karen is a philosophy teacher and avocational musician who can't quite believe it's been forty years since "The Seven Percent Solution" first attracted her to the world of the Great Detective. Special Sherlockian interests include the music of Sherlock Holmes (and his devotees).

Beth Austin is a past Gasogene of Watson's Tin Box and current Torquemada. She is the organizer of the "Saturday with Sherlock Holmes" program in Baltimore and is the founder and editor *of Irene's Cabinet.* In addition to WTB, Beth belongs to The Denizens of the Bar of Gold and, The White Rose Irregulars. In real life she is the IT administrator for a national interior design firm. Her motto is "I support complete sentences, correct spelling, proper grammar, and the Oxford comma."